EUCLID OBSERVER
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Candidates for Mayor

Kirsten Holzheimer Gail

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident for 48 years. One of the things I am proud of is that we have so many wonderful neighbors all over the city that care about our community and are willing to work/ volunteer/ invest to make Euclid a great place to live.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I have proudly served as Mayor from 2016-2019, City Council President from 2008-2015, and Ward Council Representative from 1997-2007. I bring a Master's degree in Social Science Administration with a concentration in Community Development, Planning and Management. I have many years personal and professional experience working with neighborhood, community, and service organizations across the City and region.
What book are you currently reading?
Becoming by Michelle Obama
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid Mayoral Candidate
What do you consider to be your greatest strength that would make you an ideal candidate for Mayor of Euclid?
I work from a "strengths based approach" - building on our assets in a collaborative, positive and pro-active manner. This approach is inclusive, builds partnerships, and conveys optimism and hope.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the city of Euclid?
1. Continue to strengthen our business base - bringing new tax dollars and job opportunities.
2. Reduce crime and strengthen police-community relations.
3. Complete Waterfront Improvements Plan increasing public access to Lake Erie.
4. Create new housing opportunities to attract and retain residents.
What are a few of your short-term goals for the city?
1. Hire additional police officers 2. Begin street re-surfacing program 3. Increase communications efforts to keep residents better informed 4. Engage more residents in city activities, events, task forces, commissions to ensure all voices are represented and involved.
What would you do to bring more businesses to Euclid?
I am extremely proud of the progress we have made in bringing new businesses to Euclid and assisting in the expansion of existing businesses. To continue the success, I will conduct regular business visits; proactively meet with brokers and real estate professionals; expand our strong team of partners (Greater Cleveland Partnership, TeamNEO, and other economic development organizations) to increase support and incentives for business growth; market incentives like Opportunity Zones, CRA, etc.; and support the growth of small businesses in the community.
Why should Euclid residents vote for you?
Euclid has made great progress over the last four years including new businesses, action on Lakefront Improvements, increased housing values, and renewed investment and pride in our community. There is more work to do and I have the experience, leadership and proven results to continue the growth.

Dr. Richard T. Montgomery, II

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
4+ years
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
My education, career path, and personal experiences have paved a path that would make me an effective mayor. My doctorate in Educational Leadership and Supervision gave me training and expertise in management, policy development, public sector budgeting, and research. With more than 20 years of public service, primarily in management positions, I gained experience leading and collaborating to improve the lives of others. During my public service, I traveled across the United States and to eight other countries (Hungary, Japan, Great Britain, Egypt, India, Lebanon, China, and Mexico) to create workforce development partnerships focused on training, and later employing, Ohioans in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. In each of my professional roles, I have worked to identify gaps in services and create new approaches to serve the community more effectively. During my term as associate dean for Education and Social Sciences at Tri-C, I created a program that significantly increased the academic success of at-risk students. My value for public agencies to be responsive to the changing needs of the community has fueled my career in public service. With effective leadership our government can be a positive force for improving residents' quality of life.
What book are you currently reading?
Citizenville: How to Take the Town Square Digital and Reinvent Government by Gavin Newsom.
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid Mayoral Candidate
What do you consider to be your greatest strength that would make you an ideal candidate for Mayor of Euclid?
One of my strongest attributes is the ability to analyze data. We need to be able to examine and understand how policy decisions impact people's lives. When the city

began experiencing what seemed to be an increased number of lawsuits filed against our police department, costing citizens hundreds of thousands of dollars in litigation, I recognized the need for data to interpret and address the issue. I asked the administration to review the department's operations in order to either disprove or ratify citizens' concerns. Because the current mayor did not follow through with the request, I obtained and analyzed the data myself and found significant risk for federal civil rights violations and additional lawsuits. My ability to use data-driven decision making practices allows me to take an objective approach to assessing the effectiveness of city departments and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the city of Euclid?
1. Increase the number of businesses in Euclid contributing to the tax base so that we can generate enough revenue to reduce the taxes of our residents. 2. Identify investors and partners who can assist the city in creating a training center for Euclid residents to learn a trade. 3. Attract a major grocery store chain to the south side of Euclid. 4. Identify partners who can assist with opening Central Middle School as a multiuse business, learning, and recreation center.
What are a few of your short-term goals for the city?
1. Establish a three-year strategic plan (one does not currently exist) that focuses on

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Chris Litwinowicz

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
40 years living a wonderful life taking care of our community helping others everyday . Chris pride himself in his wisdom and motivation in 1993 Chris help raised over 100 million for education in 25 years with the shared income tax to the schools our future our kids and raised 75 million for police fire and recreational events just as the brand new Euclid high school football round stadium which is a nice investment to our community .
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I'm the only mayoral candidate that has a real vision for the city of Euclid and it residents visitors and patrons including safety and real leadership we haven't seen in a while. Chris ask you for your nomination and vote on November 5 2019. He graduated Euclid Sr high school in 1998. While in high school he received meritious achievement awards three years in a roll in 1995 1996 1997 as a Euclid panther NJROTC 4 year graduate. He then graduated in 1998 Marine corps boot camp. In 1999 United States Marine Corps administration school. Leadership you can count on. He then continued his education in 2006 receiving a BSA in political science and a minor in music. In 2007 he continued his education at Lakeland community college by taking updated accounting classes to prepared himself for government. In 2007 Mr. Litwinowicz ran for mayor as a democratic candidate. In 2011 again Chris ran for mayor. Also 2015 Chris Litwinowicz ran for mayor. Thank you Chris for his hard work for you. In February through March chris and others residents in Euclid got together to gather over 2500 signatures for a city wide vote on our tax department on November 5 2019. He says say no to r.i.t.a. save our jobs keep us working for you. As a public servant He also in school working on his master's degree of law. Taking on line classes and currently enrolled at Cleveland state upgrade his education background as he is on a waiting list for his masters.
What book are you currently reading?
Educating myself on law in Ohio and government law and procedures of ethics a mayor should understand comprehend the laws of his her community to an effective leader
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid Mayoral Candidate
What do you consider to be your greatest strength that would make you an ideal candidate for Mayor of Euclid?
My ability to work good with others and my experiences in life and education and also my military experience and education to be a leader that has the know how to get it done right the first time and Chris is a long living Euclid democrats that loves and support his community anyway he can .so vote for Chris so he can stand up for you
What are a few of your long-term goals for the city of Euclid?
Keep Euclid stronger vote yes keep us educating our future. So Chris supports the schools. Number one rule safety. Save you money as we build for the future .every street resurfacing 2020 no new taxes free programing for kids and free pools in your community. Let's celebrate the fourth of July again in Euclid. Chris has a vision for a 1/2 mile by 6 mile sand white beach boarder to boarder with a restaurant on the beach. Also we need to start our own college in the city of Euclid. Euclid community college ecc and run this with fafsa.government for free education idea for the future

EUCLID CITY COUNCIL WARD 3

Dontea T. Gresham
City Council Ward 3

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident in the city of Euclid, Ohio for 6 years. I am proud of the degree of civic pride and neighborly politeness that I've seen in my city. We truly have the foundations of a city we can all take pride in--we just need active, bold leadership to help it live up to its potential.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I was born in Cleveland, Ohio and attended Martin Luther King Jr. High school for Law & and Municipal Careers and telecommunications. During my time at MLK, I stayed involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities such as: the soccer team, boys track team, bowling team and Mock Trial team. I served in many leadership capacities: student President of the B.R.I.C.K Program, President of the MLK National Honor Society, Senior Class President, and outside of school I served as President of the Ohio Youth and College Division in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), President of the Cleveland NAACP Youth Council, and Vice President of the Cleveland Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). During my sophomore year, I was selected to be the keynote speaker at the swearing in ceremony of former U.S. Attorney Steven Dettelback, who was appointed by President Barack Obama. Shortly thereafter I became the first and youngest high school student to be employed as a Student Clerk for the United States Attorney's office for the Northern District of Ohio/ U.S Department of Justice, also serving as a student intern in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District Superintendent Office. Additionally, I maintained a student intern position at McDonald Hopkins Law firm in Cleveland, Ohio through the Louis Stokes Scholars Program. I graduated as valedictorian from MLK High school in 2012. That year I was selected to travel to the Dominican Republic for a mission project as a student ambassador for CMSD with International Partners in Mission. Furthermore, I was the recipient of the 2012 NAACP Gloster B. Current award as well as the recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award in the youth category. I started my undergraduate career in 2012 at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. I became a Morehouse College Vanguard Scholar and am currently a key member of the world renowned Morehouse College Glee Club. During my summer vacations I interned in the Director office at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport as a BPACF Aviation Scholar for four years, Calhoun Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation, and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District Internal Audit Office. If you asked me what was the hardest thing I had to go through while at Morehouse College, I would say it was losing my beloved parents. Today, I am a student at Cleveland State University working towards a B.A. in Political Science. I am currently a five-year Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Louis Stokes Scholar and have been employed at Douglass and Associates Law Firm for 3 years. Additionally, I serve as a mentor to other youth in the Greater Cleveland area.
What book are you currently reading?
Currently I am reading: • Becoming by First Lady Michelle Obama • The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates by Wes Moore • Juvenile Justice sixth edition by Karen Hess, Christine Orthmann, and John Paul Wright • The American Supreme Court by Robert G. McCloskey
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate Ward 3
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
I believe there are a multitude of issues in our city that require Council's attention. However, the issue I believe most urgently calls for immediate and transparent action from City Council is finding ways we can work together to promote constituent engagement and develop an organized and effective plan on how we can respond to the recent news that a Ohio voter purge will be happening before the November 5, 2019 election. Above all, our role as the governing body of the city of Euclid is to make sure our constituents have a voice in their government at all levels. I will work with and urge my colleagues on city council on drafting voter recovery plans to strategically reactive those voters in our wards that were wrongfully and or inaccurately removed from the Ohio voting list. This effort will have to be accomplished ahead of the 2020 elections.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
I am running to move Euclid into its next era. In order to do this, our city needs to become connected, healthy, and united. For Euclid to be connected, it needs to strengthen its transportation networks both within and beyond the city. We need to better maintain our roads and sidewalks along with establishing new bike lanes to make sure that our residents can get where they need to go safely within our city. I will also work with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to establish an express line from Euclid to downtown Cleveland and to bring sorely needed full-length, handicapped-accessible busses to our city. For Euclid to be healthy, we need to give Euclid residents the ability to make healthy choices in their daily lives. I will get to work on establishing a low-cost farmer's market, attracting healthy grocery stores, and exploring the establishment of a community-run city garden to combat our status as a food desert. I will also promote healthy transportation options, like running, walking, and biking, by improving sidewalks and expanding bike accessibility. For Euclid to be united, we need to make sure all of our residents are engaged in our civic life and identity. This means that Council needs to fight unfair voter purges. We also need to promote civic engagement among our youth, a task which, as a Millennial, I am uniquely qualified to take on. Furthermore, we need to tackle the divisions and inequities that exist within our town. I will fight for police accountability to restore faith in our law enforcement. I will also explore the establishment of a Resource Center to provide residents with guidance through the criminal justice system along with other advisory services. Finally, I will work to bridge the gap between renters and homeowners through even-handed governance and promoting community involvement

