



Home Builders Association of Western Michigan
5700 West Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

(269) 375-4225

Fax: (269) 375-6493

www.kalamazoohomepage.com

Home Builders Association of Western Michigan Government Relations Committee

Information Request Form

Candidate Name: Mary Balkema

Street address: 1131 Whites Road

City / State / Zip: Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Mailing address (if different): _____

County: Kalamazoo Length of residence: 53 years

Phone: 2697203246 E-mail: votebalkema@gmail.com

Website: marybalkema.com

Campaign committee name & address: CTE Mary Balkema, 1131 Whites Road,
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Occupation: Kalamazoo County Treasurer

Candidate for which office: Kalamazoo County Treasurer Incumbent? YES

Please list endorsements received to date: _____

Kalamazoo GOP, WMUGOP, Right to Life, several community members

Mission Statement

The Home Builders Association of Western Michigan exists so that members of the residential construction industry can conduct their business ethically and efficiently to provide our communities with safe, quality, affordable housing, and to promote home ownership



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HBA of Western Michigan – local candidate informational questions

Have you ever run for elective office?

Yes, I ran successfully for Kalamazoo City Commission three terms, was appointed County Treasurer in 2017 and have ran successfully to maintain that office three times (2008, 2012, 2016).

What is your background (education, employment, other relevant experience)?

I am a graduate of Western Michigan University where I studied Accounting. I have 15 years of banking experience, and have 14 years of experience managing public money as the county treasurer.

What are your top priority issues if elected / re-elected?

- Steady financial management (Strengthen tax base, maintain bond rating, Prudent investment of taxpayers money)
- Statewide Leader in Foreclosure Prevention
 - Zero owner occupied tax foreclosures
 - Community outreach/fundraising/leverage private resources
 - Keeping families in their homes ensures the kids in our community are not just Promise-eligible but Promise-ready
- Revitalizing Kalamazoo
 - Return blighted properties to productive use
 - Stabilize property values one block at a time
 - Strengthen the tax base by approving plats and investing in built environment
- Investing in our Community
 - Passionate about increasing affordable housing – we have a plan to build 3000 units in 10 years
 - Attainable housing partnership with home builders of Kalamazoo. Will build 100 single family homes over 10 years in the city of kalamazoo
 - Home-ownership is the best path for families to build wealth
 - Land Bank – 1 city block redeveloped and \$1 million raised to support the Eastside Gateway Project. Support 9 small businesses through the

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reactivation of vacant spaces, manage blight and demolitions, and supported a total of 89 affordable housing units. (Creamery Site)

Why should the residential construction and remodeling community support your candidacy?

I have always supported the construction/remodeling community. As the foreclosing governmental unit and Land Bank Authority Chair, we have partnered with many members to improve our tax base. I chose the homebuilders to partner with the Land Bank and the city on the Marketplace Development.

Why should the residential construction and remodeling community NOT support your opponent's candidacy (if applicable)?

Today the home building and remodeling community is confronted with a wide array of complex issues. Who and/or what organization in your community do you use for advice and counsel?

My go-to organization is the HBA.

Government regulations, policies, ordinances and codes continue to be a top concern of the residential construction and remodeling industry. What would you recommend to reduce regulations to promote and support the need for additional housing in our area?

Generally lesser government is better. I do not have code enforcement power as the County Treasurer and must abide by local ordinance. The best way to change existing laws or policies is to run good people for public office. All local units of government also have advisory boards. They should be well seated by members of the HBA

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What is your philosophy on residential development, impact fees, property taxes, etc.?

I do not like impact fees. As the tax collector, I think residential property taxes need to be fair and not burdensome.

What else can be done to encourage and support new housing development?

Low millage rates, affordable water and sewer hook up fees. Proper mitigation of flooding issues.

What is your position on the rights of property owners with regard to development, redevelopment and remodeling?

People have property rights and should be able to improve their property and should have the ability to redevelop and remodel to the best of their ability.

How would you define positive growth in housing for our area?

Increased tax base, housing options for all.

How can the HBA of Western Michigan assist you if you are elected?

Financial Support, partnering with the Land Bank on housing issues.

The Government Relations Committee thanks you for taking the time to help the HBA membership to make an informed decision on election day. Please return your form to the address above or email to JeffT@hbawmi.com or fax to 269-375-6493.

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