

## City – Brenda Bourdon – City of Whitehall

Brenda Bourdon has dedicated 14 years to municipal service, currently standing as the longest-tenured department head for the City of Whitehall. Since beginning her journey as City Clerk in 2014, she has transformed a steep learning curve into a career defined by reliability, precision, and organizational stability. Her leadership was most notably demonstrated during a recent period of major transition, where she remained the sole department head to provide continuity while the city onboarded a new City Manager, DPW Director, Police Chief, and Treasurer. By acclimating new leadership to statutory responsibilities and restructuring personnel to improve cross-training, Brenda ensured that city operations remained seamless for residents despite significant internal change.

Beyond her daily duties, Brenda is a driving force in county, state, and regional associations. A longstanding leader in the Muskegon County Clerk’s Association, she has served as President, Vice President, Director of Education, and Secretary. She is also an active member of the West Michigan Regional Clerks Association and the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks, using these platforms to stay at the forefront of the profession and foster collaboration among her peers. Her colleagues widely regard her as the go-to resource for procedural clarity and a trusted mentor who regularly assists other clerks with FOIA requests and election procedures. Brenda shared “When I first became a clerk ... I quickly realized the complexity and responsibility of the position. The willingness of fellow clerks to answer questions and offer guidance made a lasting impression on me. Because of that experience, I make it a point to support new clerks by reaching out, sharing resources, and offering assistance whenever possible.”

Brenda’s commitment to advancing the clerking profession is highlighted by her proactive approach to modernization and skill-building. In 2024, she developed Muskegon County’s first online Election Inspector training program, enabling over 50 inspectors to be trained and recertified annually to meet the demands of expanded early voting. She also organized a county-wide FOIA training session for nearly 50 attendees from various municipal departments. Within Whitehall, she has moved the city toward digital efficiency by transitioning paper forms into user-friendly e-forms and redesigning the city website to improve navigation and transparency for all citizens.

Her contributions to the community extend far beyond administrative tasks, focusing on accessibility and fiscal responsibility. Brenda researched and developed the pathway to shift Whitehall to even-year elections, a move that increases voter turnout while saving taxpayer dollars. To engage the next generation, she hosts day-long training sessions for high school seniors to learn about the vital roles of local government. Whether she is recording and live-streaming public meetings or serving as Sexton to assist families with compassion during times of loss, Brenda models a professional, customer-service-oriented approach that has earned her the deep respect of community leaders and residents alike.

Brenda was nominated by Dan Tavernier.