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Taneika Hill
City Council Ward 3

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident in the city of Euclid for 9 years. The one think that I am most proud of are the passionate people that make up this city.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I am the current council person for my ward. I have years of experience in city Government. During those years I have learned the importance of collaboration and objectivity.
What book are you currently reading?
The Kid, by Saphire.
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate Ward 3
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
The budget. I would like to see us look at the budget differently. Ensuring that we are implementing thigs that truly support the current needs of our community. Finding a way to increase program dollars that would allow for things like, assistance with dangerous tree removal or teen resource center.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
The Beautification of Euclid Ave. Beginning with Painting all the Fire Hydrants, adding some benches and planter. Euclid Ave. is one of the gateways of the city and it should be inviting. I would like to hire more police officers, so we can get back to community policing efforts such as the cops on bikes. I would also like to see that all of our ordinances have been reviewed and are relevant.
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
Organizing the 2017 peace march. There were probably 100 people of all ages, race and religion. On that day we all marched together for the purpose of peace and unity.
What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?
I worked with a core group of people who were dedicated to seeing my vision come to fruition. I delegated each with a task and it was perfectly executed.
If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?
I think they would like to see me focus more on Ward 3 as a whole. I've worked on a lot of citywide efforts, it's time to put more of my energy in Ward 3, and that is exactly what I plan to do for the next four years. Revitalizing the ward.

Marcus Epps
City Council Ward 3

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I am a fourth generation Euclid resident. I am proud to be a Euclid Homeowner. I am extremely proud of our diversity. I just want us to continue to find creative ways to embrace our diversity!
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
As well as being an advocate for regular folks for nearly a decade, I am a business broker. We need someone who is used to measuring progress on a daily basis. I am someone who has an understanding of bottom lines, which we desperately need right now. I am used to using research based approaches to solve problems. We don't have enough of this on council, and it's effecting our bottom lines. Period!
What book are you currently reading?
The Art of the Deal
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate Ward 3
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
We have to find creative solutions to solve our fiscal crisis. I am a strong supporter of ending the sharing income tax with the schools. With the new deal struck by the schools, and our current administration concerning new income tax revenue generated by Amazon, along with this tax levy on the ballot this November (which I support), I think it's time we address this shared tax once and for all. Once elected this November, I will bring this up in every conversation, and apply political and legislative pressure to both my new colleagues, and this administration to get this done. It will bring millions into our budget immediately, and in my opinion is a must for sustainability.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
1. A better working relationship between both the administration and council. -The administration has a solid five votes they can count on regardless. This should not be an automatic thing they can count on. As a result, they don't communicate with all of council enough and it's disrespectful. We have to apply political and legislative pressure to ensure all of council are a part of the conversation every day! This is how we ensure our ENTIRE community thrives!
2. Stronger safety forces. -Inclusive of Culture and Sensitivity training ensuring accountability and fairness across the board. Also, once we have restored integrity in our department we need to add more officers to ensure safety for our residents. This will be a top priority that will take some time.
3. A Recreation Center. Our youth, seniors and families deserve a Rec. Ctr. they can call their own. A place where community can be restored to our once valued community. I propose we move all recreational administrative positions, as well as the tax department into the YMCA facility and we find a way fiscally through co-ops, the whole nine yards, and get this done for Euclid. I am certain it will make a difference in petty crimes created by young people, and restore a sense of pride in our community as well.
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
I am the individual person who initiated the referendum petition to stop this current administration from shutting down our local tax department and replacing them with RITA (Regional Income Tax Agency). This required the assistance of our entire community to achieve. I knew this going in. I reached out to groups, individuals and businesses across our community for

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EUCLID CITY COUNCIL WARD 5

Christine McIntosh
City Council Ward 5

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
Five years this January. I'm proud of the passion that residents have for their city. I see it in the beautiful homes we have, the volunteer efforts people give, the dreams they have for their community and the challenges they bring up to our civic leaders.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I currently hold the position of Ward 5 Councilperson after being appointed in 2018 so I have the experience of the position I'm seeking. It's a nuanced role that requires time and relationship building, dedication and vision. There are long term projects that I'm involved in and I hope I have the opportunity to see them through to fruition while on City Council. My work experience outside of City Council includes project management, customer service, accounting, marketing, and community development. I am also a certified yoga and meditation instructor and daily practitioner. Yoga provides me the opportunity to seek balance in all aspects of life, to keep an open mind and challenges me to be a more compassionate, loving and non-judgmental individual. My diverse professional experience has given me many opportunities to learn new skills and refine existing ones. I've always worked for small businesses and entrepreneurs and the knowledge gained from that has contributed to the resourceful, creative and intentional person I am today.
What book are you currently reading?
The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity by Nadine Burke Harris, MD; Inside the Yoga Sutras by Reverend Jaganath Carrera and Retired, Rehabbed, Reborn: The Adaptive Reuse of America's Derelict Religious Buildings and Schools by Robert A Simons, Gary DeWine and Larry Ledebur.
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
I believe that Council needs to address the shortfall in funding for our safety forces. We need to increase support in order to get them the training, equipment and technology they deserve along with increased manpower so they can continue to keep our community safe and ensure the well-being of all that enter our city.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
I've recently introduced a Domestic Violence Task Force that includes our police & fire departments, prosecutors, judges, probation officers, mayor and city council along with our county DV advocate. We'll be looking at why our DV rates are so high, what trends we see in court cases, how we can advocate for victims' rights and set up a support system for those who decide to leave their abusive partners. Our advocacy will reach the entire community, from individual households to our schools. I am an active board member of our Greater Euclid Kiwanis Club and our mission is to develop leadership in our youth and create more opportunities for them to get involved in their community. I have partnered with a young Euclid resident and we are in the process of developing a Youth Council that will include teens from public and private schools and address concerns they have in our community. I hope to expand the mindfulness program that I instruct bimonthly at EPD by offering sessions more often and also bringing it to EFD if they'll allow me to do so. More and more studies show that mindfulness programs that include conscious breathing, yoga postures and meditation increase resiliency in first responders by positively affecting brain and nervous system functioning, strengthening intuition, regulating impulse behavior and improving sleep. I plan to explore ways we can increase entrepreneurship and grow small businesses in our community, including offering microloans to residents that dream of owning or expanding their own business but need a little financial support to move them forward. I have been working with the administration and Chamber of Commerce on developing a Special Improvement District (SID) in our downtown and hope to see that become a reality next year. This could allow for shared services and more collaboration between business owners, along with further beautification of the area and more community events.
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
I initiated the mindfulness program recently implemented at EPD, after going on ride along with patrol officers and talking with department supervisors. I brought the idea to the city's HR director who convened a group from EPD, EFD, and administrators from the city's employee assistance program. I brought along with me one of the co-founders of Cleveland Police's Mindfulness Training program and we discussed the issues that first responders face, not only on the job but at home, and crafted a training tailored to their needs and schedules. The program is in its infancy but has much potential for growth.
What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?
I persisted in moving the idea forward by regularly following up with my contacts at EPD and marketing the program to officers by attending numerous roll calls in order to reach as many officers as I could. I have surveyed participants to better understand their needs, both physically and mentally, and craft classes around them. The program is in its infancy but has much potential for growth. I hope in the future to expand the amount of classes and provide different class times in order to reach as many in the department as possible. The program could not have happened without my collaboration with supervisors and the buy-in of officers. It's a completely volunteer effort, both my instruction and their participation, and I am grateful to each individual that supported the idea and for those that attend classes.
If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?
The number one issue I receive from residents is regarding housing. They want to see neighborhoods strengthened by a healthy real estate market and reduction in vacancies and irresponsible landlords. I hope to be able to continue to work with the administration and my Council colleagues on updating building and housing codes in order to reconcile resident concerns about our housing stock.

Gabrielle Kelly
City Council Ward 5

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident for 27 years. I am most appreciative of the pride that residents show for their community. They volunteer at athletic events, support our local library, and are willing to participate in helping Euclid make changes that they believe will make the city successful.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I am a licensed attorney with experience drafting and reviewing statutes, contracts, and financial records for multi-million dollar matters. A good councilperson understands the council's, and the city's, legal and financial responsibilities. My career has provided me with experience that would serve me well as a Euclid city council member. I have also served on the boards of various organizations and have had to make decisions affecting large groups of people. These experiences have honed my ability to listen respectfully to all viewpoints and weigh differing opinions. Lastly, my experiences working with underserved populations have shown me that all people need to feel like they are being heard and that someone cares about the issues that are affecting them -- and wants to do something about it.
What book are you currently reading?
Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell. The book examines the factors that contribute to high levels of success, through examples and a study of social phenomena.
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
The issue that requires Council's immediate attention is finding innovative ways to increase and maximize usage of revenue to meet the needs of its citizens.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
I have three long term goals for Euclid. First, improve the safety and security of the residents. I want residents to not only feel confident that their person and belongings will go unharmed; but, also that any interactions they have with Euclid civil servants will be to their benefit. Second, I want to expand the diversity of Euclid's tax base so that one group does not feel burdened. Lastly, I want all areas of Euclid to have a strong community feel where neighbors know each other well and interact to better the quality of life in Euclid.
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
I chaired a subcommittee for a non-profit program focused on youths. There were diverse people that all had different ideas about the manner in which the organization should devote its human and financial resources.
What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?
To resolve the issue, I had everyone agree upon criteria that would be used to judge what best accomplished the mission at that time. I then had each person briefly explain their ideas, how long implementation should take, and how it would best be accomplished using the current resources. In selecting the ideas that were implemented, the whole group was on board, even if their idea was not chosen, because they were listened to and could see that there was an impartial method for selecting. Also, they could see a timeline of how long before they could/should suggest a different manner.
If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?
Based on my conversations with residents of Ward 5, I believe safety and issues relating to housing are equally important. If elected, however, I am looking forward to speaking with more residents to make sure that I'm correct.

EUCLID CITY COUNCIL WARD 7

Larry Longstreth
City Council Ward 7

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I've been a Euclid resident since 1968. Many of our citizens continue be active within the community & supportive of our public safety forces which I'm proud of.

What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I'm currently a police officer with the Euclid Police Department Auxiliary & have served the community as a block watch coordinator/captain with the EPD Community Policing Block Watch Program. I'm aware of existing community issues & can be an asset to our community due to my previous government service.
What book are you currently reading?
None
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate Ward 7
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
•RITA •Schools • Maintaining positive rapport between police & citizens.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
•Restore city administration accountability. • Improve appearance of downtown Euclid & neighborhoods. Educate community regarding increasing trash/litter, rodent issues & successfully resolve them.
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
At my current full time place of employment. Resolved & bridged the gap between fellow employees who had continuous personality issues.
What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?
As their supervisor, I had a meeting with all involved employees. I also had my immediate supervisor present to discuss & create methods that had successfully resolved personality conflict issue in the workplace.
If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?
RITA tax issue.

Rose M. Allen
How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a Euclid resident for nearly 43 years. I am proud that I convinced council members and council president Joe Farrell to provide access to Lake Erie. That access area is located on the shore of Lake Erie at Sims Park.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
My personal experience of being active in local, county, state and national politics taught me how to reach out elected officials to get them to act on important matters.
What book are you currently reading?
I am reading 'Entrepreneurial You' by Dorie Clark.
What office are you running for this November?
City of Euclid -City Council Candidate
What do you believe is the greatest issue in our city that should require Council's attention as soon as possible?
We need a city council that has not only a clear vision for the future of Euclid,but a vision of the pathway to actualize the vision. We need to stabilize Euclid's financial situation.
What are a few of your long-term goals for the City of Euclid?
My goals for the City of Euclid are:
1. Recruit a proprietor and build a first class lakefront restaurant that will attract people to Euclid.
2. Establish retail businesses for shopping for personal items that were available at the former Euclid Square Mall.
3. Declare a moratorium on re-occupying the houses that are less that 1200 sq ft. Require that any future homes be 1200 sq ft or larger to encourage young growing families to move to Euclid. .
Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.
When wind energy was starting to advance in Northeast Ohio, I joined and helped grow a wind energy task force that encourage developing wind energy projects in Euclid.
What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?
My efforts eventually led to companies erecting wind turbines in Euclid. Due to lack of support from elected officials we missed the opportunity to establish a turbine parts manufacturing plant at Bluestone Industrial Park.
If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?
Erosion is causing people with lakefront homes and property to grown very concerned. Some of them gave up and moved out of Euclid. Those who have remained, would like to see some immediate efforts to address this serious problems. I would work with county, state and federal agencies to obtain the help needed to address the problem.

Architect: Herman Gibans Fodor, Inc. – Architects, Photography: Scott Pease Photography

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EUCLID CITY SCHOOL BOARD

Steve Johnson Jr.
School Board

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident off and on for about 30yrs. I am proud of the fact that so many in our community rise everyday work their butts off without complaint and don't let the noise affect their attitude about our community. They bleed Blue and Gold and I love it.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
My upbringing and military experience prepared me for the rigors of running and winning a seat. But more importantly having the stamina for the Herculean tasking of fighting for the kids and the community against anything and everything there tries to tear us apart as opposed to bringing us together. Mostly that fight is with the state legislators and their policies that unfairly impact communities like Euclid and sometimes its with those in the community who don't understand or care to understand how things work and attack their own community. Admittedly I was once one of those who didn't understand and went most board meeting to complain. But I learned very quickly how complex education in America really is and the impact it has communities, good and bad. I have served now for almost four years as a member of the board, but I have been serving this community and our kids in some form or capacity since my return to Euclid with my wife and kids. In a effort to be the best legislator of board policy I decided to go to college and get my degree in education. I will have accomplished this in just over two years. I am in my practicum now. I felt that if I am making policies to govern our schools I should know exactly what's happening in the foxhole.
What book are you currently reading?
I am currently reading six books, but two that are very intriguing are The Unknown American Revolution by Gary Nash and Lying about Hitler by Richard J Evans.
What office are you running for this November?
Euclid City School District Board of Education Candidate
Why do you want to serve on the Board of Education?
I want to serve because I bring a different dynamic to the board that's necessary to finish the mission I started four years ago. That mission was to turn this schools test scores around and thus it's image. One way that is accomplished is the children seeing a hardworking and successful person who came from the same place they come from and made a life worthy of emulating with no excuses.
What relationship do you believe the schools and the community should have?
I believe the myriad of data that indicates, without strong schools there is no true community in the true essence of the word community. A community and schools are there is a group of people having shared
Steve Johnson Jr. - School Board
goals and lived experiences; Neither is good or viable without the other.
What do you consider to be the most pressing issue facing the Euclid City
(continued on page 12)

Steve
Landesman
School Board

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I've lived here for 15 years. We have the nicest library. Many people that I have talked to are residents were from other cities but they come here because this is the nicest one around.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I have been President of the PTA at a school in Conneaut. I have been in the restaurant business for 48 years and most of my employees have students. I have also received awards for employing and working with handicapped employees.
What book are you currently reading?
I have been reading books on genealogy. I have also been reading books about Budapest Hungary, my grandparent's birth place.
What office are you running for this November?
Euclid City School District Board of Education Candidate
Why do you want to serve on the Board of Education?
I feel the school board needs new people with new Ideas.
What relationship do you believe the schools and the community should have?
The Board needs to be more transparent and honest.
What do you consider to be the most pressing issue facing the Euclid City School District today? If elected, how would you address the issue?
There is a lack of trust by the community. After 111 past a new Football Stadium was built. There is no concession stand and no bathrooms. The next year ther was another levy. I was voted down. Now they want another levy this year. The citizens are being taxed to death. I don't think that another levy will pass. don't let the voters down. We need to talk to people more and tell them what is going on.
According to the 2018 Ohio School Report Card, the Euclid City School District received an failing grade. As a future Board Member, what is your response to this report and what solutions would you offer to help Euclid students succeed and to improve the overall image of the School District?
The renters in the community come and go. Students from other systems are way behind and are worked with to get caught up. Then they move. We need to have tutors to work with the students. AARP has volunteers doing tutoring. Have the Board meetings at other sites. Hold them at other school and invite people to come. Most people have never been to a meeting.

Yvette André
School Board

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I've been in this community for over 44 years. I'm most proud of how we as a community takes care of each other and take pride in the upkeep of our schools and their surrounding streets. I am also proud that we have the only STEM preschool in the country.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I have obtained over 20 plus years with Euclid School system. I have held numerous roles and responsibilities which includes, but not limited to: Room Mom, Booster Club, PTA, Lunch Aid, Bus Monitor, Security Officer (Associates-Criminal Justice, 2015), and Custodian. My various positions have allowed me to have one-on-one interactions with our students, staff, and community. All three of my children have obtained a diploma from the Euclid City School system, which has allowed me to view situations from the parents perspective. I am aware of the issues that Euclid Schools have faced and the changes that have occurred over time. Once elected, I intend to bring awareness and transparency to the community and our staff, with our students best interest.
What book are you currently reading?
Becoming- Michelle Obama
What office are you running for this November?
Euclid City School District Board of Education Candidate
Why do you want to serve on the Board of Education?
I would like to BE the change for our community. I am passionate about the quality of education that our children are receiving. I intend to do what is best for the interest of our staff.
What relationship do you believe the schools and the community should have?
We should be transparent and honest with our community.
What do you consider to be the most pressing issue facing the Euclid City School District today? If elected, how would you address the issue?
We are currently facing a huge upcoming Tax Levy. If the Tax Levy passes, that will resolve our financial issues. However, some of our Tax Payers will face the burden of the Tax Levy increase. This why transparency is a MUST! It takes a village to raise a child, and we have to be honest when it comes to our financial checkbook with our community. We need to take preventative measures and accountability.
According to the 2018 Ohio School Report Card, the Euclid City School District received an failing grade. As a future Board Member, what is your response to this report and what solutions would you offer to help Euclid students succeed and to improve the overall image of the School District?
It is unfortunate to see our school district in a failing category. Based on previous research, I have noticed that the school districts that are prospering, have high level of community involvement and support. It is imperative to have involvement from the parents and community. As a newly elected Board Member, I intend to be transparent and involve more community outreach with our students and staff.

Kathy
DeAngelis
School Board

How long have you been a Euclid resident and what is one thing you are proud of in our community?
I have been a resident for almost 35 years. I am most proud of how the community of Euclid came together to support the construction of the new schools. This example shows resident of Euclid are investing in the future of our children.
What prior career, education, or personal experience makes you a contender for the seat?
I am currently in my 8th year on the Euclid School Board. I have been employed by the City of Euclid for over 28 years (Recreation Department and Law Department), my responsibilities have included budgeting, staffing, working with others and listening to residents with their concerns on various matters of importance to them. I feel that have a good pause on the City of Euclid.
What book are you currently reading?
Natural Disaster written by Ginger Zee, meteorologist for ABC news.
What office are you running for this November?
Euclid City School District Board of Education Candidate
Why do you want to serve on the Board of Education?
I want to give back to the community that I "adopted" in 1984 by helping to support the academic growth of all students.
What relationship do you believe the schools and the community should have?
They should have a working relationship. So that they support each other.
What do you consider to be the most pressing issue facing the Euclid City School District today? If elected, how would you address the issue?
The funding of our school district by the State of Ohio is our most pressing issue. I would address this by contacting state office holders about lifting the "Cap" and by adopting the Cupp/Patterson Fair Funding Plan.
According to the 2018 Ohio School Report Card, the Euclid City School District received a failing grade. As a future Board Member, what is your response to this report and what solutions would you offer to help Euclid students succeed and to improve the overall image of the School District?
Even though the overall grade was an "F" no school in the district received a failing grade. As a school board member it is important to support the academic initiatives that the district has put in place to promote academic achievement.

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OFFICIAL LETTERS ABOUT RITA

VOTE NO ON ISSUE 27! NO! TO OUTSOURCING OUR EUCLID TAX DEPARTMENT TO RITA

Submitted by: Councilwoman Laura J. Gorshe, Councilman Daryl Langman, Jeffrey Beck and Diane Stimburys

Welcome to election season! There is a lot of information coming out seemingly on a daily basis. Some of this is correct and some of it is incorrect. For example, the $1M per year the pro RITA people are claiming RITA can collect from delinquencies has now ballooned to $3M. This is totally incorrect. Our own mayor has publicly backtracked on ANY increase in delinquency collections from RITA and is on record saying so.

The Save Our Tax Dept. Facebook page is accessible to all and all postings are under true identities. It's important for people to wade through the misinformation coming from scare tactics, bullet points and hidden identities. The issue with RITA is simply this: if you want to save our local, in house tax department and have your tax service local, then VOTE NO!

If you have had stellar service, peace of mind and help when you needed it – VOTE NO!

VOTE NO! If you do not want your tax services outsourced to an entity that services 310 plus communities that you can only visit in Brecksville, Cleveland Hts., or Mentor. Sacrificing time and money and at the end of the day will cost us more than our tax department does now.

VOTE NO! If you do not want to lose your local service to an entity that may cause you grief and is not worth your precious time. Check out Yelp and Google to find those reviews.

There is absolutely no way that the alleged $1M pot of gold will be realized (that, now has ballooned to $3M). While it is true that business is coming into the city. It has been said that with the newly opening of Amazon, the city will be rolling in cash – This is simply not so. As a matter of fact, there are businesses that are leaving the city, with no retention strategy in place.

Something we all can agree on is that the City does need more money. The risk with RITA is not worth the alleged reward. This change would be a much higher cost with no guarantee of increased delinquent collections. More money comes from positive economic development.

The Federal Tax Information that the Pro RITA people claim is the key means nothing. Euclid's own tax department obtains that information already from the State Tape that accesses the FTI. The City currently has a subpoena program that realizes collection with an actual attorney in court. The costs are passed onto the delinquent taxpayer not to our City (RITA has an ala carte cost program that the City would pay for). The City obtains the names and addresses to send letters with a bill for $1,000. This usually brings in the scofflaws. So we don't miss a beat. We just have an extra step.

E filing can be realized with a low cost upgrade to the software, yet the administration has no interest in spending the money for the program. Employees that have left our current City tax department have not been replaced (even though they were budgeted for).

They say: (in italics
We Say: (in bold)
Improve Euclid's Budget & Enhance Payer Options Without Raising Taxes –
No one ever said taxes were being raised to our residents, at least not with the RITA issue. RITA will not enhance our budget – it will cost more.
Partnering with RITA is endorsed by the Mayor and was passed by City Council
This vote is endorsed by the Mayor and was passed by City Council – the vote was 5-4 with one councilmember changing his mind after voting no. The independent thinkers on council saw this "rush to judgment" and voted against closing our tax department. There was not proper due diligence done when discussing this change. A vote to close our tax department will cost you, the taxpayer, and a loss in personal friendly service with NO guarantee of higher delinquency collections.
RITA uses industry best practices to better identify & pursue those that don't pay their taxes
RITA will cost the City of Euclid more money, possibly a lot more. RITA will withhold 3% of collections to cover their costs. This amounts to about $900,000. This amount is more than twice what it cost to operate our own department last year. The extra costs come from their "al a carte" menu. The ala carte menu cost $8 for subpoenas (really just letters), $35 per hour for a paralegal, and in their sample contract they even list a buy in to belong to them. This cost has not been determined. We now get these services at no extra charge. The "best practices" are discussed here elsewhere.
Holding delinquent filers accountable is fair, increases and improves the City's budget
A robust economic development plan to prospect for business and obtain a good business mix will increase and improve the City's budget. The Mayor Stopped the non-filer program when she made the decision to switch to RITA, even before City Council knew of her decision.
Improving collections means vital city services are protected
Vital city services will stay in place because 60% of the budget is for safety services and are mostly protected under union contract. Our tax dept. is also a vital city service. See above economic development statement.
RITA's state-of-the-art technologies make it easy to view your information, file and pay online
If you were to pay online you will pay a service charge. Tax preparers always give you copies of your returns. You can view the tax returns in hand anytime. We can also implement e- filing for a small additional cost.
RITA utilizes sophisticated security systems to ensure your personal information is protected
We contracted with MITS for safeguarding of your tax information. When the idea was to move to RITA, the Finance Director had all MITS data transferred onto an external hard drive in his office. That hard drive with your data is still there. We're not sure if it is protected or within Ohio's compliance rules right this very minute.
While RITA does have electronic filing, the City could have electronic filing at a cost of about $10,000. So instead "E" filing, we have "P" filing. Personal filing. You can take your information into city hall and our dedicated staffs, which spend 100% of their time on Euclid, will fill the forms out for you at no cost. You will not have this service with RITA. You will have to put up with their mistakes, rudeness, security breaches, and other issues. Some of which has been reported on the local TV news channels.
Working with RITA will NOT increase your taxes
Switching to RITA means a higher cost of collecting each dollar in taxes…higher costs, hidden fees, reduced customer service …A BAD DEAL FOR EUCLID RESIDENTS!

For more information visit the Save our Tax Dept. on Facebook, where all are welcome or call (216) 759-2840

Why R.I.T.A. is the Right Choice for Euclid

Why R.I.T.A. is the Right Choice for Euclid

The essential role of any tax collection agency is to collect all taxes due so the City can provide services for its residents. Our current department does what they can, but they are understaffed, paper based, dependent upon manual processing, and lack up -to- date security, data and technologies. Further, residents have very limited options when it comes to accessing their own tax information and filing. The Regional Income Tax Agency (R.I.T.A.) employs the most complete federal tax data available to identify non-filers and those that underreport their income. This helps ensure that all are paying their fair share. While the City will maintain a local presence to help residents, R.I.T.A also gives us the ability to view our information, file, and pay online.

R.I.T.A Provides More Options for Residents

Partnering with R.I.T.A. provides a greater range of services for our residents. Right now, if you have a question or would like some information, it is very likely that you will be asked to make a trip to City Hall. After joining R.I.T.A., you can still visit City Hall if you'd like, but a full array of service options would be available; not just at City Hall. To start, R.I.T.A. provides a 24/7 voice response system for straight forward refund, estimate and payment information. You can speak with an agent during regular business hours which are extended beginning in March through the filing deadline. All agents take notes and all calls are recorded for quality, security, and continuity of service. Also, R.I.T.A has confirmed they will come to City Hall for "taxpayer assistance days" several times throughout the year. Lastly, R.I.T.A. makes it possible to view, file and pay your taxes online. This means you can complete your local income taxes from the comfort of your home any time of the day.

Better Information & Technology Leads to Better Results

Having the very best information is critical, because better information, aligned with advanced technologies leads to better results. Unfortunately, the Euclid Tax Department will never be able to access the most comprehensive data or afford the necessary technology upgrades. Euclid only has access to the State of Ohio "state tape". The "state tape" only provides the name, address and social security number of a person that has a filed a tax return with Ohio- that is it. By contrast, R.I.T.A. uses the "federal tape". This data also has name, address and social security, but most importantly also includes W2s, 1099s, line by line data from Federal 1040s, and ALL accompanying forms and schedules. R.I.T.A uses the "federal tape" to identify non-filers and those who have filed a tax return but have under-reported their income to a municipality. Identifying those not in compliance leads to more collections and improved City budgets. There is no data available to Euclid Tax Department that is not available to R.I.T.A, but there is a wealth of data that only R.I.T.A can access. R.I.T.A has a proven track record of using that information to find those that haven't paid their taxes.

Security

Finally, let's briefly touch on the security of your personal information. R.I.T.A. uses industry best practices and a document imaging system with the most sophisticated encryption technologies to safeguard your personal information. Conversely, because our current system is paper based, after your return is manually entered into the system, the paper returns that contain your personal information are put into boxes and placed in the basement of City Hall. By any standard this is not safe or secure.

