

Candidate Profile

1. Candidate Information

Name: Ben Van Egmond

Age: 43

Occupation: Highway Engineering Technologist

Township/Community: ACW

Contact information: 519-608-6008

Campaign website/social media: n/a for now.

2. Why I'm Running

I am running for Mayor because I believe it is time for a new, fairer, and more open approach to local government in ACW Township.

Based on my own experiences and conversations within the township, I believe many residents are ready for meaningful change. We have an opportunity to bring forward new ideas, new perspectives, and a new vision for the future of ACW. I believe local government works best when it is open, accountable, responsive, and focused on the needs of the people it serves.

With rising costs and an increasingly challenging economic environment, I believe we need to act now rather than simply continue doing things the way they have always been done. We have an opportunity to think differently, find innovative ways to attract business and investment, support responsible growth, and strengthen our community. The challenges we face require us to be willing to explore new ideas and carve a new path forward.

My first priority would be to focus on the core responsibilities of local government. Before pursuing new initiatives, we must ensure that the essential services residents rely on are being delivered effectively, efficiently, and at a reasonable cost. We must also ensure that the people responsible for delivering those services have the tools, resources, and support they need to serve our community well.

I bring nearly 20 years of experience working in highway engineering, infrastructure, and asset management. Throughout my career, I have worked with engineering firms, contractors, and public-sector organizations on infrastructure planning, evaluation, maintenance, and contract administration. I also grew up on a rural Ontario farm, where I learned firsthand the value of hard work, practical problem-solving, and building something together.

My education in engineering technology, combined with my professional experience, has given me the opportunity to work with communities across North America, including municipal, provincial, state, and First Nations governments. I have helped organizations develop systems to better monitor and manage their roads and infrastructure, while sharing practical approaches to maintenance and long-term planning that can help control costs over time.

I am running because I believe those experiences can bring a valuable perspective to ACW Township. I want to apply my knowledge, practical experience, and commitment to responsible decision-making to help build a stronger, more open, and more sustainable future for our community.

3. Connection to the Community

I want to be honest and upfront about my connection to ACW Township. I do not currently live here full-time, and I recognize that many people have deeper, lifelong connections to this community than I do. I believe that honesty and transparency are important, especially for anyone seeking to represent the people of this township.

That said, my connection to ACW began in 2017, when I purchased property here. It did not take long for me to understand what makes this community special. The people I have met have been welcoming, and ACW is home to a beautiful stretch of coastline and communities with a character that residents rightly value and want to protect.

My goal is not to change what makes this community special. My goal is to help preserve and strengthen it while ensuring that local government works as effectively, openly, and fairly as possible. Through my own experience building and working within the township, I have seen areas where processes could be simpler, communication could be improved, and residents could be more involved before important decisions are made.

I believe that when a decision may affect residents or create additional costs, those conversations should happen early and openly. People deserve to understand what is being proposed, why it is being proposed, what it will cost, and how it may affect them before decisions are finalized and before construction begins. In a time when many families are facing increasing costs and economic uncertainty, local government must recognize those realities and make responsible decisions with taxpayers in mind.

Community involvement is also important to me. I do my best to volunteer whenever I can and am a registered member of Lions Clubs International. I value the way communities can come together around common goals and make a difference through volunteerism and shared effort.

I am also a strong supporter of local events that bring people together—whether that is Movies in the Park, Canada Day celebrations, holiday events for children, or other simple opportunities for neighbours to connect. These events do not always need to be expensive or elaborate. Sometimes the most meaningful things a community can do are simply creating opportunities for people to come together.

That sense of community is one of the things I value most about this part of Ontario. If elected, I would bring that same spirit of openness, collaboration, and practical problem-solving to my role as Mayor.

4. Professional and Leadership Experience

While I have not previously held elected municipal office or led a municipality, I bring nearly 20 years of experience working in public infrastructure, transportation, and asset management with the Provincial Highways.

My current role as a Technical Officer specializing in Geotechnical work involves many of the same skills that are essential to effective municipal leadership. My work requires me to evaluate infrastructure conditions, identify maintenance and rehabilitation needs, analyze technical information, and develop practical recommendations to support long-term planning and investment decisions.

Throughout my career, I have worked with engineers, consultants, contractors, and government staff to support the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation of transportation infrastructure. I understand the importance of making informed decisions, planning for the long term, and using public resources responsibly.

My experience has also given me a strong understanding of infrastructure lifecycle management. Maintaining roads and other public assets is not simply about responding when something fails—it requires planning ahead, understanding the condition of existing infrastructure, prioritizing needs, and making strategic investments that can reduce costs over the long term.

Some of the key skills and experience I would bring to the role of Mayor include:

- **Infrastructure evaluation and asset management:** Assessing the condition of transportation infrastructure and helping identify appropriate maintenance, rehabilitation, and long-term management strategies.
- **Long-term planning and prioritization:** Analyzing infrastructure needs and developing recommendations that help prioritize projects and investments based on evidence, condition, and long-term value.
- **Consultant and contract administration:** Working with engineering consultants and supporting the administration of technical assignments related to infrastructure evaluation, design, rehabilitation, and materials.

