

MUKWONAGO VILLAGE BOARD

# Well-known residents challenge incumbents for trustee seats

By Brandon Anderegg  
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**MUKWONAGO** — The place of the bear could bare new names in its local government as five candidates contend for three Village Board seats for the April election.

While Ryan Klemme, Eric Brill and Roger Walsh are well-known names in Mukwonago due to their involvement in village affairs, these newcomers hope to make their debut on the Village Board. Incumbents James Decker and Karl Kettner are running for re-election while Mark Penzkover is stepping down.

**Klemme**

Klemme said he wants to improve Mukwonago for all residents including his twin daughters, who just entered elementary school. Because his kids are young, he has a long-term interest in monitoring Mukwonago's growth, he said.

"The community has grown, and I want to be a part of where and how that growth continues to provide all residents and business owners the best possible outcome for our long-term future," Klemme said.

Between his upbringing on a dairy farm and his education in engineering and business administration, his background allows him to bring a unique perspective as trustee, he said.

If elected, Klemme would responsibly manage Mukwonago's industrial, commercial, and residential growth, he said. Klemme's wife is a former trustee, so he's familiar with Village Board dynamics.

Klemme is also focused on transparency, adding that Mukwonago will have to evolve "so that everyone stays connected, informed and supportive of each other."

**Decker**

Decker is an eight-year village trustee who retired after 48 years at an engineering company. His time as a trustee and tenure on multiple committees makes him an asset to Mukwonago, he said.

If re-elected, Decker would keep taxes low while maintaining Mukwonago's vibrancy. One of his primary goals is to budget for capital investments to meet the needs of staff funding, equipment and capital expenditures, Decker added.

"I would work with the board to see that the commercial and industrial tax base is increased, to help offset the cost of providing for major further capital items that are forthcoming," Decker said.

As chairman of the Health and Rec Committee, Decker takes pride in Mukwonago's park system and their amenities. Major upgrades to Field Park will take time, but Decker feels Mukwonago is headed in the right direction with recent discussions of future park upgrades, he said.

**Walsh**

Walsh actively engages local government through his participation on various citizen committees and by attending meetings regularly. He wishes to share "past information while supporting fiscally respon-

sible new ideas."

"As a longtime resident, local real estate appraisal business owner and small commercial property owner, I believe I have a useful combination of knowledge, skills and time I can contribute to the community," he said.

If elected, Walsh would collaborate with nearby communities and service organizations to generate mutually beneficial opportunities, he said. Walsh believes streaming meetings online and a user-friendly website would increase transparency and community involvement.

Walsh has a degree in energy policy and said he would use his background in real estate to guide village investments and to create a development progress tracking system, so residents know exactly how their money is being spent.

**Kettner**

Kettner seeks re-election, he said, because he has the time, ability and desire to get involved and shape local policy. He sees a state of powerlessness and negativity and feels he can have a positive impact on the community, Kettner said.

He is an IT engineer who prides himself on his ability to generate compromise, a strength he finds in his work life as well as a trustee.

Kettner hopes to keep services and amenities in the village at a high level, but also maintain low property taxes through business growth, he said.

"It's in the business growth where we see a major benefit to taxes, but we need to carefully monitor that growth," Kettner said.

Kettner said he would continue to tackle Mukwonago's traffic congestion, an issue he and others have addressed by rerouting truck traffic around downtown, he said. However, he's also conscious that more traffic on the outskirts of town could cause issues for other residents.

**Brill**

Brill said he is running to ensure the Village Board's composition equally represents all of Mukwonago's stakeholders. For Brill, Mukwonago's small-town family identity and numerous amenities are important to the village's success.

"As our community is growing, we need independent thinkers on the Village Board who can see how this growth will add to our entire community and maintain our values at the same time," Brill said.

If elected, Brill would renew focus on preserving Mukwonago's historical identity, small-town atmosphere, community events and traditional downtown.

Brill also supports economic development in the village, which can generate places to eat and shop while providing additional tax revenue, which reduces taxes for residents, he said. However, village-led investments need to be more transparent, Brill added.

Brill is an electrical engineer and has an engineering degree. He is also committee chair of the local Cub Scout Pack and a Den Leader for his youngest son's den.

**Eric Brill**

Age: 36  
Address: 1537 Whitetail Run, Mukwonago  
Occupation: Electrical engineer



Elected experience: None  
Years in district: 6

**James Decker (I)**

Age: 80  
Address: 1138 Eastern Trail, Mukwonago  
Occupation: Retired engineer



Elected experience: Village trustee, eight years  
Years in district: 29

**Karl Kettner (I)**

Age: 47  
Address: 603 Prairie Hill Ave., Mukwonago  
Occupation: IT engineer



Elected experience: Village trustee, two years  
Years in district: 10

**Ryan Klemme**

Age: 41  
Address: 710 Stoecker Farm Ave., Mukwonago  
Occupation: Process engineer



Elected experience: None  
Years in district: 9

**Roger Walsh**

Age: 65  
Address: 142 Oakland Ave., Mukwonago  
Occupation: Property and business owner



Elected experience: None  
Years in district: 36



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Published Tuesday-Saturday except legal holidays.  
Postmaster: send address changes to:  
The Freeman, P.O. Box 7, Waukesha WI 53187-0007  
Postage paid at Waukesha 53186  
USPS 698-140  
Periodicals ISSN Number 1062-9041