Conclusion

This November 5th voters have a chance to modernize our tax collection process. Joining R.I.T.A. not only gives our residents more options, but R.I.T.A.'s proven track record should lead to more efficient tax collection and improve our City's budget. Improving the budget means more services for our residents. Vote YES to join the Regional Income Tax Agency (R.I.T.A)

Sincerely,
Euclid Citizens for R.I.T.A.

NO FOR RITA

What I really love the most about R.I.T.A. is the acronym itself. Yep, the Regional Income Tax Agency sure sounds like the name of a real person and what's not to like about that? Rita is a terse four letter word that is laden with a wealth of untapped cultural references. From Steven King's novella, Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption to Rita Moreno's memorable portrayal of Anita in West Side Story, the word Rita comes with a proven track record. Has it really been fifty two (52) years since The Beatles immortalized "lovely Rita, meter maid"? The naysayers may very well point to J.K. Rowling's Rita Skeeter, whose florid praise, innuendo and veiled accusations, will assuredly raise some suspicions. The cynics will undoubtedly mention Rita Repulsa, the formidable nemesis of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers as a counter argument. Just saying.

Although our in-house tax department lacks a snappy acronym, a zippy logo and a catchy tune, I will continue to offer my unconditional and unwavering support for Euclid's in-house Tax Department because of the exemplary service provided by Nick, Amy, Pam, Sue and Mary. They are the gold standard for personal and professional customer service.

Richard J. Fiorelli
758 East 232nd Street
Euclid, Ohio 44123
(216) 556-3548
richard.j.fiorelli@gmail.com

We are in full support of the continuation of our City tax department to continue to run income tax collection for the City of Euclid.

I guess we follow a simple and old adage. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

What totally swayed our opinion on this matter was the claim of the administration that bringing on R.I.T.A. would gain a minimum of $1,000,000 a year in unclaimed taxes. But what became public fact was that after a group of Euclid citizens placed the R.I.T.A. issue on the ballot, the administration, in a special work session, now admitted that the schools were being overpaid by guess what...nearly.a million dollars a year; and that the Mayor admitted that they knew about this issue, which they kept hidden from the City Council, since 2018. It was also brought out that as far back as 2010, Bill Cervenik, then Mayor, also knew of this money.

Maybe if the City administration had been up front, maybe we would better trust their judgment. But when you deceive the public and due to public activism, you are forced to tell the truth, I'm sorry, but trust is the only virtue government must have.

Respectfully,
Audrey Kaplan & Victor Goodman
216-486-1326

I got a letter from Hupp Tax service and this was my response: I just got your letter of endorsement for RITA since the letter came from your business I have to perceive that you are speaking on behalf of your company. Your offer to deliver RITA signs makes your company an activist. Thank you for the timing I need to find an accounting firm that is not more interested in politics than people. Offering a discount once RITA takes over as incentive to get votes all on behalf of your company. I hope the board of directors is on board, my taxes have been prepared by your company for almost twenty years. I don't mix business with politics and I'm sorry to discover that you do.

This was a response to a letter from an accounting firm. I am shocked at the level of politics entering commerce. The fact is our government planned the switch and prepared for it before it was even presented to the people. They didn't count on us citizens speaking out against it. What Will be left for our city to do if they outsource the tasks a government does? It wasn't broken but our City seems to be about fixing things that aren't broken. They ignore the real problems. I will witness at least one drug exchange on my street and nothing gets done.

Belinda Fulton

To the citizens of Euclid,

Please vote no on the issue to hire the Regional Income Tax Agency for Euclid's tax collection agency on the November 2019 ballot.

I have had bad experiences with RITA in the past, when I lived in cities that used RITA. I had to fight very hard with them to get monies owed to me back when they incorrectly calculated my income tax due.

I have used the Euclid tax department on many occasions. They were very helpful in assisting me with my city income tax return.

If the city of Euclid can't collect the income tax owed to them by dead beat citizens, then I say hire a few more qualified people for the Euclid tax department to collect the monies owed to the city! I find it hard to believe that the city of Euclid cannot get access to federal income tax returns for the citizens of Euclid, in order to find out which citizens did not pay city income tax.

Again, please vote no on the RITA issue. Voting in RITA will mean losing a great city of Euclid tax department (that is very helpful in assisting citizens to prepare their income tax, they are very friendly, qualified, & have the citizens of Euclid best interest at hand)!

Sincerely, Joseph P. Ward

I wanted to follow up with the article in the Euclid Observer Volume 10, issue 9, September 2019 about the Rita Tax Issue in this upcoming election. Seems like Euclid has been down this road in the past. I moved to Euclid in 2002 from Perry Township, where we were exempt from having to file city taxes. In 2002 up through 2006, CCA was contracted to collect our income taxes for Euclid. It didn't work then, and I don't see it working now. So we had CCA collecting, then we moved to in-house, and now our mayor wants to move to RITA, regardless of the amount of complaints, poor customer service, over billing and inconvenience. I worked in sales for 23 years, RITA must have promised the sun moon and stars to this administration. I cannot see for the life of me, why such a push to remove our own tax department, not to mention put these good folks out of work. I heard and was present at a council meeting a few months back, when the law firm that does our collections stated they were doing everything they could to garnish wages from those that were working. People either pay their taxes or they don't. RITA is not going to collect any more than what we are already collecting currently. Not to mention the numerous complaints as I mentioned above. Lastly, as I stated I worked for 23 years, now severely disabled with a rare spine condition, I'm on Social Security and of course we still have to file because this is a mandatory filing city, whether or not you have working income. Removing our own in house Tax department will now make it more inconvenient for residents that are disabled or do not have transportation, they will now have to find other means to file their taxes as it will not be a local quick trip once removed. Will this cause more people to not even bother to file? This town has a lot more pressing issues than removing our tax department. I've never had a complaint about the good folks that work there, they are attentive, get right to you when you go in, and I feel they have a genuine stake in helping the tax payer, not RITA. So I have to vote in favor of keeping our tax department. Thank you

Sincerely, Tyson R. Bell 25391 Richards Ave., Euclid, OH 44132 216-496-8611

Note from the publisher: We have printed every single submission we received on this topic.

YES FOR RITA

YES TO RITA

I have been reading and hearing about the controversy around the proposal for the City of Euclid to transition and use R.I.T.A for the collection of City income taxes. I have worked for a community that went through this transition and the entire process and experience was extremely positive.

Representatives from R.I.T.A. were attentive and worked with us prior to the transition to fully understand and grasp our concerns, challenges we felt may be present and came up with a timeline and plan to go through this process. During the transition, they did what they said they would, worked with our residents and businesses and slowly our concerns went away.

After the transition was in place, we received our payments twice a month, timely as they had stated. They went after the individuals who were not paying their taxes.

Being an outside entity, when dealing with those who were not paying, they were still professional and worked through the process quickly and efficiently. The back taxes owed turned out to be a significant amount and was done, again, as they stated it would.

Change is never easy. When making changes to processes, there is always a learning curve, a time to transition, and concerns. However, during the transition we experienced, it went extremely smoothly, R.I.T.A. was professional and kept to their word. I know there are many against this transition and the concerns that residents have. I can only state that by actually being part of this transition and change, there were no issues, our revenue did increase and R.I.T.A. did and still does, a fantastic job.

Harry Stark

RITA is best choice for Euclid taxes

As a CPA, a tax professional, and a Euclid resident, I would like to offer perspective on the Euclid-RITA issue. My firm prepares taxes for over 4,500 individuals every year. Our clients are in RITA communities, as well as many CCA, Euclid, and other stand-alone cities (Lakewood, Parma, etc). The benefits described in the Vote Yes for RITA letter in last month's Observer are compelling. I have direct experience working with RITA nearly every day and have never had a problem working with them. They are a well-run organization. They offer electronic filing options and 24/7 online and phone access to account information. With their resources and infrastructure they will bring in more revenue; they have done it repeatedly for other cities.

I do not find last month's The RITA Debate letter credible. Here are a few relevant points:

- "City must pay RITA $930,000 to transfer tax collections" is not true. RITA does not charge any municipality a fee for data transfers.
- "FTI makes very little difference...increased collections because of access to FTI is false." RITA has access to federal tax information (FTI); combined with their technology, they manage to regularly and significantly increase collections.
- There is an"$8 charge to send out delinquency letters". RITA does not charge for routine notices or bills. If a taxpayer fails to respond to initial notices, RITA offers cities the option to send subpoena letters at an $8 charge.
- For goodness sake, for refunds under $10, RITA does not "keep your money" any more than Euclid does.

Council members who voted for the switch to RITA did a substantial amount of independent research. Two members visited and toured RITA's facility; another met with our in-house tax department. Another surveyed RITA members (including Lakewood, a rare city that chose to leave RITA) to ask about their direct experience. Another council person gathered data and analyzed revenue of several RITA cities both before and after the switch, factoring in general economic trends. The majority conclusion was RITA is likely to bring more revenue to Euclid. It is not easy to vote to outsource a department. Clearly, council did not make the decision lightly.

No one likes the idea that good people might lose their jobs. However, when revenue to the city is increased, other jobs (police, fire, roads) might be saved or added. Emotionally this is difficult, but in the end, the switch to RITA is the best thing for Euclid as a whole.

Thank you,
Beth D'Arcy, CPA
Euclid Resident

In February 2019, after almost six months of research, the majority of Euclid City Council passed an ordinance to partner with the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA). The facts support the clear advantages to partnering with RITA. On September 19, 2019 the Euclid Democratic Club endorsed the passage of the RITA issue in the upcoming election. I wanted to share some of the remarks made by other municipalities' leadership about RITA's impact. Vote Yes to RITA Charlene Mancuso, Euclid City Council President

"There is no way that our city could provide comparable service to our residents and businesses at a cost anywhere near that of the Regional Income Tax Agency. ....I have always been impressed with their knowledge, patience and willingness to help me resolve tax issues. I have heard similar stories from the residents of our City regarding the considerate and professional manner with which the RITA staff have assisted them in resolving their own tax matters."
Jason Stewart, CPA Director of Finance, Middleburg Heights

"As we all know all sources of revenue are vital to our cities. One of the biggest advantages of being a member of RITA is their excellent program for delinquent tax collection….In addition to increased collections, you will save money by having RITA administer your income tax collections."
Ted M. Pileski, CPA, CPFA City Finance Director
City of Elyria

"Prior to joining RITA, the City maintained an Income Tax Department.... In the overall scheme of things, the move to RITA was as a cost-savings measure…as well as provides us the ability to participate in programs that were not available to us prior to joining RITA…. RITA also hosts regional Taxpayer Assistance Days to assist our residents with completing their tax forms."
G. David Gillock
Mayor, City of North Ridgeville

"RITA's tax software system is a very important tracking and reporting tool for the city because it provides real-time and comprehensive data. Since we have direct access to the system we can research various items without the need to call RITA… Furthermore, RITA is available to provide needed counsel on various income tax matters."
Mate Rogonjic, Finance Director
City of Chardon

"RITA has experienced tremendous membership growth that in turn drives down the cost to its members and increases services available through the RITA process…. Strongsville has been an active participate of RITA's two Delinquent Programs, the subpoena program and the Federal Tax Information (FTI) program. The FTI program matches income reported to the IRS with income reported to RITA to determine if taxpayers are reporting all of their income. Strongsville has collected over $1.7 million in delinquent tax revenues at a cost of $48,000 from the use of these two programs, 'a great return on investment for the City of Strongsville."

Joseph Dubovec, CPA Director of Finance
City of Strongsville

"The percent cost of collections for 2018 reinforces one of the three main reasons for the City joining RITA: lower cost of collections….enhanced technology. RITA technology allows me to have information at my desk to be of better service to my residents…. The opportunity to direct RITA in conjunction with other member cities is meaningful."

Michael A. Thomas, CPA Director of Finance and Tax Administrator
City of Rocky River

This past February, City Council passed an Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) for the collection of City income tax. As Council Representative for Ward 6, I voted in favor of switching to RITA from our current in-house tax collection department. I would like to provide details about my assessment leading me to vote in favor of this change.

To me this decision always hinged on the bottom line – would switching to RITA increase our net income tax collections? I sought an objective way to answer this question by comparing other northeast Ohio cities who had recently switched to RITA against the City of Euclid's collection for the same "transfer" period. I did not rely on data presented to Council, but rather used information from audited financial reports from both the comparison cities and the City of Euclid. Taking into account both collections and cost of collections, this analysis resulted in a projected net annual increase of over $750,000.

As the method in which we file tax returns and pay tax bills continues to become more electronic, utilizing RITA for income tax collection will enable us to stay current, efficient and effective in collecting our most critical revenue source. RITA has superior technology as it is able to spread the necessary and significant hardware and software costs over its 300+ member communities. RITA has a Data Exchange Program with the IRS - the IRS will not provide this data to communities the size of Euclid. This data enables RITA to concisely identify non-filers and those who under report their income.

RITA's track record of increasing revenue through its superior collection process is documented and verified. Based on this information and my own objective analysis, I came to the conclusion that switch to RITA is the right decision. I encourage voters to join me in supporting the use of RITA for our income tax collection services.

John M. Wojtila
City of Euclid – Council Ward 6
jwojtila@cityofeuclid.com

YES FOR RITA

YES TO RITA

Dear Residents:

As a member of City Council that has been researching the RITA issue for nearly a year now, I'd like to offer you my perspective on why I believe working with RITA is in the best long-term financial interests of Euclid.

Since it was first proposed to City Council, the core rationale for contracting with RITA has been that it will improve our tax collection efficiency, increase our overall net collections and provide several enhanced services to our residents. By using the most comprehensive data and the latest technologies, RITA is best equipped to not only collect taxes, but more importantly, to find and go after those that have either failed to file city income taxes or may have underreported their incomes. I'm sure we'd all agree that being able to improve the City's budget without having to consider raising taxes is an idea worth pursuing. During multiple meetings, RITA and the administration presented case studies, but I wasn't comfortable simply taking their word for it.

Before I could support a change, I would need to conduct my own due diligence and independently verify these claims. I've spent many hours reviewing budgets, financial statements and speaking directly with municipalities that work with RITA, as well as, those that have recently transitioned to RITA. Since late 2018, I have been in correspondence with roughly 20 communities, and all have reported being very happy with the services RITA provides. They all have indicated that RITA has improved their net collections by either improving collections, reducing costs or both.

The following are just a few excerpts from email correspondences I've had with communities regarding their experience with RITA.

"Our community has had a great experience with RITA. I have no doubt that RITA can deliver the same to you and your residents. One huge advantage is RITA's ability to look at the federal returns…We catch a LOT of folks who might not otherwise file a local return. I know that you have a lot more apartment buildings than we so you should experience quite a bump from that capability alone." - Mayor of Lyndhurst

"RITA has been very efficient in their distributions and collections. If the resident is not satisfied, they can contact me, and I still have the authority to reduce or waive penalties and interest depending on the circumstances. They have a staff that is very responsive and helpful. I wouldn't even think to go and switch to self-collection." - Highland Heights Finance Director

"We joined RITA beginning in 2017. It has been a great move… RITA has been extremely efficient for us. Another benefit is that they have access to federal returns and know who should be filing with us. I would not hesitate moving forward with RITA. Tax laws are constantly changing, and I feel hiring a company that specializes in tax collection was a smart move for us." – Finance Director Norwalk

"We are a city of 50,0000 residents which is comparable to Euclid. Our income tax department was becoming grossly understaffed…We knew we had to either, 1) do extensive hiring and training, or 2) contract with RITA. We did extensive research on RITA and…talked to other municipalities. The choice was easy for us given all those factors. I feel it was absolutely the right move for us." - Mayor of Cuyahoga Falls

"RITA's tax sophistication and access to federal data was extremely helpful to us. With a fairly high transient population due to Kent State University, RITA's ability to track tax payers through federal tax tapes beyond Kent's borders, along with their tax subpoena collection services have definitely improved our overall tax collection rate…I'm pleased we made the switch and we continue to lean heavily on their tax capabilities." – City Manager of Kent

My research also suggests that when municipalities join RITA, they do generally see an increase in collections. Again, here are just a few examples.

In 2011, the City of Cleveland Heights joined RITA. The income tax collections reported in the previous year were $18, 971,000. The first year in which they received 12 months of income tax collections with RITA, the revenue reported was $21,675,993 (an increase of $2,700,000 or 14.2%).

The City of Wadsworth a former CCA member joined RITA in 2016. Prior to joining RITA, income tax collections reported were $8,446,000. The first year in which they received 12 months of income tax collections with RITA, the revenue reported was $9,202,178.05 (an increase of $756,178.05 or 9.0%).

In 2016, The City of North Canton joined RITA. In the previous year reported income tax collections of $7,105,000. The first year in which they received 12 months of income tax collections with RITA, the revenue reported was $7,688,000 (an increase of $583,000 or 8.2%).

In 2013, the City of Painesville joined RITA. The income tax collections reported in the previous year were $7,136,522. The first year in which the municipality received 12 months of income tax collections with RITA, the revenue reported was $7,897,225 (an increase of $760,000 or 10.6%).

Based on 2018 collections of $24,737,092, if RITA can improve our net collections by just 2%, that would equate to an additional $500,000 to our bottom line. This is an important consideration since we will run a sizable deficit this year. Personally, I would urge we pledge any additional revenues to making sure that our police force is adequately staffed and equipped, but that's a different discussion for a different day.

I could go on but let me conclude by saying that the more research I do, the more testimonials I receive from other communities, the more confident I am that RITA is the right choice for Euclid. I now understand why over 100 communities have chosen to move from in-house collection and CCA to partner with RITA since 2013. Frankly, I don't see how any individual community like ours can match RITA's capabilities in data, technology, staffing, taxpayer options and security. It is my strong belief that voting YES and working with RITA is the fiscally responsible decision for Euclid.

If you have questions, please feel free to email me at kjarosz@cityofeuclid.com or message me through my Facebook Page titled Kristian D. Jarosz Ward 4 Euclid, OH.

Sincerely,
Kristian Jarosz
City Council- Ward 4

Euclid-RITA issue - Frequently Asked Questions

By Beth D'Arcy, CPA

Will I pay more tax if we switch to RITA?
No, the tax rate of 2.85% stays the same, as does the 100% reciprocity. RITA will not have the authority to change our tax rate or reciprocity.

I'm retired. Will I have to file a tax return now?
No. If you are in Euclid's system as retired, that information will be transferred to RITA, and you will not be required to file if you have no taxable income. If you are not "retired" in Euclid's system, you might need to file a one-time Exemption form to update RITA's records.

Is there any guarantee RITA will increase revenue to Euclid?
No. But they have a proven track record with other cities. They have increased revenue by millions of dollars in some cities, and they estimate Euclid could see $1-$3 million. When you look at how they operate it makes sense. Access to information from federal taxes and other RITA members, combined with the technology to electronically compare that info to the city tax returns filed, will lead to better identification of non-filers and under-reporters. This results in more tax revenue collected.

How could Euclid tax department possibly be missing such a large amount (over $1 million per year) in tax revenue?
Euclid uses a paper based system. They don't have access to complete income information and we have a large transient population. Euclid tax department knows there are delinquent taxpayers. They find some of them. They simply don't have the resources or infrastructure to find them all.

RITA administers most of Euclid's neighboring cities, and they track when taxpayers move. RITA will be able to identify these residents who only live in Euclid for part of the year, or who don't include all of their W2s on the tax return. It doesn't take long for the tax dollars to add up.

Of course, other economic changes, like the new Amazon facility, will create additional revenue, too. This would be in addition to those RITA identifies as not paying their fair share.

When I mention to friends about Euclid switching to RITA they cringe and say how bad RITA is and that they hate paying RITA. Why is that?
Sometimes people equate RITA with their city taxes. RITA does not make up the tax rules or tax rates. They simply process the tax returns according to your city's rules.

If RITA has all this technology and access to valuable information, how much will it cost?
The cost of RITA is currently estimated to be slightly more than Euclid's in house budget. Based on historical norms, RITA estimates Euclid's cost will end up at around 1.7% of revenue. My understanding is that the current cost of the Euclid tax department is about 1.4% of revenue ($434,000). RITAs estimated cost of 1.7% of revenue ($527,000) would make the cost of RITA $93,000 higher per year.

How does RITA get paid?
RITA is a non-profit government agency, run by and funded by its own members. To ensure they operate properly, RITA withholds 3% of what they collect; they forward everything else twice a month. At year end, RITA calculates the actual cost of collections and spreads that cost among all the member cities. They refund the difference in June of the following year.

There are complaints about RITA all over the internet. Why would we want to use them?
RITA is a tax collector. The taxman rarely gets a positive review. Similarly, there are plenty of complaints about the IRS and not a lot of positives, even though the IRS successfully processes millions of tax refunds every year. My experience with RITA has been positive; they are a well-run organization and I have never had a problem resolving an issue. In addition, RITA records all phone calls. If you find that a RITA representative has treated you inappropriately you can request a review of that interaction.

I've heard that RITA charges exorbitant penalties, even if you owe a very small amount. That doesn't sound fair.
By Ohio law, RITA and Euclid assess the same penalties on an account. Ohio law, effective 2016, provides consistency across ALL cities in Ohio regarding many aspects of city taxes. That includes how penalties and interest are calculated.

If a person did not file a required tax return, even if there is no tax due, they would be subject to the late filing penalty of $25/month, up to $150 maximum. Euclid (and all RITA members) could choose to waive certain penalties according to their city ordinance. Many RITA cities have given RITA authority to automatically waive one penalty without appealing to the city. Otherwise, the taxpayer would have to appeal to the city to get anything waived.

Why does RITA send out so many non-filing notices and other letters?
There are residents who are not paying their required taxes. RITA's job is to identify those residents who have failed to file or failed to include all of their income on their tax return. No one likes to pay taxes, but RITA's job is to help ensure all residents are paying their fair share.

That said, in the process of transferring information, some honest, law-abiding residents may receive letters from RITA they are not used to seeing. You might have to initially communicate your situation so RITA knows you are in compliance.

I've heard RITA sends letters requiring you to prove when you moved years and years ago. I don't have those documents anymore! Will that happen to me?
RITA does send out a lot of letters and occasionally they can be frustrating. Generally the reason they send the letters is because they have incomplete information about your tax and living situation. If you receive a RITA letter, you should respond to it promptly. If you don't understand it, you should ask about it. RITA has actual humans available during regular business hours to help you. As a tax professional I have never had a situation where we couldn't reach a fair resolution to an issue. If you ignore the letter, RITA will continue to send notices, as it is their job to make sure they are collecting all the tax for the city.

If this issue passes, when would I have to file with RITA ?
RITA needs about 6 months lead time to convert all the records. Residents will likely continue to file 2019 taxes with Euclid's in-house department. Most likely the switch to RITA would be July 1, 2020.

Will anyone lose their job?
Yes. The tax department has 3 full-time and 2 part-time employees. One person will be retained to serve residents who still prefer to visit the department in person. The staff will have the opportunity to interview with RITA for continued employment.

Will I still be able to pay my Euclid taxes with a credit card?
Yes. RITA accepts credit cards; however, they charge the standard "convenience fee" of 2.75%. Euclid does not charge this fee. Credit card companies charge a fee, and most tax collectors (IRS, Ohio Department of Taxation, RITA, etc) pass this fee to the user. If Euclid collects $8 million from residents who all choose to pay with a credit card, that is potentially costing the city $220,000 every year.

ELECTION

October 7 is the Deadline to Register to Vote or Update Your Registration for the November 5 Mayoral Election

By Alisa Boles

Euclid Voters must be registered in Cuyahoga County in order to vote in any election. In order to vote in Cuyahoga County, you must meet the following requirements:

• You must be a United States Citizen;
• You must be at least 18 years old on the day of the General Election;
• You must be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days;
• You must register to vote at least 30 days before an election to be eligible to vote.

Voters can submit or update registrations ONLINE!

• Register to vote or update your Ohio voting address electronically on the Secretary of State Website: https://boe.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/VoterRegistrationForm.aspx

You can also obtain a form and mail it to the Board of Elections.

• Print blank registration form here: https://www.ohiosos.gov/globalassets/elections/forms/vr_form_04-2015.pdf
• Pick up a form at one of the following local locations:

Euclid High School (Main Office)711 East 222nd Street

Euclid Public Library631 East 222nd Street

Euclid Shore Cultural Center WIC291 East 222nd Street or

• Call the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at 216-443-3298 for a Voter Registration Card to be mailed to you.

If completing a paper form, mail it back to the BOE at: Cuyahoga County Board of Elections Registration Department 2925 Euclid Ave Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Of course, you can always go down to the Board of Elections and register in person as well.

Issue 4-Euclid Schools' Emergency Levy in on the Nov. 5th Ballot

By Donna Sudar

The failure of the renewal levy in November 2018 resulted in the loss of $5.6 million in revenue to the Euclid City Schools.

This resulted in significant cuts to the district's operating budget, including the reduction of: transportation for students in grades 1 through 8 to state minimums, 10 teaching positions, 5 administrative positions and 8 classified positions.

All employees also agreed to a wage freeze for the 2019-2020 school year.

Other programs including elementary and middle school arts and athletics were also cut districtwide.

Issue 4 is an 8.7 mill, 10-year emergency levy that will generate $5.6 million dollars annually. The funds generated from this levy will be used to operate the Euclid City Schools. The cost to an average homeowner (owner of a $75,000 home) is $19/month.

If Issue 4 fails, additional teacher cuts will be made, resulting in larger class sizes. Transportation will remain at the state minimum and additional cuts will be made to programs including athletics and the arts.

In the state of Ohio, money for school construction projects cannot be used to cover any operating expenses. This is why Issue 4 is critical for the children and families in our district.

The passage of Issue 4 will result in the return of busing in January of 2020.

As demonstrated by our recent state report card, our district is making progress and building momentum.

Passage of Issue 4 will ensure that needed programs and resources, including career tech programs, early literacy and intervention programs, will continue to be available to help move students forward.

Continued academic progress will result in a stronger school system that will ultimately have a positive impact on our property values, resulting in a stronger Euclid.

Voting FOR Issue 4 is an investment in our Euclid City Schools and our community.

The Kent Smith Capitol Update

By Kent Smith

Hello, Euclid Observer readers. State Representative Kent Smith here. This is the first of my monthly Capitol Update columns. It is my honor to serve you in Columbus as Ohio's Representative from the 8th House District, and as a new contributor to the Euclid Observer.

As you may know, I am in my third term. I took over from Armond Budish and, before him, Kenny Yuko. The 8th District includes Euclid, South Euclid, Beachwood, Richmond Heights, East Cleveland, Woodmere Village, and a little bit of the City of Cleveland. In this, my first Observer article, I am happy to announce a series of October Ohio Promise Capitol Update Town Hall meetings to be held across the 8th House District.

My 8th District Ohio Promise Capitol Update Tour will be a series of legislative town hall meetings to discuss:

• The Ohio Promise legislative framework
• A review of the state budget
• Bipartisan priority legislation
• The FirstEnergy bailout legislation
• Gun safety proposals
• State-takeovers of public school districts
• An overview of legislation that I have sponsored and cosponsored
• Audience questions

After a busy nine months of this legislative session, I want to get out into the district, answer questions, and be available to my constituents – because I work for you. That's my promise.

The Ohio Promise Capitol Update Town Hall Tour brings the Statehouse to your neighborhood and your community. You will have the opportunity to share your opinions and concerns as we head into the final 14 months of the 133rd General Assembly. At the town hall meetings, I will also unveil the 8th House District Legislative Survey – a questionnaire, available to anyone, that will be used to help shape our legislative priorities.

The best way to represent people is to listen to them. That is the purpose of the town hall meetings and the legislative survey. I hope many of you will participate. These meetings are free and open to the public, and for your convenience, there is one scheduled in the Shore Room at the Euclid Public Library. Please help spread the word. If you have any questions, feel free to email my office at Rep08@ OhioHouse.Gov or call us at 614.466.5441.

The Ohio Promise Capitol Update Town Hall Tour

• East Cleveland: Saturday, October 12 (Location and Time TBD)
• Euclid Public Library (Shore Room): Monday, October 14 • 7pm
• Beachwood Community Center: Tuesday, October 15 • 7pm
• South Euclid Community Center: Wednesday, October 16 • 7pm
• Richmond Heights Elementary (Multipurpose Room): Friday, October 18 • 6pm

Euclid's Muni-Toons®

Drivers: On Halloween watch out for kids crossing streets.
Remember that excited children move unexpectedly!

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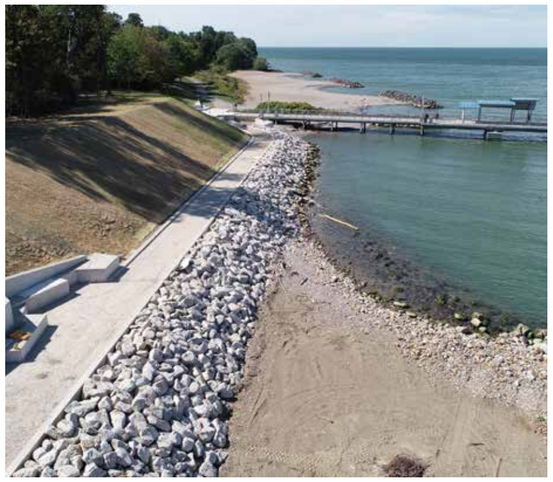
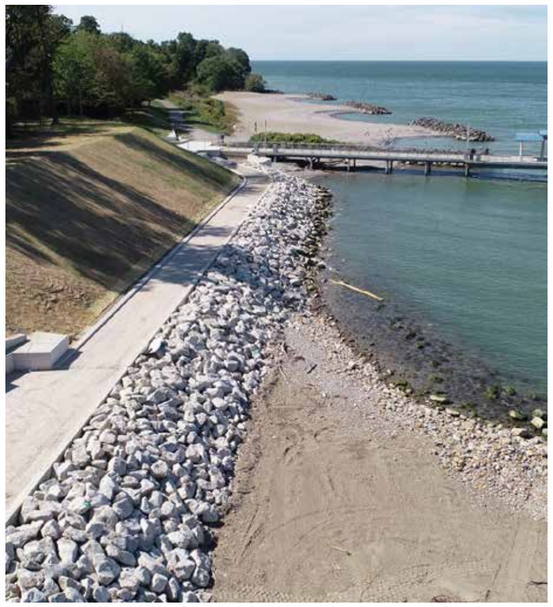
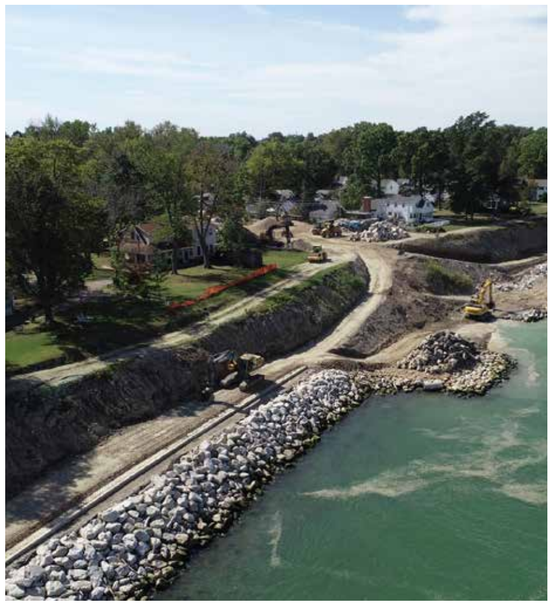
COMMUNITY







Euclid's vision to provide unprecedented public waterfront access, habitat enhancements, and upland stability is underway!
Mark Haynes Construction began mobilizing on November 1, 2018 with the current phase of work expected to reach substantial completion by December 16, 2019.
Regular construction updates can be viewed by clicking the "Construction Project Update" tab on the City of Euclid's main webpage at www.cityofeuclid.com

Candidates for Mayor (continued from front page)

Dr. Richard T. Montgomery, II

bringing jobs to Euclid. 2. Work collaboratively with City Council and the Law Director to pass legislation that creates greater accountability for property management companies and landlords to maintain rental properties. 3. Identify partners who can assist with reopening the YMCA as a multiuse business, learning, and recreation center.

What would you do to bring more businesses to Euclid?

First, our plan should identify high revenue producing industries that can benefit from our proximity to the interstate and downtown Cleveland. We can build on the growth of information technology companies relocating to downtown Cleveland with low-cost commercial real estate that would be attractive to this industry and to the biotechnology industry, which could house research or production space in our areas industrial zones. Secondly, I believe supply chain businesses could benefit from our proximity to the new Amazon Fulfillment Center as well as the I-90/I-271 corridor. Companies that supply goods to Amazon could reduce shipping costs by relocating near the Amazon facility.

Why should Euclid residents vote for you?

In the past four years, residents have seen an ongoing rat infestation along the Lakeshore Boulevard corridor; civil lawsuits against our police department; a dearth of investment in the south side of Euclid; loss of recreational options for children and families; loss of city services; and a sense that City Hall neither hears nor considers citizens' voices. Despite all this, I truly believe Euclid can rise. I want to work with Euclid residents to build on our strengths and simultaneously look at problems, evaluate their sources, and implement solutions that improve people's lives.

Chris Litwinowicz

What are a few of your short-term goals for the city?

Lower the city water bill to 20 mo. flat rate no more per mcf charge no more wastewater fee. Immediately 2020 resurface every street in the city of Euclid 2.5 million to 5 million new sidewalk new look a clean approach to forgotten city we need to upgrade our laws and established new ones like a 5 percent business payroll tax separate from other. This would generate more taxes from business revenues projected previously so thank you for your support vote Chris for mayor thank you

What would you do to bring more businesses to Euclid?

Reduce our city income tax from 2.85 to 1.85 threw a public vote of the people of Euclid Nov 2020 this would be part of a business proposal to local business and new upcoming business. Quote by Chris if you can't sell a dream them you can't think big if you can't work together then you can't build a city vote Litwinowicz for mayor early voting starts October 9 to November 5 2019 please get out and vote thank you

Why should Euclid residents vote for you?

I'm the perfect candidate and the right person for the job. I have the knowledge and know how to get the job done right the first time. Well respected in his community. Chris will work for the people everyday not just for a check. His vision fits Euclid now as our community has change. Let give Chris a chance elect Chris Litwinowicz mayor city of Euclid November 5th 2019 thank you for your support

Euclid City Council Ward 3 (continued from page 2)

Marcus Epps - City Council Ward 3

assistance. We needed over 1800 valid signatures in 30 days. Euclid came together. There were a lot of egos involved, and folks were playing the blame game early in the final stretch. Together, we delivered! As a community, with business support, countless number of man hours by Euclid ran group, Citizens in Action, Councilman Darryl Langman (who we will all miss his voice on Council), Councilwoman Laura Gorshe, Christopher Litwinowitz and myself, we were able to stop this administration in its tracks. Now, this November, you, the voters will decide on RITA. Thank you Euclid!

What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?

Refer to previous answer. I laid out the obstacle, and how I brought folks together to get the job done for our entire community.

If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?

Safety, blight and code enforcement. I intend to be the top inspector for my ward. The city always says they don't have the money or resources to do more. I am going to change the face of what hard work looks like as a Euclid City Councilman. I am ready to get to work!

Dontea T. Gresham - City Council Ward 3

regardless of income or neighborhood.

Provide an example when you had to bring together a diverse group of people to achieve a common goal.

As a rising leader in the Greater Cleveland region, I have always worked to bring diverse groups of people together to discuss, develop, and execute action plans on numerous issues, including voter engagement, climate change, eliminating food deserts, and others. This issues and crises are not isolated to one city, area, or region. Recently, as a Louis Stokes Scholar my colleagues and I were tasked with finding and developing a space that invited dialogue on how Cuyahoga County could deal with the opioid and overdose crises we are currently in. We brought together students, professionals in various industries, and more.

What solutions did you provide to resolve that issue?

My cohorts and I worked together to bring together a diverse crowd of people to a safe space to speak on the issue of the opioid crisis. I would argue that this type of dialogue is a first step in combating this problem. With the crises affecting all communities, being able to bring people from throughout the region was instrumental in brainstorming and coming up with possible ways to resolve this issue. While this crisis is a difficult one that will be solved overnight, this type of discussion is an important first step.

If elected, what topic do you think the residents of your area would like you to focus on first?

There are many issues my ward will want me to focus on the moment I am sworn into office. When elected Councilman for Ward 3, the first thing my constituents will want me to focus on is establishing complete transparency and accessibility. I understand that being elected to serve is a privilege given to me with the expectation that I will do the people's work and not waste time by being inaccessible or uninformed about the needs of my community. My first priority will be to establish these connections, build trust in my ward, and work to bring their issues to the table.

Euclid City School Board (continued from page 5)

School District today? If elected, how would you address the issue?

Besides the obvious; Grades, graduation rates, discipline, lack of engagement from some families, dwindling resources and the gov't forcing it's responsibilities on the tax base just the name a few. I believe that most pressing issue facing us this very moment is a sense of hopelessness by many in and out of the schools. Often this belief is trumpeted by too many voices who are parroting things they have heard having never lifted a finger or spent a second with our kids, teachers or administrators in the schools. These voices that rail on the children and its leaders with little to no evidence cause more harm than good and we know from data a divided community has a deleterious impact on the schools and community at large. We also know the impact it has on the students who interpret and internalize those messages spewed in the public discourse. Children often characterized these messages of frustration as hate or disgust towards them, be it true or not, and we know this can have devastating effect. At the end of the day I will keeping fighting for what I believe to be right first for our kids and then community in that order whether I am on the board or not. I have done so since the day I was elected and will do so til the day I am done. I don't know the exact number but if someone wanted to pull the public records and check my record I can almost guarantee I have voted against the board as whole more times than any member in the last four years. I am a fighter for what I know that works for kids in general and disadvantaged minority kids in particular since I have a track record of shepherding toward success and I will continue to do so until the war against mediocrity and complacency is won or until my wife and I and our remaining 4 kids follow their two older brother's and sister's footsteps and finish their education in the Euclid City Schools and it becomes the next highly motivated parents job to fight that good fight.

According to the 2018 Ohio School Report Card, the Euclid City School District received a failing grade. As a future Board Member, what is your response to this report and what solutions would you offer to help Euclid students succeed and to improve the overall image of the School District?

The previous answer touches on this question quite a bit but, as I have learned in my last four years of losing sleep over this very subject it cannot not be answered in a survey box like this, but if anybody wants to talk about it I can be reached on the school board's website and we can go as deep as they want to go in the subject. This is what I do every day either in the halls of Cleveland State or the city of Euclid, bottom line there are a host of things that need to be done and many of them, no single board member can do if there is not a team (community, parents, administrators and gov't) no single effort will impact this situation.