- **Technical analysis and decision support:** Preparing and reviewing technical information, reports, and recommendations to support informed planning and infrastructure decisions.
- **Responsible use of public resources:** Understanding the importance of balancing immediate infrastructure needs with long-term costs, lifecycle planning, and available public funding.
- **Collaboration and communication:** Working with a wide range of professionals, including engineers, consultants, contractors, technicians, and government staff, to move projects and programs forward.
- **Public-sector experience:** Bringing nearly two decades of experience working within the provincial public sector and understanding the importance of accountability, documentation, established processes, and responsible decision-making.

I do not believe that a Mayor needs to be an expert in every area of municipal government. A strong Mayor needs to understand how to ask the right questions, listen to the people with the appropriate expertise, review the available information, and help guide decisions that are in the best interests of the community.

My professional background has taught me the importance of preparation, collaboration, accountability, and making decisions based on reliable information. I believe those skills, combined with a practical and common-sense approach, would allow me to bring a valuable perspective to ACW Township and work effectively with Council, municipal staff, residents, and community partners.

5. My Priorities for ACW Township

Priority 1: A Smarter Approach to Building and Development

The Issue

Growth and development are necessary for the long-term future of ACW Township, but development must be approached responsibly. Public safety and the protection of the community must always come first, while cost, efficiency, and the long-term impact of development must also be carefully considered. Too often, the costs associated with growth can become a source of conflict between developers, property owners, taxpayers, and the broader community. We need to look for a more balanced and sustainable approach.

My Approach

I would approach municipal development as a long-term investment in the entire community, rather than focusing solely on the immediate interests of individual landowners or developers. In some cases, cost-sharing will be necessary. However, I believe we should be willing to explore new and more flexible ways of distributing development costs so that they are fair, transparent, and manageable. Development should support sustainable growth without placing an unreasonable burden on existing residents or discouraging responsible investment.

Why It Matters

The cost of construction and infrastructure continues to rise. Simply shifting those costs from one group to another is not a sustainable solution. We need to find better ways to plan, fund, and manage growth. My goal is to support steady and responsible development while finding practical ways to make that growth more affordable for the community, developers, businesses, and residents.

Priority 2: Reliable Delivery of Core Services

The Issue

The first responsibility of any local government is to ensure that essential services are delivered reliably and efficiently. Residents should be able to depend on services such as waste collection, road maintenance, winter snow clearing, and the maintenance of municipal infrastructure. These services depend on having reliable equipment, well-maintained assets, and properly supported staff and contractors. When equipment is unreliable or infrastructure is allowed to deteriorate, the result can be higher costs, service disruptions, and frustration for residents.

My Approach

I would begin by taking a close look at the condition of the township's existing assets, equipment, and infrastructure, as well as how municipal resources are currently being allocated. My professional experience in infrastructure evaluation and asset management has taught me the importance of understanding the condition of an asset before deciding how and when to invest in it. I would support a practical, evidence-based approach to equipment replacement, maintenance planning, and long-term budgeting. It is also important that the people responsible for delivering these services—whether municipal staff or contractors—have the tools, equipment, support, and fair working conditions necessary to do their jobs effectively.

Why It Matters

Reliable services are the foundation of a strong community. Well-maintained roads, dependable winter maintenance, responsible waste management, and properly managed municipal assets make ACW a better place to live, work, operate a business, and invest.

By focusing on the fundamentals and planning for the long term, we can improve reliability, manage costs more effectively, and support steady and sustainable growth.

Priority 3: Review and Improve Controversial By-laws

The Issue

Municipal by-laws can have a direct and significant impact on residents, property owners, and local businesses. When a proposed or existing by-law creates widespread concern, confusion, or strong opposition within the community, it is important to take those concerns seriously.

Strong public disagreement does not automatically mean that a by-law is unnecessary, but it may indicate that the language, intent, implementation, or consultation process needs to be reconsidered.

My Approach

I would support a review of by-laws that have generated significant community concern. The goal should not simply be to remove rules, but to ensure that municipal by-laws are clear, reasonable, enforceable, and properly reflect the needs and values of the community.

Where language is unclear or creates unintended consequences, it should be improved. Where a by-law is no longer serving its intended purpose, it should be reconsidered. And before significant new regulations are adopted, residents and affected businesses should have a meaningful opportunity to understand the proposal and provide input.

Why It Matters

Municipal by-laws affect people's homes, property, businesses, and daily lives. For that reason, they should be developed carefully and with meaningful public engagement.

When large numbers of residents feel compelled to attend council meetings and speak out about a proposed by-law, local government should listen. Good governance means being willing to review concerns, explain decisions clearly, and make changes when a better approach is available.

My goal is to support by-laws that protect the community while remaining fair, practical, understandable, and respectful of the people they affect.

6. Leadership Style

I recognize that running for Mayor is a significant step, particularly as someone who has not previously held elected office. However, my decision to seek this role comes from a genuine belief that local government can do a better job of communicating with, listening to, and serving the people it represents.

Through my own experiences and by observing council meetings, I have seen situations where residents felt frustrated, unheard, or unclear about how their concerns were being addressed. Those experiences made me believe that meaningful change requires more than simply identifying a problem—it requires leadership that is willing to change the culture and approach of local government.

I believe that government, at every level, exists to serve the people—not the other way around. Those entrusted with positions of leadership have a responsibility to remain accountable, approachable, and connected to the communities they represent. It is important that elected officials never lose sight of that responsibility.

My leadership style would be based on listening first. When a resident brings forward a concern, I would make every effort to understand the issue fully before it reaches a formal council meeting or becomes unnecessarily complicated. I believe that in a community the size of ACW Township, there is often value in having a conversation early, bringing the appropriate people together, and exploring whether a concern can be resolved before it grows into a larger dispute.

This does not mean that every issue can or should be resolved informally. Council meetings, public processes, and established procedures remain essential to transparent and accountable local government. However, I believe there is also an important role for respectful communication, early problem-solving, and a willingness to negotiate when appropriate.

As Mayor, I would aim to lead by being accessible, approachable, and prepared to listen. My goal would be to encourage a culture where residents feel comfortable raising concerns, where disagreements are handled respectfully, and where people can trust that their local government is genuinely working to understand and address the issues that matter to them.

I believe strong leadership is not about having all the answers or exercising authority for its own sake. It is about listening carefully, asking the right questions, bringing people together, and helping move the community toward practical solutions.

7. What I Believe About Local Government

I believe the Mayor's role is to provide leadership, help guide Council, and ultimately serve the needs of the people they represent. That means representing everyone in ACW Township—not just those who voted for me, but every resident, property owner, business, and community within the township.

I believe local government should remain focused on its core responsibilities. As Mayor, one of my priorities would be to ensure that essential municipal services are delivered reliably, efficiently, and responsibly. Residents should be able to depend on their local government to maintain the infrastructure and services that support daily life.

That includes maintaining our roads, bridges, culverts, and other municipal assets in a responsible and sustainable way. It also means planning ahead, understanding the condition of our infrastructure, and making informed decisions before small problems become larger and more expensive ones.

At the same time, I recognize that every municipal service and infrastructure project is ultimately paid for by the public. My approach would be to balance the need for reliable services and well-maintained infrastructure with the need to keep costs reasonable and affordable for residents.

I believe good local government should be practical, transparent, and accountable. It should listen to the people it serves, communicate openly about the decisions it makes, and use public resources responsibly.

My goal as Mayor would be to help build a local government that residents can rely on—one that delivers the services people need, maintains the infrastructure our communities depend on, and always remembers who it is there to serve.

8. Key Message

We are living in a time of rapid economic and social change, and local government must be prepared to think differently and adapt to the challenges ahead. The traditional ways of doing things will not always be enough to meet the needs of a changing community.

ACW Township is a community where I believe my outside experience in infrastructure, asset management, and public service could bring a new perspective and make a

meaningful contribution. I am not running to make promises that I cannot guarantee or commitments without first understanding the full situation facing the township.

If elected, I will need to carefully review the township's financial position, existing commitments, infrastructure needs, and the challenges inherited from the previous Council before making decisions about the future. I believe residents deserve honesty rather than unrealistic promises.

What I can commit to is bringing a practical approach, a willingness to listen, and a determination to look for new and innovative ways to address the challenges facing ACW Township. My goal is to help build a more open, responsive, and forward-thinking local government—one that manages public resources responsibly, delivers reliable services, and plans for sustainable growth.

Ultimately, the decision belongs to the people of ACW Township. In October, residents will decide whether they share this vision and whether they want to give me the opportunity to help bring it forward.

9. Short Biography

I am running for Mayor of ACW Township to bring my experience, practical approach, and commitment to public service to our community. With more than 20 years of experience in transportation, infrastructure, and asset management, I understand the importance of responsible planning, sound decision-making, and working collaboratively to build a strong future.

Throughout my career in public service and infrastructure, I have worked on evaluating roads, planning infrastructure improvements, administering contracts, inspecting construction projects, and developing practical solutions to complex challenges. My experience has given me firsthand insight into the importance of long-term planning, responsible investment, and maintaining the public infrastructure that communities depend on every day.

As an Engineering Technician with specialized training in soils, asphalt technology, and municipal infrastructure, I bring both technical knowledge and a practical, common-sense approach to leadership. My work has taken me across Ontario and beyond, where I have worked with contractors, engineers, technical professionals, and public-sector organizations, managed projects, trained staff, and supported detailed analysis and decision-making.

Now, I want to bring that experience to ACW Township. I believe strong communities are built through responsible decision-making, well-maintained infrastructure, fiscal responsibility, and leadership that listens. I am committed to working collaboratively with

residents, Council, municipal staff, and community partners to help build a strong, sustainable, and prosperous future for ACW Township.

10. Campaign Tagline

Mayor Ben for Mayor — If you change nothing, nothing changes.

11. Profile Picture:

