

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SOUTH COUNTY

# **KINGSTOWN, SOUTH KINGSTOWN, NARRAGANSET**

VOTER GUIDE IS FUNDED BY: THE RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND GRANT

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Dear Readers,         The League of Women Voters goal has always been to educate voters so that they may make informed choices when they enter the voting footh. By providing a Voter's Guide to your community, we hope that you learn more about the local candidates who are seeking offices and understand their positions more clearly. The League of Women Voters strongly believes that 'all politics is local' and begins with grassroots participation. This year's midterm elections will decide issues that will determine future vital functions in your town as well as in Rhode issues.         Me Informed Before You Vote! Participate in your government—check the Secretary of State's Office website to learn more about the chain to the invoting regulations and update any changes in your voting status. Most importantly VOTE:         Christine Marton         President The League of Homen Voters South County	
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Dear Voters,	
The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose a political party or candidate.	
This is a very exciting time for our League as we continue to grow membership across South County RI and provide programs that educate and inform our community on current public policy and, in election years, state and municipal candidates and government. Since the 1920's the League of Women Voters has fought to improve government and encourage all citizens to become knowledgeable in the decisions that impact their lives.	
Thank you to all the citizens who submitted questions, which, based on the frequency of mentioned topics, were used to generate the final questions for the candidates. Special thanks to all the candidates who responded in a timely manner with your answers.	
This Voter Guide is paid for by a grant from the Rhode Island League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501(c)3 entity, established by a generous donation from Susan B. Wilson, a past local LWVSC member.	
Nina P. Rossomando LWVSC Voter Service Committee	

# LIST UF GANDIDATES

Some district lines have changed. Please check your polling place by visiting: https://vote.sos.ri.gov

### **<u>STATE SENATORS</u>** - Two Year Term - Elect 1/District

District 35 - North Kingstown, South Kingstown, East Greenwich DOREEN COSTA - R - no response BRIDGET VALVERDE - D (Incumbent)

District 36 - Narragansett, North Kingstown, New

**District 37 - South Kingstown RAYMOND GARDNER** - *R* - no response **ANITA NORTON JACOBSON** - *I* **VIRGINIA S SOSNOWSKI** - *D* (Incumbent)

District 38 - South Kingstown, Charlestown, Westerly





Shoreham ALANA DIMARIO - D (Incumbent) PATRICK MURRAY - R CASWELL COOKE - I - no response ROBERT deVILLERS - I - no response VICTORIA GU - D WESTIN PLACE - R

### **STATE REPRESENTATIVES** - Two Year Term - Elect 1/District

**District 31 - North Kingstown, Exeter** JULIE CASIMIRO - D (Incumbent) - no response LISA MARIE LEAVITT - R

**District 32 - North Kingstown ROBERT CRAVEN, Sr.** - D (Incumbent) **RYAN HANSEN -** R - no response

District 33 - South Kingstown, Narragansett JESSICA DREW-DAY - R CAROL MCENTEE - D (Incumbent) **District 34 - South Kingstown, Narragansett CATHERINE CANAVAN** - *R* **TERESA TANZI** - *D* (*Incumbent*)

**District 35 - South Kingstown** KATHLEEN FOGARTY - D (Incumbent) WILLIAM PANICCIA - R

District 36 - South Kingstown, Charlestown, Westerly, New Shoreham JOHN PACHECO - R TINA SPEARS - D

### TOWN OFFICES

### NARRAGANSETT

**Town Council** *Two Year Term - Elect 5* 

SUSAN CICILLINE-BUONANNO (Incum-

bent) EWA DZWIERZYNSKI (Incumbent) STEVEN FERRANDI WINTER HAMES LAURIE KELLY DEBORAH KOPECH (Incumbent) JILL LAWLER MATTHEW MANNIX ROBERT PATTERSON ALICIA VIGNALI HENRY

**School Committee** *Two Year Term - Elect 5* 

JENNIFER ARMSTRONG TONY JONES TAMMY MCNEIECE (Incumbent) ALEXANDER MENZIES (Incumbent) DIANE NOBLES (Incumbent) JUSTIN WOLF SKENYON (Incumbent) **Town Council** *Two Year Term - Elect 5* 

**NORTH KINGSTOWN** 

KATHERINE ANDERSON - D (Incumbent) KALEN ARREOLA - R MARY BRIMER - R (Incumbent) - no response WILLIAM KING - R GREGORY MANCINI - D (Incumbent) LAWRENCE MANDEL - D MATTHEW MCCOY - D KIMBERLY PAGE - D (Incumbent) RICKEY THOMPSON - I RICHARD WELCH - I RANDY WIETMAN - R CHRISTOPHER ZANGARI - R

**School Committee** *Four Year Term - Elect 2* 

THOMAS BRIODY - D ERIN EARLE - D JAMES GALLO - R - no response ROBERT JONES - R KAREN KUMINSKY - I KRYSTLE SIMAS - I

### Town Council

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN** 

*Two Year Term - Elect 5* 

PATRICIA ALLEY - D NATHAN BARRINGTON - R DEBORAH BERGNER - D (Incumbent) DAVID COTE' - R MICHAEL MARRAN - D RORY MCENTEE - D (Incumbent) SEAN O'DONNELL - R ALEX PETRUCCI - R JESSICA ROSE - D (Incumbent) CHARLES (GREG) SWEET - R

**School Committee** *Four Year Term - Elect 3* 

MICHAEL DAY - R KATHERINE MACINANTI - I (Incumbent) LACEY MCGREEVY - R - no response JAMES RESTIVO - D CAROL VETTER - D (Incumbent)

# NOVEMBER 8, 2022 POLLS ARE OPEN

7AM - 8PM



http://vote.sos.ri.gov/













Senate District 35 **Bridget Valverde** Democrat

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I have loved serving my constituents in East Greenwich, North Kingstown, South Kingstown and Narragansett these past four years. I think we've all learned lately how important state legislatures are and how deeply their decisions can affect our lives. It will be a privilege to keep representing the interests of my community and continue making positive change for another term.

As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, I work to expand access to health care services and lower costs for patients. I work with my fellow members of the Committee on Environment and Agriculture to advance legislation that will help us address the climate crisis, protect our clean air and drinking water and curb plastic

pollution. Moving these priorities forward requires teamwork with my colleagues in both chambers, as well as advocates and members of the public. I have worked hard to build and maintain good working relationships with other members of the Senate and stakeholders in legislation I am championing so that I can deliver results for my district.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

Climate change impacts all Rhode Islanders. Rising sea levels, more severe storms, and increased drought conditions are already causing negative economic and health and safety outcomes in our state.

We must take action on many fronts to stop emitting greenhouse gasses, transition to renewables, increase energy efficiency, and build resiliency in our cities and towns to mitigate some of the effects of climate change that are now inevitable. We have taken some important

steps in the General Assembly to tran sition RI away from fossil fuels and get to net-zero emissions by 2050. We passed the Act on Climate in 2021 to update our climate goals and include accountability for reaching those goals. We have committed to getting to 100% renewable energy by the end of this decade, and we are building a green economy to support more renewable energy infrastructure and production so we can stop importing dirty energy.

But our transition to renewable energy must not be at the expense of our open space and forested areas, so I oppose clear-cutting for solar and support incentivizing the use of brownfields and other already disturbed sites for large-scale solar projects.

This year. I introduced legislation to remove the net metering limits

for residential solar, so that people can generate more energy than they use and get credits for providing that excess energy back to the grid. We should encourage the maximizing of rooftop solar for homeowners who are willing to install it.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode **Ísland**

Both of my kids attend public school in North Kingstown and I am a substitute teacher, so supporting our public schools, our students and our teachers is near and dear to my heart.

The first few years of a child's life are critical in their development, and having access to high-quality child care programs and pre-kindergarten sets up our kids to thrive in school later on. That's why I support additional investments in child care assistance programs, as well as making sure that our child care providers are paid a livable wage so we can retain this critical workforce. And I support universal pre-kindergarten at no cost to families.

For kids who have developmental delays, Early Intervention is critical. This year, I fought for the first Early Intervention funding increase in twenty years and made sure it was included in the budget. I hope to tie future increases in this funding to inflation in the next legislative session.

More and more kids are reporting struggling with mental health issues, so making sure that they are supported at school with an adequate number of counselors is key. We included additional funding for mental health in this year's budget and I hope we can do more next year.

In addition to those investments, we need to continue to update our aging school buildings. Our kids deserve to learn in modern classrooms, so make sure you support the school infrastructure bond on this year's ballot!

4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

**SENATE** 

All of us are affected by gun violence, either directly or indirectly. Accidental shootings, school shootings, gun suicide, mass shootings. Gun violence in all its forms is traumatizing to the victims and the survivors as well. Beyond the obvious physical trauma, there is also undeniable individual and collective mental health trauma. We need to do more to stop it.

This year, I proudly supported and voted for the three new gun safety measures that were signed into law, including placing a limit on magazine capacities, prohibiting public carry of loaded shotguns and rifles, and raising the age to buy any gun to 21.

These are all important measures that complement past action to establish our "Red Flag" law and ban "ghost" and 3D-printed guns.

I have cosponsored bills to ban assault weapons and improve safe storage laws and will continue to push for their passage in the next legislative

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI

session.

Rhode Islanders have a constitutional right to access the shoreline and I support efforts to clarify those rights in our state laws, so there can no longer be any confusion about what is allowed.

We have nearly 400 miles of beautiful coastline in Rhode Island. It is one of our state's greatest assets and should be enjoyed by everyone, not locked away by private interests.

The Rhode Island House Commission on Shoreline Access did a wonderful deep dive into the issue and came up with a fair bill that established clear guidance: people have the right to the beach 6 feet above the high tide line.

I was disappointed that Senate

leadership blocked the bill from a vote in our chamber this year after it passed the House, but I am hopeful we can get it across the finish line in 2023.

I am also happy to see that calls from shoreline access advocates to remove misleading signage and ensure that public rights-of-way are clearly marked and maintained are being heeded. Good work, advocates, and thank you!

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

Everyone deserves to make their own medical decisions and that includes deciding whether or not to have an abortion.

In 2019, my first year in the Rhode Island Senate, I was proud to vote for passage of the historic Reproductive Privacy Act that codified the tenets of Roe vs. Wade in our state law, protecting the right to an abortion here in RI.

I knew then what we all know now: that the Supreme Court wouldn't protect us forever and we had to take action here at home.

And while the right is protected here (for now), so many Rhode Islanders are denied access to abortion because their health coverage is forbidden from covering the services.

For the past three years, I have been the lead sponsor of the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act, a bill that will remove the harmful bans on abortion coverage for people who use Medicaid and state employee health plans.

It will go a long way to making sure that the right is truly real for all Rhode Islanders and remove these discriminatory barriers to care.

I am glad that the bill has become a topic in this year's primary elections and I look forward to winning passage in the coming legislative session.

7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn



### property in Galilee? Please explain

The Port of Galilee is an important economic engine for Rhode Island. I'm pleased that we are investing more than \$46 million to continue upgrading infrastructure in the port to accommodate sea level rise and allow more commercial fishing vessels to land their catch.

Galilee has always been a special place, so it was disappointing to see the Lighthouse Inn allowed to fall into such disrepair. I know there are competing ideas about what should be done with the state-owned parcels Ultimately, it is up to leaders at the Department of Environmental Man agement to determine the future of the property

At the end of this term, I will no longer represent part of Narragansett due to redistricting, so I will defer to the legislators who will be representing the town on any future enabling legislation or advocacy that is requested by the Town Council.

\*Regarding question #8 about election laws that only permitted a yes/no answer, I'd like to add some more detail.

I am very pleased we passed the Let RI Vote Act this year that improves access and opportunity to cast a ballot. This bill codified some of the emergency measures that were put in place during the pandemic, including no-excuse early voting, removing the two witness/notary requirement on mail ballots, and allowing online mail ballot requests.

Next year, I want to update our very outdated voter registration deadlines to allow same-day voter registration instead of the current cutoff of 30 days prior to an election.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published) Yes

Senate District 36 Alana Dimario Democrat

background has given me the ability to sit at a table with people who have different perspectives and desired outcomes and successfully find common ground to find solutions for our community.

tive working relationships with my colleagues and community leaders from our district I have also become a persistent, relentless advocate in the Senate for progress on the issues I have taken on. I'm proud of what I have been able to accomplish due to that dedication to the details of this work so far, and I plan to build on those relationships and that success to push forward even further on these key issues next term.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

District 36 is comprised of the

To do our state's part in combating the global warming leading to these climate change effects my first priority is supporting a responsible transition to renewable energy sources. These changes must include using local labor to create family-sustaining jobs as well as protection of local ecosystems and protections for ratepayers - renewable energy sources are cheaper than fossil fuels, and Rhode Islanders should see those

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode

First, all of Rhode Island's children should be guaranteed a world-class education in a modern building that is safe, comfortable, and shows every child walking in the door that this state values their education and is willing to invest in their future. In recent years Rhode Island has created opportunities for cities and towns to affordably finance the construction of schools that meet the modern needs of their communities. As towns like North Kingstown face decisions about their new facilities. I will ensure the state supports their efforts to maximize available funding and incentives to bring these plans into reality. Second, a child's education is dependent on the educators within those buildings. We must focus on educator wellness as we help our school communities recover academically and emotionally from the pandemic. A key part of supporting teachers is having an appropriate ratio of mental health professionals to students in all of our schools. When the mental health and behavioral needs of students can be met by having an adequate number of school social workers, therapists, and psychologists, teachers are able to focus on the academic needs of their students. Third, we need to invest in expanding our early education and public preschool opportunities across the

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

Rhode Islanders deserve to be safe in our homes, our schools, and in our communities. We have enacted many gun safety laws that I support, such as raising the age to buy guns and ammunition to 21 and a Red Flag Law to help keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. One gun safety issue that needs our attention is suicide prevention. Each year over 2/3 of the gun deaths in Rhode Island are people dying by suicide. A person experiencing a crisis should not be able to easily put their hands on a deadly weapon in that moment. I support pursuing Safe Storage Laws that would reduce suicide gun deaths and also protect against gun theft and children having access to deadly weapons.

The Shoreline Access Bill that passed the House in 2022 clarified the boundary as 6 feet above the most recent high tide line, exclusive of vegetation, yards, and hard structures. We have a Recreational Use Statute in Rhode Island so abutting property owners don't have liability for the public who are exercising their right to use the shoreline. This bill creates an easily identifiable and enforceable boundary that protects the public and property owners, and it deserves a hearing in the Senate this coming year. I support the passage of this bill as is or as amended to address any additional clarifying issues after its hearing. I also applaud and support the efforts of the Narragansett Coastal Access Improvement Committee to identify opportunities for preserving and creating public right of ways to the shore.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

equal access for all Rhode Islanders regardless of their income or type of insurance.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

The Lighthouse Inn property has been largely ignored by the state for several years, and now that there is movement from the new administra tion at the Department of Environmental Management there are understandably many opinions about the future of the parcels.

The General Assembly has no direct role or authority in the decision-making process for how that site is used, however it is my duty to my constituents to stay updated on the status of the process to make it transparent and inform people of opportunities for public input and requests for proposals. It is also my role to represent the will of the Town of Narragansett if state level support is requested. If enabling legislation is needed or advocacy to include a budget item related to an agreed-upon plan for this property I will represent the Town Council's official position in the Senate as I have on other issues. If there are questions about the ultimate plan or process that merit attention from the Senate Oversight Committee I will consult with my colleagues about initiating hearings to ensure the public's interests are protected. It is my hope that the final plan for the three parcels will meet the needs of the port in Galilee, be agreeable to the Town of Narragansett, be developed with climate change resiliency measures in mind, and will have a solid plan for funding and maintenance by the entity leasing the parcels.

While building many produc-

eastern coastline of North Kingstown, and all of Narragansett and New

savings on their utility bills.

# Island?

state. The early years are critical in laying the foundation for learning, and we must continue on our accelerated path toward universal preschool for all of Rhode Island's 3 and 4 year olds.

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

In 2020 I asked the voters to put me to work as a unique voice to represent them in the State Senate because I wanted to use my skills to serve our community. As a mental health professional who is also a self-employed working mother of school-aged children, I bring a different perspective to the General Assembly. In the last two years I have led in the passage of several bills that meet the moment of our current recovery: expanding health care access (particularly mental health care access), encouraging entrepreneurship and helping small businesses, improving our child care and child welfare systems, helping to solve our workforce crisis in several sectors, and protecting our environment. My professional

Shoreham. Picture that stretch of coastline and island community and you can see we are a unique district that is both at enormous risk for feeling the effects of climate change due to sea level rise and increasingly severe storms, and poised to play a major role in offshore wind development, building on the pioneering model of the Block Island Wind Farm. To address the impacts of climate change I support coastal resiliency efforts like the bill I passed to help property owners in coastal communities make informed decisions about building and renovating with sea level rise and future flood risks in mind. I also support funding the new Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience (OSCAR) Fund and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank to help municipalities like ours pay for infrastructure improvements to do things like protect our water supply and improve our storm drainage to prevent flooding.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

We are the Ocean State, and the Rhode Island State Constitution ensures public access along the shoreline. The current method of identifying the boundary line between public and private property is confusing and unenforceable for the public and property owners. This has been proven in the conflicts and difficulty with enforcement that we see repeatedly. In the 2021 session I was the Senate sponsor of the bill that would decriminalize passage and activities along the shoreline within 10 feet of the most recent visible high tide line, the bill that led to Rep. Cortvriend's thorough and informative Shoreline Access Study Commission.

I unequivocally support a person's right to make the private medical decisions that are the right ones for their situation, and believe that those health care options should be accessible to everyone regardless of how much money they have or their type of insurance coverage. I have focused my professional career as a therapist on supporting people through pregnancy, the postpartum period, and the early parenting years. I am the mother to three children. Both experiences have underscored the infinite number of circumstances that can lead to a person needing to make the choice of whether or not to continue with a pregnancy and the necessity of ensuring that they have the ability to make the choice that is right for them. We have codified the right to abortion care here in Rhode Island, however we do not have a fair system in which everyone has equal access to that essential health care. I support making sure that there is

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes.





**Rhode Island Secretary of State** https://vote.sos.ri.gov/





LWVSC Voter Guide | www.MyLWV.org



# $\star \star \star$ State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates $\star \star$ SENATE



Senate District 36 Patrick Murray Republican

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this

It is my intention to extend my public service to the people of the newly re-districted State Senate Seat, District 36 encompassing Block Island, Narragansett and part of North Kingstown. My approach to leadership is common sense and community based. I seek creative solutions which may sometimes break with the traditional bureaucracy of how things "get done" in our State. Local gov-

ernment should be flexible to meet the needs of constituents and not a rubber stamp for continued failed policies. Throughout my eight years on the Narragansett Town Council, I have demonstrated that I can work with those of differing philosophies to execute the wishes of all constituents. Diversity of ideas result in innovative solutions, and I look forward to bringing my municipal experience to the Rhode Island State Senate.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

As a 4th generational resident of the Town of Narragansett I have witnessed firsthand the effects of our ever-changing climate. The Urban Renewal Project of the 1970's in Narragansett Pier is a perfect example of flood mitigation by local, state and federal agencies. Coastal areas such as ports, roadsteads and low-lying residential areas need to be monitored, managed and funds secured for future preparedness, engineering and mitigation projects. In Narragansett, the Middlebridge Conservation Area received funding from the State to improve resilience through the removal of impermeable pavement and installation of salt-tolerant grasses and vegetation along the Narrow River. The Narragansett Town Beach Enterprise Fund sets aside \$125.000.00 each year to fund future beach replenishment needs as they arise and match Federal Funds. I would encourage all coastal communities to set aside such funds to ensure future engineering needs.

Climate has always affected our fishing fleet. I started my maritime career lumping fishing boats in the 80's in Galilee, now as a 20-year retired Merchant Marine Officer I bring unique experiences and understand the nuts and bolts of this industry. I intend to be a Rhode Island State Senator who advocates for the 200+ men and women who risk their lives fishing during every voyage

# 3. How will you support im-proving public education in Rhode Island?

Covid 19 has had a major negative impact on K-12 Education. Our son attends Narragansett H.S. Under the leadership of Dr. Cummings and the hard-working, dedicated teachers and staff, most of our students will be able to overcome the challenges and learning losses presented by the pandemic. Not every student will emerge this resilient. As a nation, we are experiencing a teacher shortage. Providence started the school year with 162 teacher vacancies. Many teachers feel disrespected. As a result they are pursuing less stressful careers. Elected officials have an obligation to address these issues, improve student outcomes and not use cultural wedge issues to divide us. The majority of Rhode Islanders favor expanding charter schools. In 2019, Johns Hopkins University released a devastating analysis of Providence schools. Students and teachers did not feel safe in schools filled with asbestos, lead paint and rats. Students were not learning on grade level. In response, the RI Board of Education approved adding 5,500 public

school charter seats. In 2021, the RI Senate voted to approve a three-year moratorium on new charter schools & expansions infuriating many parents who had fought hard to get their children out of unsafe and underperforming schools. One of the most basic obligations of state government is to ensure safe and quality schools for its children. If elected, I will listen to and work alongside parents amplifying their voices to ensure their children have equal opportunity to a safe, excellent schools

### 4. How do you stand regarding the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

The recent changes in gun laws in the State of RI have restricted use of legal responsible gun owners. Many in the RI General Assembly have no idea what the difference is between a semi-automatic weapon or an automatic weapon (from testimony) but are making laws based on rhetoric and not facts. I believe the GA has good intentions but are more concerned about doing something than doing something right. Criminals have no concerns for any gun laws when executing crimes. I am a longterm defender of the 2nd amendment and would continue to do so as a Rhode Island State Senator.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I grew up one block from the Town Beach in Narragansett surfing and fishing along the coast and 20 years

on the ocean in the Merchant Marine so access to the ocean is part of my DNA. Rhode Island is one of the few states in our nation where a citizen's access to the shoreline is guaranteed and enshrined in its Constitution. As an elected official, I have sworn an oath to protect the Rhode Island Constitution. As a Narragansett Town Council member, I have led the effort together with Council President Jesse Pugh, to ensure that five major points of access (rights of way) in our Town are fully and safely accessible with parking for all those who wish to enjoy our magnificent shoreline. In June of this year, the RI House of Representatives unanimously passed the Shoreline Access legislation which would allow people more access to the shore than which is currently being enforced. This bill allows people to exercise their constitutional rights below the high tide line plus a six-foot landward barrier within reason. There was no companion bill in the Senate and there needs to be for this to become law. It will be a first priority of mine, if elected, to co-sponsor this bill with like-minded colleagues in the RI Senate so that this legislation can

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

become law in 2023.

In 2019 the General Assembly passed and Goy. Raimondo signed into law the Reproductive Privacy Act codifying Roe v. Wade in RI. It would take a two-thirds majority to overturn the current Rhode Island Reproductive Rights Law. As a lifelong Catholic, I am prolife. I do support rape and incest exceptions as well as the health and well-being of the mother. Protecting human life, especially the most vulnerable, means advancing policies that help women and families. I look forward to working with legislators on both sides of this issue to find common ground to protecting the most vulnerable and those who struggle with the high cost of living here in Rhode Island.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain:

We have State land that has been mismanaged for decades in Galilee by the Department Environmental Management. The abandonment of the Lighthouse Inn by the long-term lessee Procaccianti Group (PRX) is disconcerting. The Town of Narragansett issued an RFP which was rejected by the Department of Environmental Management. PRX has shown itself to be unworthy of any further lease renewals from our State. Galilee. RI's FY2023 budget does include nearly \$50 million in State Fiscal Recovery monies to upgrade infrastructure in the Port of Galilee which is the hub of our State's commercial fishing industry. It is my intention to work with all stakeholders in this quasi-Town/ State/Private enterprise to ensure that these parcels are used as intended to support the fishing industry.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)



Senate District 37 Anita Jacobson Independent

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I am a local resident of South Kingstown who became active in advocacy at the State House in my role as President of the Rhode Island Pharmacists Association back in 2014. Since that time, I have worked legislatively to expand access to hormonal contraception, reform predatory pharmacy benefit manager practices, and enhance insurance coverage for tobacco cessation medications. I have been increasingly disappointed with the lack of legislator engagement and low attendance at committee hearings that I witnessed on these and other important public health topics, which inspired me to run for the District 37 State Senate seat. I bring expertise as an educator and healthcare provider to this role, with over a decade of teaching at the University of Rhode Island and over two decades of clinical practice as a licensed pharmacist. We need strong consensus builders at the State House, and I believe that the quality of our food and water, longevity of our planet, health of our society, and safety of our children are issues that should unite us all.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

The destabilization of our climate due to fossil-fuel combustion impacts all of our Rhode Island cities and towns, and South Kingstown is no exception. We are a coastal, suburban, and farming community, and as such we are vulnerable to both the short- and long-term effects of carbon emissions. We need to collaborate with climate researchers and work quickly to enact legislation to begin converting the fleet of State vehicles to zero-emission models, allow purchasing from solar panels on homes that generate more energy than they use, start incentivizing the development and use of green public transportation, stop expanding our dependence on natural gas, and continue promoting the environmen tally-sound bills that were introduced in 2022, but did not make it across the finish line.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island

Our public schools are underfunded, and this disproportionately impacts students who lack the financial resources to make up for what

elsewhere. Ensuring early and robust literacy skills is a strategy that will benefit our whole society and help to close educational and wealth gaps for marginalized populations. I support curricular transparency and will work to help our teachers navigate new opportunities with technology and develop students' skills to be workforce ready. As the mother of a child with special needs, I also know first-hand the inequities that many students and their families face in our current educational system, and I will advocate to improve ancillary services in our public schools for students who have behavioral and learning differences.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

I support responsible gun ownership and believe that the rules and regulations for obtaining a gun permit should be structured similarly to those for a driver's license. People who have been educated on proper gun use and safety, and who have adequately demonstrated their skills in those areas are the individuals who should have access to owning weapons. Continuing to allow people to purchase guns impulsively and/ or without proper training will lead to more tragedies in our State and

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

Our Rhode Island Constitution guarantees that the people have the right to enjoy the privileges of the shore. Over time it has become increasingly unclear where the mark is that separates private land ownership and public access to the shore. I believe in and will strongly advocate for legislation that protects public rights of way to and passage along the shore (including equitable parking), clearly defines the recognizable high tide line, and ensures public access to the passable shore 10-feet above the visible high tide mark.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I have a long history of advocacy for protecting and expanding access to low barrier hormonal contraception. Ensuring that young people have access to no/low cost and reliable contraception is one of the ways that our society can become more equitable for marginalized populations. While Rhode Island has moved to codify abortion rights into law, we need to elect legislators who will prioritize passing the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act to allow for

Medicaid and associated plans and eliminate the denial of coverage for State employees.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

The property that the Dutch/Lighthouse Inn is situated upon is State owned land that is managed by the Department of Environmental Management and has been leased for the past several years. It has been heartbreaking to watch the once bustling building that sits on such a beautiful piece of real estate sink into total disrepair covered in seagulls. I would advocate for the State to use this opportunity to create a public space with a DEM-run parking garage, open air seafood/farmers market, splash pad, park, or similar attraction that would allow all Rhode Islanders to enjoy Point Judith and support the vibrant commercial fishing industry. If the State and DEM are not able to maintain the property, I would support donating the land to a Native Land Conservancy as was recently done with the Mashpee Wampanoag (Cape Cod).

### 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)



Senate District 37 Virginia Susan Sosnowski Democrat

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I am honored to serve as the State Senator from District 37. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I make it a point to be accessible to my constituents and responsive to their concerns. I first ran for office to ensure there was someone representing the needs of everyday residents at the State House. Whether it's standing up for fishermen, farmers, and local small businesspeople, or advancing legislation to stop health insurers from charging women higher premiums than men, I have always sought to serve as a strong voice for our community. I now serve as Chairwoman of the Senate Commerce Committee, and it is a position that enables me to deliver results that make a difference on behalf of our community. I think I have been able to accomplish some important things-preserving Roe v. Wade, ending the car tax, eliminating taxes on veterans' pensions, implementing historic environmental protections, and so much more - and I hope to continue working for the people of District 37.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

I have worked on environmental issues my entire career, both as a farmer and as a Senator. In the Senate, I have proposed many ways to combat climate change, many of which, I am proud to say, have become law. Some of the renewable energy laws I sponsored were hailed as a national model when they passed, and they led to

our first-in-the-nation offshore wind farm. More recently, we enacted the Act on Climate, expanded offshore wind procurement requirements, and set the most aggressive renewable energy standard for electricity in the nation (100% by 2033).

However there is still a lot of work to do, and more people to convince that this is an immediate crisis that must be confronted with strong measures. My constituents in South Kingstown see how climate change has affected much of our town already. With the relationships I have built with my constituents, in the environmental community, with state agencies, with my Senate and House colleagues and others, I am convinced that all Rhode Islanders are gaining greater awareness of our climate crisis. I will be reintroducing my bills that did not pass yet as well as others to continue our efforts to address this crisis.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode İsland

No investment is more important than the one we make in education. It sets the foundation for our future. Education holds the power to transform individual lives, and a strong education system benefits the economy in many ways. Companies want to locate where they can find an educated workforce-and entrepreneurs want to live in communities where they know they can send their own children to quality schools.

In recent years at the State House, I have been proud to support major reforms aimed at improving our schools, including aligning high standards with statewide curricula and improving accountability measures in a set of reforms modeled after the

"gold standard" in Massachusetts. Voters approved a historic \$250 million bond issue to provide state funding to improve local school facilities, and I voted to support a second \$250 million bond issue, which is on the ballot for voters to consider this November.

This year we also made reforms to set Rhode Island on a path to universal pre-k in five years. Research clearly shows the lifelong benefits of quality learning opportunities in the early years of life. Early childhood education is an investment that pays dividends not only in better educational outcomes, but in every facet of later life.

It is critical that we continue to support these investments-the pre-k plan, for example, will require increased resources in the next several years. I remain committed to this because education is so central to our future as a state.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

The debate about gun control can be divisive, but I believe that there is common ground. The vast majority of us do not want firearms in the hands of individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others. I believe that we can and should work together to build upon this common ground.

I respect the Second Amendment. I also believe there are many ways in which we can take common sense steps to improve the safety of our communities without infringing upon the rights of law-abiding gun owners. Examples include improving background checks to consider mental health issues, prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing firearms, and enabling "Red Flag" reporting of

individuals who pose a clear threat to themselves or others-all laws recently enacted in Rhode Island that I have supported.

There are additional ways to improve our gun safety laws, and I think it is important that all residents, and especially responsible gun owners, are part of that conversation.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

The Rhode Island Constitution is clear that all Rhode Islander citizens have a right to "privileges of the shore." That right needs to be ensured in a practical manner that translates into real access for Rhode Island residents while also taking into consideration private property rights of those who live along the shore.

I believe our laws need to be updated. However, this update needs to be carefully crafted to withstand legal challenges and protect private property rights. I will support legislation that ensures Rhode Islanders can enjoy their constitutional rights to the shoreline access while protecting private property rights.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am, and have always been, an ardent supporter of women's reproductive rights. I am proud to have sponsored the bill to codify Roe v. Wade in Rhode Island and happy it became law in 2019. Women's right to privacy and proper reproductive health care is safe and accessible in Rhode Island because of that law.

7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn

### property in Galilee? Please explain

As all Rhode Islanders should, I take particular pride in our commercial fishing industry which, despite our stature as the nation's smallest state, has a large impact on the national commercial fishing industry. Rhode Islanders have been fishing in the Atlantic Ocean off Rhode Island's coast for nearly 400 years. Our fishing industry is vital to Rhode Island's economy, and Galilee is vital to the fishing industry. The economic impact of Rhode Island's commercial seafood industry includes more than 4,300 Rhode Island jobs and more than 538 million dollars in gross sales in the state. In fact, Rhode Island is home to the second largest fishing fleet in New England, and Galilee is the number one port for longfin squid landings on the entire East Coast. Nationally, Galilee is always in the top three commercial fishing ports in the entire United States in squid landings. The largest supplier of calamari in the United States is located in Galilee.

As the Chairperson of the Senate Fisheries Taskforce, I know that the history, jobs and economic impact of our fishing industry are vital to Rhode Island's economy and culture, and I have been, and will continue to be, a passionate supporter of the fishing industry.

It is therefore imperative that the state continue to provide and increase support and services to our essential fishing industry, and that state land in the port be used to support, maintain and preserve the industry for another 400 years.

### 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)





Senate District 38 Victoria Gu Democrat

# $\times$ State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates $\times$ SENATE

### community, and is focused on bringing fresh, evidence-based solutions to the challenges we face. We have unique challenges in our coastal towns. First, we're a coastal community in the time of climate change. I joined the local Climate Resiliency Commission and was honored to be named chair. As state senator, I will work hard to protect our groundwater and other critical infrastructure and make sure we're prepared before the next Hurricane Sandy hits. Second, we are seeing fewer families here and more out-

1. Why do you want to serve as

Senator in the General Assembly?\*

senator who works hard, listens to the

I'm running for State Senate because our community deserves a

of-towners who only come during the summer. The cost of everything: housing, gas, food, chidcare, and healthcare, is stretching many families' budgets. Our community is special because it is tight-knit. I will

work hard so that everyone who has roots here can afford to stay here. I didn't grow up thinking that I would ever run for office, but our community and our state legislature would benefit from some fresh perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. As a professional software engineer and data analyst, I have worked on health technology ranging from training doctors to make better diagnoses to helping expectant mothers have a healthy pregnancy. In all this work, my team used a data-driven approach to decision-making. I want to bring this evidence-based approach to the Rhode Island state legislature.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district and what specific efforts will you support or oppose?\*

Westerly, Charlestown, and South Kingstown are at the frontlines of climate change. Sea level rise. tidal flooding, and severe weather events are affecting our groundwater and infrastructure. Septic systems are in danger of failing more often. The current drought is causing some households' wells to go dry. Our coastal ponds are warming, and that is affecting the marine ecosystem.

We need to make a swift shift to 100% clean energy, build up our renewable energy sector, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil. We have so much potential for both solar and offshore wind. We should have credits and incentives for rooftop solar and solar on pre-existing community or industrial sites. We also need to pave the way for more offshore wind projects, modernize the energy grid to handle these new sources of energy, and invest in energy storage.

In order to fulfill the Act on Climate objectives, we also need to decarbonize transportation, homes, and industry:

- In transportation: we must build out an effective and accessible EV charging network across the state and invest in electric-powered public transportation that helps move at least some residents off of their reliance on cars

- In homes: we must provide credits and support for installing electric heat pumps and stoves, funding for energy efficiency improvements, and low-carbon building standards for

future developments - In industry: we must fund research and incentives to decarbonize different industries as much as possible and as quickly as possible.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?\*

Two things that I would look at are school funding and leadership.

We need to revisit the school funding formula that has resulted in major cuts in state funding for the school districts in South County.

I would advocate for creating a pool of funding for schools to apply for in order to implement evidence-based curriculum changes (there is a national database for that) as well as pre-K, career/technical, and afterschool programs. I volunteered in an afterschool program for low-income kids for four years, and I am a big proponent of them because they provide a safe environment for kids after school. They help students whose parents work long hours and can't supervise them or help them with their homework. Finally, the transition back to in-person learning has been tough on both teachers and students, and that is why we need more support staff to help with behavioral and mental health issues (social workers, etc.).

Aside from funding, we also need strong leadership at the top. I spoke to someone at the Massachusetts department of education who emphasized continuity of superintendents. Many educators- superintendents, principals, and teachers- are getting burned out from the demands of the

past few years. We need to hire and retain highly qualified and motivated superintendents and principals at the top, and we need to reform salaries and pensions and address common causes of burnout so that we attract and retain high-quality teachers.

### 4. Where do you stand with regard to current gun laws in Rhode Island?\*

I'm a strong supporter of common-sense gun reforms, and I've talk-ed to many gun owners who agree: it's been 10 years since Sandy Hook, and we need to take targeted steps to reduce gun violence and stop preventable tragedies. These measures don't restrict people's ability to hunt or do self-defense. I went to the state house this year to support raising the age of buying a long gun from 18 to 21 and limiting magazine capacity to 10 rounds. I also support the following:

- A ban on the sale of assault weapons - Robust background checks and

red-flag laws

 Measures to curb gun trafficking - Safe storage requirements

### 5. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I'm running as a strong pro-choice Democrat because I believe that women should have the right to make choices about their future and their family without government interference. I'm also the only Democratic candidate in the primary to have the endorsement of organizations like

Planned Parenthood Votes RI, the RI Democratic Women's Caucus, and Emily's List because they know I've always been a strong supporter of a woman's right to choose.

### 6. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI law?

I grew up fishing with my dad and golden retriever Kelly. We loved going exploring and getting sprayed by the waves. I want to make sure we protect and expand public access to the shoreline in RI because our whole community should enjoy it-whether you're swimming, fishing, or making a living or a home here. Here are a couple of initiatives I want to work on

- Sponsor and pass H-8055 to ensure that the public always has passage along the shoreline (high tide + 6 feet)

- Work with the Attorney General on guidelines for legal and illegal signage (for example, we don't want "Private Property" signs right next to public rights of way)

- Ensure that CRMC has adequate funding to enforce signage rules and make sure that public rights of way are clearly marked and accessible.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain.

Did not respond.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws?

Yes



Senate District 38 Westin J. Place Republican

### 1. Why do you want to serve as Senator in the **General Assembly?**

I love Rhode Island and I want to represent all of the citizens. I am by no means well off. I'm a blue-collar Truck Driver who sacrifices a whole lot to afford living in RI with my family. I'm not part of country clubs or any exclusive groups. My goals are helping out regular people, because with inflation and electricity costs rising, I'm suffering along with all of you, and we are not represented in our state like we should be.

2. How does climate change impact your district and what specific efforts will you support or oppose?

Putting a specific label on what climate change is affecting my specific district is tough. I know green energy will be needed in the future but making the cost of it unaffordable for regular Rhode Islanders does not help anyone. We need a transition that is not forced to an unrealistic time frame and we shouldn't be looking at purchasing technology from China and focus on US ingenuity instead.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?

Rhode Island has one of the highest costs in the country per student. Yet we are nowhere near the top when it comes to test scores. Our schools need to stop trying to politicize our

children and get back to basics. Reading, Writing, Arrhythmic, History (Both good and bad), Civics. Finance. Science. and Cursive. These should be the curriculum; any other classes should be decided on between the local parent communities and school boards. I also want an expansion in Trade schools like Chariho has done. Not everyone will be a doctor or lawyer. We can hope but some of us need to be Mechanics and Truck Drivers.

### 4. Where do you stand with regard to current gun laws in Rhode Island?

Gun laws in Rhode Island have been working for us for years. We already had the strictest background checks and the longest "waiting period" of 7 days. Our problem now is the lack of prosecution of criminals breaking the law. Laws are laws for a reason. If vou don't follow them, you should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Not making new laws just to punish the law-abiding citizens of Rhode Island.

### 5. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I consider myself a Pro-Life Candidate. Personally I do not believe in abortion but I am also someone who knows it is still necessary in certain situations. With the advance of technology when it comes to birth control and early pregnancy detection, I must insist that abortion not be a form of birth control. It should be safe, legal, and extremely rare. Rhode island current laws do that for the most part but we need to make adoption more affordable and a more viable option for expectant mothers.

### 6. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI law?

Shoreline access is enshrined in the Rhode Island Constitution. We should look to article 1 section 17 "The people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery, and the privileges of the shore, to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter and usages of this state," This should be looked at as the law of the land before any shore-

line access law is passed.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain.

I grew up in Narragansett but now reside in Westerly. My district does not cover Galilee so I will keep this on the short side. Personally, between the Town Council, Galilee Adviso ry Lease Committee, and the Galilee Advisory Committee should have an equal say in its usage just as much as the owner of the property, the DEM in this case. Local issues are better dealt with by local people and groups.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws?

Yes



# **MAIL-IN VOTING UPDATES**

Voting by mail takes extra effort this year. The time between the passage of the Let RI Vote act and the Midterm Elections did not allow enough time to customize the application process online for the Midterms. It should be better in 2024.

Rhode Island voters who are unable, or prefer not going to the polls on Election Day can vote by mail, but you need to act now!

- 1. Go online immediately to https://mailballot.sos.ri.gov/Home/MyRequest to request an application, which will come by mail.
- 2. The paper application must be returned to your local Board of Elections by **October 18, 2022** in order to receive a mail-in ballot for November 8, 2022. Signature must match your voter registration signature.
- 3. When you receive your ballot, mark it and complete the Voter's Mail Ballot Certificate as directed. The signature on your Mail Ballot Certificate envelope will be compared to the signature on your mail ballot application.
- 4. Return sealed ballot to the Board of Elections by 8:00 PM on election day. Allow at least 7 days by mail, deliver ballot to a dropbox or to the RI Board of Elections, 2000 Plainfield Pike, Suite A, Cranston, RI 02921.

### IF YOU THINK YOUR MAIL-IN BALLOT WILL NOT BE RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS IN TIME BY MAIL, YOU CAN DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL DROPBOX BY 8PM ON ELECTION DAY.





House District 31 Lisa Marie Leavitt Republican

### Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

My parents explained to me early on that I will someday see where I am needed and that my inner strength, my ability to say 'NO' will come in handy (one of their least favorite while I was growing up I am sure). They wanted better for me. They taught me to excel at everything I did in life and try my hardest no matter what. Today I am a wife, mom and stepmom, a grandmother, and a business owner. To this day it is my mantra and my teachings to my kids am tough, I have a lot of energy and



I am by no means claiming to be an expert, but I will support my fellow Rhode Islanders, and the constituents in my district will actually know me, and be invited to work as a team with me to solve the issues at hand.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

I love RI's beautiful landscape. I've practiced conservation since I was little. I've been taught how to care for animals and conserve our resources. I have watched our landscape change in the past years; not for the better. Places we used to fish are now off limits due to pollution. Shellfish/blue crabs-almost disappeared from the beaches.

I believe in common sense solutions vs. radical ones. We need to do better. Fishermen need their livelihoods preserved and our citizens should not be burdened by costly green-energy misjudgements. Recently our current legislators voted against helping our neighbors. Republicans wanted to give \$7 million to LIHEAP for this winter to help struggling Rhode Islanders with newly inflated bills from RI Energy. But Casimiro voted no.

I can name several negative/positive points regarding what is being called "renewable energy". Here are a few...Approximately 50% of all

current solar installations require deforestation. Why can't we offer tax breaks to add solar panels to already existing commercial buildings? Those trees give us oxygen, and they take away carbon dioxide. Oxygen is more important than energy. This earth we live on is a beautiful gift and we need to be mindful of its delicate balance. Same applies to our fishermen and farmers. No food=no people. That will be a far faster death than global warming. Let's manage it. Let's learn more about science instead of forcing it on unprepared and financially destroyed (following Covid +after effects ) people.

# 3. How will you support im-proving public education in Rhode Island?

Of course I will. Having been a teacher in the past I truly respect the profession. I have seen teachers work long hard days to help children in their classrooms with the constant excuse of funding issues, grants being cut and having to generalize for the masses of kids they are forced to manage. The paperwork alone is crushing. I feel that children all learn differently. I have seen this as well in my own children and step children. Teachers need our parental support and all students should be supported financially by towns in each district with a majority of this money spent on the kids in the classrooms, not on administrators. This pertains espe cially to special education. No child should be denied the special help that they need to learn because their issues are not extreme enough, and parents told that it's just not in the budget. I feel the curriculum should (be set as a countrywide standard and) should emphasize reading, writing, arithmetic, and history as well as

the arts and physical fitness. Teaching other ideals and beliefs should be left to parents or legal guardians. We need to take a hard look at school safety. In North Kingstown we are very lucky to have resource police in the high school but we need to do better here with providing equal protection with police or former officers' presence shown in all schools. Our children are the future and they are Rhode Island's most precious asset.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

I am aware of the gun laws just recently signed by our Governor. I feel that these "rulings" by our current "leaders" are just that. I also don't believe that these 'rules' will be allowed to stand because they violate our Constitutional rights as Americans. Rhode Island is a stand your ground state. As a woman I am especially horrified that just because a mentally ill person shot someone with a non-permitted or stolen gun that I will be restricted in my right to protect myself and my family with a legally purchased firearm. Suddenly with the stroke of a pen, law abiding citizens are now criminals. I would be deemed a criminal simply because they changed magazine capacity rules. Our "leaders" insist on their own protection with armed guards. but they are not protecting our kids in schools, or allowing us to protect them! I truly feel like the larger "elephant in the room" issue in this country is actually the unmentioned mental health issues, and our dehumanizing, desensitizing, and distanc ing as human beings. Many children have become benign to emotions due to video games, television, and movie violence that they are exposed

to almost on a daily repeated basis. Let's work together and protect our families wherever we are

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I am unsure of the particulars but I do know that there was a study commissioned and legislation put forward to grant shoreline access to all Rhode Islanders, but influential and wealthy people killed it. Rhode Island Law states every Rhode Islander has the right to enjoy our shores. I wholeheartedly support safe public access to the shoreline and would be supportive of the legislation that was proposed this year to protect this right. I do however, believe that current pollution and littering laws should be fully enforced and perhaps Coastal Resources should implement anti pollution methods they have set in these areas to preserve our coastline along public access. There is a current issue in my own neighborhood where we have been hindered by a resident because he has created a barrier and added obstacles. Many in the neighborhood pay elevated "water view" property taxes. These taxes state if you can stand in the middle of the road and see the ocean you must pay a higher tax rate. I am sure this will be coming back to light shortly and I am interested to learn more and help my own neighbors to win their right to visit the shore without any barrier or hindrance.

# 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

As a woman I fully support women's reproductive health and I believe in medical privacy. I be-



lieve that everyone should have their right to medical privacy no matter the situation. I believe that only a doctor, a patient and per-haps family members should be involved in any medical decision. There is no "one size fits all" for this issue.

# 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain.

My family maintains leased tenants as well. We have never tolerated such acts of malice towards our own prop erty so why should RI tolerate this and hand them a reward to boot?. I was raised to respect other people's prop erty, and live up to the promises that I make. In this instance I believe that the landlord (the State of Rhode Island) should hold the lessee, The Pro caccianti Group (aka TPG) accountable for not maintaining the property as promised in the lease. I do not feel that the taxpayers of The State of Rhode Island, nor the Town of Galilee for that matter, should be paying for the faults of a private business owner agreement with their landlord. TPG is a large conglomerate millionaire corporation maintaining hundreds if not thousands of properties all over the United States. As a side note, I am sure that this particular property is much smaller and easier to maintain than others that they own. There are absolutely no excuses for this. Why is the state of Rhode Island allowing a further/ deeper relationship with this company on the citizens dime?

# 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published).

Yes



House District 32 Democrat

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I have served as the State Representative for North Kingstown's District 32 for ten (10) years. For the last four (4) years, I have served as Chair of the powerful House Judiciary Committee. As the Chair, I have been able to lead the efforts to pass meaningful gun control legislation, such as raising the age to purchase guns to 21 years old, limiting high-capacity magazines, and prohibiting guns on school grounds. I also led the effort to codify Roe v. Wade in state law, protecting the right of women to control their reproductive decisions. If re-elected, I will continue serving the people of North Kingstown in my current leadership position.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or esodao

Climate change significantly impacts my district. Rising tides in Wickford are threatening the existence of the downtown shopping area. We need to do our part as a town and support green energy in appropriate areas of our community. I supported the 2021 passage of the climate change bill and the Governor's efforts to make Rhode Island a 100% green energy state by the year 2033.

# 3. How will you support im-proving public education in Rhode Island?

I will support improving public

education in Rhode Island by (1) continuing the State's efforts to help cities and towns build or repair schools, (2) capping the mayoral academies and charter schools at the current level, and (3) continuing to protect our schools from gun violence by supporting gun control and other safety measures.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

Although I have personally led the fight to pass responsible gun control legislation, more needs to be done. We need to pass new laws related to mental health checks prior to permitting gun purchases and consider banning the sale of military-style weapons.

5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I was a sponsor of the shoreline access bill that passed the House of Representatives in 2022. I expect to again sponsor the bill and support its passage, if I am re-elected.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am proud to say that I sponsored the bill that codified Roe v. Wade in Rhode Island law in 2019. I anticipated the U.S. Supreme Court's shift to the right and I persuaded then-Speaker Mattiello to allow the bill to be voted on the floor of the House. I will continue to advocate for women's rights, including the right to freely

### make reproductive decisions.

7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

The zoning issues are a local Narragansett decision but I am willing to do anything I can to prevent the sale of the property to the proposed developer.

### 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

**Robert E. Craven** 



### 1. want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I am a Rhode Islander who, over the years, has worn many hats cluding wife mother

remember swimming in Greenwich Bay and scooping up handfuls of eels. There are no longer clams or eels in the bay due to use of chemicals at the shoreline. Our waterways are the lifeblood of this state and must be protected. Our commercial fishermen depend on the bay for their livelihood. We depend on the bay for recreation, as well as food. We can do better. I am a common-sense environmentalist. We need to protect our waterways and environment without putting unfair burden on already-struggling Rhode Islanders. However, the climate act signed by Governor McKee is unrealistic. I am opposed to putting windmills in our oceans and mowing down hundreds of beautiful habitats for solar farms. For example: "Some estimates from various resources for RI indicate up to 20,000 acres of solar panels would be needed to reach our 2040 goals, and approximately 50% of all current solar installations require deforestation. That's a potential elimination of 10,000 acres of forest in RI and trees are the single largest eliminator of CO2 in the world." This is not environmentally friendly. When the Republicans wanted to give \$7 million to the LIHEAP program for this win-ter to help struggling Rhode Islanders. Kazerian said no, our elderly need to embrace green energy. I am completely opposed to hurting our most vulnerable Rhode Islanders.

them with everything they need to teach every student, every day. Our parents are key to our children's success. I would write legislation that ensures parents are notified of behaviors of our children in school and provides them with the curriculum so that parents can help their child succeed. I homeschooled my two children. It was challenging because they were so different and each child learned differently. I understand what it takes. I am here to help parents and teachers succeed. Our teachers are not trained psychologists and need to have access to support they can recommend to the parents when issues arise with their children. We have a Narragansett police officer (SRO) at the Narragansett High School. As a parent I was comforted that a trained professional was in the school in case of an emergency or needed if drugs were found or a fight broke out in the school. The kids respect and have a good relationship with officers at the high school. Recent events in South Kingstown schools have made its SRO much less visible. An engaged SRO should not just be a privilege to someone in the right zip code.

a stroke of the pen. I find it disingenuous that while signing the most recent gun laws, Gov. McKee was guarded by armed security. We as a state continue to fail to secure our schools with resource officers and other measures. We need to protect

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

The Lighthouse Inn has been an resore for way too long. Instead of

House District 33 Jessica Drew-Day Republican

owner, landlord, homeschooler, gardener and fisherman. I am a concerned citizen who is tired of staying on the sidelines. The last straw came when I started reading actual bills and was stunned how at every turn, they catered to special interests and infringed on the rights of Rhode Islanders. As homeowners struggle to pay bills, one bill would streamline property tax sales, making it easier for investors to seize people's homes. A tragically high number of children are below grade-level in reading and math. But instead of addressing our failing schools, lawmakers proposed mandating "pleasure based" sex education for children as young as 11. As business owners cope with supply chain and staffing issues, lawmakers focused on banning gas-powered lawn equipment and plastic straws. I have decided I can no longer stay silent. I can no longer do nothing. When elected, I will be a voice of reason in a political climate that is often unhinged.

# 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or op-pose?

I am a fisherman and have been since I was little. I remember going to the shoreline and digging buckets of clams with my family for dinner. I

# 3. How will you support im-proving public education in Rhode Island?

I support our teachers and provide

### 4. How do you stand in regard to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

While this is not a focal point of my campaign, I am aware of the laws just passed at the State House level. I support our Constitutional rights to defend ourselves. In a knee-jerk reaction to a recent school shooting, our legislators and governor made law-abiding citizens criminals with

our children while working at the root cause of violence – which is men-tal health. I would have liked to see the state put in place a law that dealt with mental health and also made a commitment to securing our schools.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

The Rhode Island Constitution, rightly, protects the public's shoreline access. I was against the closure of Beavertail, our state beaches and other state parks during COVID. Our state's beautiful shoreline should not be reserved for the rich and access to the general public needs to be preserved. It wasn't fair that Gov. Raimondo shut down the public beaches and public access during one of the hardest and most depressing times in our history. The shoreline access bill establishes shoreline access along the ocean. I would be in favor of this bill. The bill presented does not include waterways such as rivers, lakes or ponds.

# 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I believe women's reproductive health should be a matter between a woman and her physician.

a vibrant seaside town, the tourists who flock to the Block Island ferry encounter this dilapidated, excrement-covered property. The state owns the land and is doing a terrible job holding the PRIX group (Procaccianti and Paolino properties) responsible for cleaning up the Inn or maintaining it. As a landlord myself I would never allow a tenant to mistreat my property like this and let them get away with it. The taxpayers of Rhode Island should be outraged that again a billionaire is put before the hardworking Rhode Island tax payers. I would hold the Billionaire PRIX group responsible for the cleanup of the property and end the lease on the land. It should be put out to bid and the PRIX group should not be allowed to enter into another lease with the state of Rhode Island. I insist that all parties come together for a seat at the table to come to a good plan for both Narragansett and the state.

# 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)



# VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

**OCTOBER 9, 2022** 





House District 33 Carol McEntee Democrat

# State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I have been serving the people of Narragansett and South Kingstown as their state representative in District 33 since June 2015. I am currently Chairwoman of the House Small Business Committee, First Vice Chair of House Iudiciary Committee, member of House Labor Committee and the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Some important legislation that I have sponsored include, the extension of the statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse, the RI Parentage Act, licensing for genetic counselors, the creation of a mental health court, reinvestment of American Rescue Funds into the unemployment trust fund to offset the tax increases to businesses due to Covid and the moratorium on zoning ordinances to allow businesses especially the food services to create

outside dining spaces. Prior to holding this office, I served as a member of the South Kingstown Town Council for 7 years. I have been an attorney practicing in RI and MA for over 30 years. My experience in the law and politics helps me navigate through the often difficult issues that face the State of RI and the general assembly. I am very familiar with the people in my district and I use that knowledge and understanding to help me serve the people of District 33 at the state house.

2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or

### ur oppose?

Climate change is a very important issue in my district. I represent two oceanfront communities and climate change is eroding our beaches and threatening our waterfront homes and business establishments. As a member of the House. I have sponsored and supported many environmentally friendly initiatives including the Act on Climate, a national model for protecting our environment, addressing climate change and creating good paying green jobs in RI. This year's budget included major investments in wind and solar energy and I sponsored the Plastic Waste Reduction Act, which bans the use of single use plastic checkout bags by retail establishments statewide. I received an A+ environmental grade from the Environmental Council of Rhode Island and ranked 5th highest legislator in the house in 2021-2022. I am also endorsed by Clean Water Action of RI.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?

This year we fully supported the education funding formula and provided an additional \$17 million more than the previous year. Each year I co-sponsor legislation to include school transportation costs into the funding formula and will continue to advocate for this money in the next legislative session. Transportation costs can be very expensive for a community the size of South Kingstown. I support the \$250 million school construction bond that will be on this November's ballot for kindergarten through grade 12 school construction projects.

I have advocated for the 2nd ballot question in November regarding the \$100 million in borrowing for new construction and repairs at the university of RI Narragansett Bay Campus. The new dock is currently under construction at the Oceanography School and the facilities need to be ungraded to support the new research vessel called the "Narragan sett Dawn". The URI Oceanography School is world renowned and they are in dire need of upgrading their facilities to meet the challenges of luring high level students and faculty. This investment in URI Oceanography School is an investment in our future especially as it relates to climate change and it's effects on our environment. This investment will allow the University to actually make money in the long run.

I have also supported legislation providing the development of alternative learning plans, with special consideration to be given to the unique difficulties and interruptions that students experienced during Covid.

4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

The mass shootings in this country have become a weekly phenomenon, enough is enough!

I have co-sponsored all of the gun safety legislation that was introduced this legislative session. As Vice Chair of Judiciary, I was able to advocate for legislation in 2022 that banned high capacity gun magazines to a maximum of 10 rounds, limited the sales of guns and ammunition to adults over 21 years of age and penalized the act of open carrying of loaded rifles and shotguns in public. I would support the passage of the safe storage act and I would support a federal ban on automatic weapons. I am endorsed by RI Moms Demand Action and the RI Coalition Against Gun Violence.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I voted to support the shoreline access bill in the House. It passed overwhelmingly in the House but never had a hearing or vote in the Senate. I will continue to support this legislation in the next session.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I co-sponsored and advocated for the codification of Roe v Wade in RI. Fortunately, we passed the RI Reproductive Rights Act in 2020. I am in full support of a woman's right to choose. I remain saddened and frustrated over the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe. I am strongly committed to Womens rights and I will continue to advocate for equal rights for all women.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

Galilee is the largest fishing port in RI and one of the busiest ports



on the Atlantic Coast. It is a driving economic engine in RI. I supported and advocated for the \$46 million for much needed improvements to the commercial docks in this year's budget.

The Lighthouse Inn property consists of three lots totaling five acres. Two of these lots have been used for parking and the remainder contains the Lighthouse Inn property. DEM plans to divide the three parcels and terminate the lease on the parcel containing the Lighthouse Inn. DEM plans to demolish the Inn in the hopes that it will clear the way for investors that may be interested in establishing a business that will complement and support the commercial fishing industry and provide public amenities.

The most important factor in this discussion is demolishing the building in order to rebid the property. This will make the property more appealing to investors. I fully support the revitalization of Galilee and the prospect of new businesses in the village such as a hotel, restaurants and or a museum. Galilee has become a parking lot for Block Island. It could be so much more. I would suggest that DEM consider building a parking garage so that the acreage of parking could be reduced therefore opening spaces for new developments to improve the village of Galilee.

The town of Narragansett should absolutely have input on this project.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



House District 34 **Catherine E. Canavan** RN, BSN Republican

# 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I want to have influence in the lives of my neighbors, family, and friends. I want to be their voice as to what is important to their livelihoods. As a nurse I bring my wealth of knowledge: specific to evidence-based information, and as a mother and grandmother I can appreciate the parents need to be informed regarding mandates and the health of their child.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

Climate change affects beach erosion. I would like to find more ways to protect beaches for generations to come. I support the need to take care of our land and sea. I believe we need more research and planning before making grand pledges in a short amount of time. For instance, wind turbines are being placed in prime fishing areas, which hurts families and businesses. Plus, the facts of how turbines are built and run. Banning gas powered cars and lawn equipment is going to be a huge expense to families and businesses. Banning wood burning is also going to hurt families and businesses. We will not have the energy capability needed to accommodate all these changes.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?

Teachers have said many times that the best outcome for a child in school is to have parent's support at home. For instance: I witnessed what it was like for parents when the Core curriculum came out. Parents had no idea how to help their child with these lessons. I would support more collaboration with parents and schools to give the children the best opportunity to be an educated, productive member of the community.

# 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

The constitution gives citizens the right to defend themselves, their families, and their homes. I also believe that we need to address mental health in this state- the root cause of violence. We, as a state, are failing at this right now and I would like to change that. When a behavioral situation arises in school with a child it needs to be addressed immediately, not swept under the rug. Collaboration between parents, teachers and licensed professionals can develop coping skills to ensure a child's learning potential. I feel that there should be resource officers in every school. Retired veterans and Police officers have expressed willingness in volunteering, which could save on the school's budget.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I think everyone should have access to the ocean.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

Personally, I do not believe in abortion, but God gave us free will to choose what happens with our own bodies and these are the choices we live with.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

First, I would look at zoning. Second, I would research what is in the best interest of the fishing and tourism industry. I feel that the community should have input, such as voting on the decisions made as it will greatly impact them.

### 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes.



House District 34 **Teresa Tanzi** Democrat

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I have 12 years experience serving in the General Assembly. Prior to that I served on the SK Economic Development Committee, Healthy Places by Design, I am a founding member of our Washington County Health Equity Zone (Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds), The Reform Caucus in the General Assembly, and sat on several recreation, bicycle and pedestrian planning committees at the state level.In the General Assembly I have served as Chair of two Study Commissions; one on the fishing industry, and one on workplace discrimination. I served as Vice Chair for the Finance and Oversight Com-

Veterans Affairs, Corporations, State Government & Elections, Internet & Technology and Special Legislation. I was just appointed to the state's Drought Steering Committee. I am an active member of the Friends of the Narragansett Library and the Narragansett Partnership for Prevention, and a leader in the state for preventing tobacco and vape use among our youth. The reason I am running for reelection is because I feel I have gained significant knowledge and seniority in the GA and have the ability to further the interests of our community. I know that there is much work to be done to manage the new Federal infrastructure dollars and will make sure the oft forgotten southern part of our state gets our fair share, whether it be for increasing our water supply, to making sure affordable housing investments are made here, I will lead the way in fighting for Narragansett and South Kingstown.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

With ponds, the ocean, Narragansett Bay and rivers throughout, climate change is a very serious issue for our towns. As much as it is about rising water, we also have to be concerned with the impact of more intense storms that are increasing in frequency, and the impacts of drought. We need to strengthen our shorelines, invest in our infrastructure and create resilient communities.

Of course, we need to invest in renewable energy, and I plan on helping direct the Federal money coming our way to build that sector while making sure that affordable options are widely available. We need to reward businesses for making smart investments and for conservWhen it comes to the water restrictions and bans we face each summer, the state must invest in expanding our access to water for households as well as agriculture immediatelywhich is what I will be pushing for as the newest member of the Water Resource Board's Drought Steering Committee. This important position will allow me to bring the forgotten voice of Southern Rhode Island to the decision making tables as I advocate for Narragansett and South Kingstown.

Last but not least, I will continue to push for better transit and active transportation options so that we can become less reliant on fossil fuels and stop empowering corrupt foreign nations to keep us at their mercy. Between conservation, smart development and investment we can make a world of difference in Rhode Island and beyond. Think Globally, and Act Locally!

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?

This is clearly a complex issue that requires a comprehensive look at many things, but I would begin with updating the School Funding Formula (SFF) which has been in place for over 10 years now. It currently does not take into account the money spent on transportation, and has only slightly increased the reimbursement for children in foster care to the districts that educate them. I have introduced legislation each year that would account for transportation costs, amounting to millions of dollars each year for SK and Narragansett, as well as legislation that raised the reimbursements for foster children to the receiving schools.

The state needs to significantly invest in having more counselors for

impact of the pandemic, the ever changing landscape and the impacts of social media.

I am also an advocate for the individual programs our districts have created for Career and Technical Education programs (CTE's) that allow students to graduate with college credits and/or valuable skills that help them advance quickly upon graduation into the trades and healthcare careers. Not every child is destined for college and these programs give students the opportunity to become a plumber, carpenter or a CNA, just to name a few. These programs help schools create a pipeline for much needed workforce development and improve on the "Vo-Tech" model of my school years. It is time for our state to take on more responsibility for supporting our schools and our students, both financially and emotionally.

# 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

I have been a leader in supporting gun violence prevention in Rhode Island, and am very proud to be the only member of the House to pass 2 bills that support common sense laws that will make a difference in our state. My first bill was "The Protect RI Families Act" which made it so that anyone convicted of domestic abuse is prevented from owning a gun. Studies show that victims of domestic violence are 5 times more likely to be murdered by their abuser if they have access to a gun.

My second law passed just this year raises the age from 18 to 21 to purchase all firearms. The law had previously prevented an 18 year old from purchasing a handgun but allowed them to buy an AR-15. This decades-old law needed to be updated available in the marketplace and put "long guns" on par with handguns.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

I am very proud of the work that the House of Representatives undertook and the compromise language that creates clarity for the first time on what public property means when it comes to Shoreline Access. I co-sponsored the bill and voted in favor of it when it came before us. I hope the Senate will take it up this coming session and the bill becomes law.

# 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am an avid supporter of women's rights and equal access to the full array of managing the reproductive healthcare needs of all. I was elated when the ACA was passed on the Federal level and covered contracep tion with no out of pocket expenses, because we know the best investment we can make to prevent unintended pregnancies is in education and prevention to empower people to make their own best choices. At the state level I was a proud supporter of codifying Roe v Wade into state law and creating equal access to abortion care for state employees and low income residents on Medicaid. As we have learned from the recent Supreme Court case which overturned Roe v Wade, there are many more nuances involved with ending a pregnancy and those decisions are best left for the individual patient and doctor to make.

7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn

My first priority for the Port of Galilee is now, and always will be, the preservation and protection of our state owned assets for the commercial fishing industry. Galilee was obtained through eminent domain, a rarely used tool for a highly strategic taking of land from private use for public good. The state recognized decades ago that the ability to feed our residents was a high enough priority that we seized the land for this purpose. Private landowners lost their rights to that land to preserve and protect our ability to feed residents and sustain our fishing economy. The Port of Galilee is a critical asset that must be preserved for these two highly strategic reasons.

Though the property in question is currently grossly underutilized (to put it as nicely as possible), at the time of its development it played an important role in the working port. Galilee was the home of one of the biggest tuna tournaments in the East and the hotel supported the charter boat guests that went to chase the fish of their dreams. Now, as species shift due to warming waters and market fluctuations that make some species more valuable than others, those tuna of the past have moved on to different waters and we are seeing an influx of crab. As we wait to see how the market shifts to bring new species to Point Judith's fleet, it is critical to keep that land open for future development that can accommodate new species.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



# Election Davis NOVEMBER 8, 2022 POLLS ARE OPEN 7AM - 8PM Find your polling place at http://vote.sos.ri.gov/







House District 35 Kathleen Fogarty Democrat



I would like to continue to serve District 35 and South Kingstown because I believe I have the experience to get the job done. I served for 10 years on the Town Council and learned a great deal about our town. I am seeking another term in the House to continue to help our district. Through the relationships I have built, URI received its largest budgetary support in decades. I have worked to protect a woman's right to choose. I have worked to increase reimbursements to South County Hospital so that it can continue to provide health care to our residents. I have fought for common sense gun laws to protect our citizens. I sponsored legislation to make it easier for elderly and the disabled to vote. I also worked and delivered tax breaks to parents, seniors, and our veterans.

2. How does climate change impact your district? What spe-

1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assem-

bly and what expertise do you bring

### cific efforts would you support or oppose?

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** 

Climate change impacts every district in the state, especially those on the water. Sea level rise will have a devastating impact on South Kingstown, both environmentally and financially. Take a ride to the town beach and you can see the erosion of our shoreline. It is dramatic and severe. We are also facing a severe drought this summer which is affecting our farms. It is only going to get worse unless we act now. In 2021, we passed the Act on Climate which gives us the tools to fight climate change. We must continue to enforce and fund this law. I was honored to receive the endorsement of Climate Action Rhode Island and Clean Water Action for my work protecting our state.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode İsland

I will work to have the House revisit the education funding formula. It is clear that South Kingstown lost

significant funding under the current formula. We need representatives with the experience to accurately convey how the formula affected our school district. One way we were able to bring money back to the district this year was in the reworking of the transportation funding for our district. I will continue to work with my colleagues on House Finance and the town to bring back additional funding for our schools.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

We have passed some great legislation recently, from Red Flag laws to limiting high capacity magazines and raising the age to purchase guns or ammunition to 21. I have been a tireless advocate for stronger gun laws and we have more work to do including passing a ban on assault weapons in the next legislative session. I am honored to have received the endorsement of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence and Moms Demand Action.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

When I served on the town council, I pushed for the town to identify rights of way to allow the public easier access to our shoreline. In the 2022 session, the House passed a bill that would make the high tide line more identifiable and add a 6 foot landward barrier to allow easier access to the public. The bill stalled in the Senate but will be reintroduced in January. The bill passed unanimously in the House and I expect it will easily pass in the Senate, also.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am an unapologetic supporter of a woman's right to choose. In 2019, the women in the House fought a difficult battle with the then Speaker to pass the Reproductive Privacy Act. This law codified Roe v Wade in Rhode Island before the recent misguided decision of SCOTUS. If we had not passed the RPA, we would have been subject to a trigger law like

Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, etc. that would have made abortion illegal in RI. Luckily, the women in the Assembly along with women all over the state fought to protect a woman's right to choose.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

It is a difficult question for me to answer because the property is in Narragansett and not in my district. I believe that the House Oversight Committee should take a look at the process that allowed the property to fall into such a deplorable condition in the first place. As a former councilperson, Î believe the town should be a partner in decision making in Galilee and not just dictated to by a state agency.

8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



**Bill Paniccia** 

Republican

### to this role? Every year I follow events at the General Assembly with interest. This

past year, and the previous few years, we have seen laws passed that are eroding our constitutional rights, increasing spending, and passing unfunded mandates to our towns. There would be no need for our state budget to balloon each year if the legislature didn't give big corporations tax breaks and incentives funded with taxpayer's hard-earned money. That is not what is best for RI and our citizens. My expertise is not in being a politician – it's being a hard wording Rhode Islander who wants a state where I can afford to live, grow, raise a family and one day retire. Our citizen legislature is fueled by the varying experiences of Rhode Islanders like me. Ordinary people who are willing to step up and represent their constituents over the special interests is what our state needs now more than ever.

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

It is clear that climate change s guiding many of our state policies and as a person who respects and protects our environment, I believe our environmental policies will have the greatest impact on the effects of climate change. I do not agree with the "Act on Climate" that was passed in the General Assembly in 2021

during the height of COVID and without much coverage in the press. While the intent may eb good, I think the technologies surrounding renewable energy are in their infancy and we are forcing these policies too early, and far too aggressively. Further, the electric grid infrastructure in Rhode Island is in dire need of significant and extremely expensive upgrades before the reliance on 100% electricity can even be attempted. Additionally, the goals that were placed in that Act of 2021, decreasing the carbon footprint of the state and moving people to electric vehicles, electric heat and making wood stoves illegal by 2030, are too aggressive and will be financially devastating for many of the peo ple in my district. By that, I mean the expense of weatherizing and convert ing homes to electric heat, coupled with the growing price of electricity and the anticipated increases for gird infrastructure will be too much for some residents to bear. The goals of this Act are just not attainable on the current schedule. I look forward to a time when the updated infrastructure will support electric vehicles and their more advanced batteries.

### 3. How will you support im-proving public education in Rhode İsland?

Parents must be involved in their children's education beyond what is taught at home. Our teachers need to be supported by the community and by their administrations and the state Dept. of Education. The recent mas-exodus of schoolteachers from the Providence school system is symptomatic of much larger, systemic problems in public education. We

need to research why this exodus is occurring, and without prejudice address every single flaw in the current system if we want to attract and retain the best teachers. Questions must be asked and answered regarding; Is pay competitive? Is the workload unmanageable? Are teachers bearing different workloads from one district to the other - do they have the necessary tools and materials? What are our curriculum goals? Is something being asked of the Providence school teachers that they do not agree with and are moving on to other school systems that do not ask the same of them? These same questions also need to be asked in every local school system to identify if the same problems that Providence is having are impacting other districts, and in turn support and improve public education in Rhode Island based on the needs and shortcomings

### 4. How do you stand in regard to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

The Second Amendment is part of our federal and state Constitutions, and both of these have been weakened over the past several years in the General Assembly. This past session, there were 3 laws that were passed that have been challenged and decid ed in other courts around the country to be unconstitutional. More needs to be done to address the mental health crisis in Rhode Island and in this county. As an emergency department nurse, I see every shift the need for more resources for people struggling with mental health issues. I can state with professional certainty that our system is broken. People's needs are

not being met due to a multitude of circumstances. There are not enough mental health providers to serve our population - from outpatient facilities to emergency rooms that need health care providers, community clinics, every emergency room, and especially regular psychiatric providers in the community. Rhode Island does not need more laws that affect law abiding citizens, Rhode Island needs to prosecute the criminals that currently break our state's gun laws - some of the strictest in the United States, and we need to address the problem of too few people and facilities addressing our mental health crisis.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

RI has 400 miles of coastline and I believe everyone should have access to the shore. This is in the Rhode Island State Constitution. The current issue of trying to define where private property ends, and public begins has been the root of this issue. From what I understand, the public access extends six feet above the mean high tide line, but that 6 feet can be onto private property. A few questions come to me about this. If the public has access to six feet onto private property, who is responsible to main tain the land? Who is responsible if someone were to get injured on that land? Does the state have the right to make someone's land accessible to the public without compensation to that person? This topic is a very sensitive topic because it affects two major areas, someone's private property and someone's ability access the shoreline.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am Pro-Life. Having a wife, 3 daughters and other women who are very important to me, I believe that they should have access to appropriate healthcare, no matter what the need for that healthcare is

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain.

The Lighthouse Inn property is owned by the state (DEM) and has been the subject of several decisions by DEM that seem to conflict with the interests of the host town. The prime location in Galilee that this land occupies should compel the Dept of Environmental Management and the State to work with the local government in Narragansett to ensure that whatever projects are approved for this property both serve the local community, as well as the port of Galilee as one of the state's busiest fishing ports. This property is simply too valuable to the local and state economy for it to languish in a tug-of war between state and local government. We need a collaborative approach that will offer the best compromise for all stakeholders especially the taxpayers.

# 8. Do you support RI's current election laws?

Yes

2. How does climate change npact your district?

record of collaborating with school departments, police departments, and my peers to identify the needs and find the resources.

I believe the bipartisan legisation that Representative Blake Filippi sponsored was an excellent compromise and the fact it passed unanimously in the house proved it. The fact that it passed unanimously should have made it a priority in the senate, it was very disappointing the senate president felt otherwise

concerns about the Lighthouse Inn

1. Why do you want to serve your



House District 36 John Pacheco, III Republican



House District 36 **Tina Spears** Democrat

### what expertise do you bring to this role?

General Assemb

As a lifelong RI resident, I understand we face multiple issues as a diverse and storied community and I love to help. My experience as President of the Burrillville Town Council shows my proven record for defending the environment, improving school safety, demanding responsible spending, fighting the opioid crisis, increasing affordable housing responsibly and most of all, advocating for the people I served.

### cific efforts would you support or oppose?

Being a district with a lot of oceanfront property, climate change can have a significant impact. I would support all efforts to preserve, nurture and keep clean, our beaches, salt ponds and freshwater resources

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode Island?

I believe having a safe, secure, well cared for school building is an essential first step. I have a successful

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

I am an avid fisherman, hunter, and supporter of the second amendment. I believe the laws passed in the last legislative session are unnecessary and unconstitutional.

5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I am pro-life but would never promote or try to change existing RI abortion laws.

7. How will you address the

I would wait for the RIDEM to finish its research into how contaminated the site may or may not be, and what may be supported there before anything else. Then having experienced what it's like to have a lack of local control, I would make sure the community was heard and on board with whatever the proposals may be.

### 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes.

### 1. Why do you want to serve your district in the General Assembly and what expertise do you bring to this role?

I have spent the last decade fighting for families and people with disabilities at the RI State House and now it is time for me to use my experience, drive and network for everyone in Dist 36 and the State of RI

### 2. How does climate change impact your district? What specific efforts would you support or oppose?

Climate change is impacting our

coastal communities, fisheries, businesses, and way of life. We must take action to protect our fragile coastal ecosystem and ground water in the Ocean State, and to create green jobs while we do.

### 3. How will you support improving public education in Rhode

I attended our public schools, and my kids do too. Committed teachers made all the difference in my life, so I know that schools build opportunity for people and communities. Our students, teachers need their fair share of resources from the state for social / emotional support, excellent

teaching and a learning environment that offers everyone the chance to succeed.

### 4. How do you stand in regards to the current gun laws in Rhode Island?

I stand with the majority of people - including gun owners and our police - who want greater gun safety. We need sensible policy that insists on safe gun ownership like the basic safety measures the state legislature passed this year.

### 5. Where do you stand on public shoreline access and existing RI laws?

Efforts to preserve the public's right to shoreline access stalled in the Senate this year. I will continue the fight to preserve access to the shore for future generations.

### 6. What is your position on women's reproductive rights and existing RI law?

I support a woman's right to make her own healthcare choices, including reproductive choices. Rhode Island's codification of Roe v. Wade into state law protected these rights in our state, but there is more to do to ensure women of all income levels have access to healthcare.

### 7. How will you address the concerns about the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee? Please explain

The Lighthouse Inn is not in my district, I need to learn more from community groups and my colleagues who represent the area to provide a more informed answer.

# 8. Do you support RI's current election laws? (Only a response of yes or no will be published)







### Susan Cicilline Buonanno

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for another term on the Narragansett Town Council because I love the town. I have grown up in Narragansett and raised my family in the town. The closeness of our community has always been desirable to me and I have resided here in Narragansett for over 50 years. I think it is so important to give back and serve the community that you



### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

It is important to be fiscal responsible while balancing the needs of the community and residents. I do believe we need to maintain and protect our assets in the town. This requires funding the important projects in the town. We need to invest in our community by improving our water infrastructure, roadways, town buildings, town assets, and other important infrastructure that continues to make Narragansett an amazing place to live, work and enjoy.

3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

As a Town Council member, I created an Affordable Housing Collaborative for Narragansett in 2020. Most recently I created an Affordable Housing Trust and will merge the groups together so that the town can do the following:

Narragansett General Election Candidates

**NARRAGANSETT TOWN COUNCIL** 

Acquiring land and buildings for the purpose of providing affordable housing opportunities.

(2)Meeting the ten percent affordable housing goal mandated by the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act (RIGL 45-53-1 et seq.). Recommend strategies,

programs, policies and initiatives for increasing affordable housing and promote/advocate for their implementation.

Assist the Town Council (4)in overseeing the affordable housing measures identified in the Affordable Housing Plan, a component of the Narragansett Comprehensive Plan.

The Affordable Housing Trust Collaborative needs to provide a variety of incentives to make it easier for residents to purchase affordable houses in town. Additionally, the town policy makers need to do more to provide opportunities and policies that assist in fair and equitable living.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and storm water runoff?

This is a difficult issue for Narragansett. The town's infrastructure system needs to support the demands of water usage. Due to the growing population in Narragansett we are presently struggling with the water which leads us to town wide water bans every summer. We continue to seek guidance from state agencies to improve our quality of water and our water supply. In order to improve the system, we need to make some major investments in the water infrastructure. This present Town Council has demonstrated and shown their support by allocating over 1.9 million dollars in American Rescue Funds for water improvements for the Town of Narragansett.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

I think the mismangement of the Galilee Lighthouse leased property must be addressed by the state since they are the landlors of this property. Narragansett expressed an interest in the property and submitted their proposal but was not granted the proposal from RIDEM. The stateowned land is leased so it is difficult for Narragansett to take an active role in fighting in the courts. Any legation of the property should come from RIDEM.

I believe Narragansett should have

a seat at the table when deciding what's important and needed on that property in Galilee. The fishing industry is so important to our state and we need to make sure that the development in this area is in the best interest of the fishing industry and the port. Narragansett can seek a strong partnership with the RIDEM to determine the future of this land. A collaborative effort with all parties will ensure the best ideas for the property and is critical in the future plans of this property.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

As a Town Council Member, I placed a motion on the Town Council agenda 11 months ago to review a parking study for the Pier Area and Boon Street. The study was referred to the Planning Board and we are presently waiting for a set of recommendations for improving parking. Parking has been a problem across the town whether in Galilee or the Pier area. Providing a parking garage that fits into the character of the town may give the town some parking relief. We need to provide more opportunities for public transportation by using buses and trolleys throughout the town could also help alleviate congestion. Our schools have 3 parking lots and some potential for using them during our summer

season in Narragansett. Narragansett could promote a more pedestrian friendly community by finishing the bike path and providing additional sidewalks around town for residents and visitors. Lastly, further investigating timed parking and metered parking in different areas of the town could also create additional parking opportunities especially during our very busy times of the year from May through September. When trying to solve the parking issues we need to create a variety of solutions in order to see town wide improvements with parking.

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

Yes, I think we have more work to do to provide laws to assist Narragansett with the town's rentals and zoning laws for both new and existing houses. We need a balanced and fair approach for all stakeholders. We have passed many ordinances over the last 12 years which have improved the quality of life for residents and visitors but we have more to do.

8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Ewa Dzwierzynski

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I love Narragansett and decided to run last term as a means to unite the Town and be a healing voice and make a difference. As a "servant leader" my goal is to serve. It is a mindset and life philosophy. Listening, healing, persuasion, foresight, commitment, empathy, self-awareness, conceptualization, stewardship, and building community are qualities required to be a servant leader. I believe one of the most important qualities of a leader is listening, and that is one of my best qualities. It has served me well on council as I always keep an open mind when making important decisions, especially when new facts or information are presented. If re-elected, I will do my best to represent the best interests of the Town. Whatever decision I make, I always ensure the best interests of the residents are taken into account. "For the People. For the Town."

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

I treat taxpayer money as if it were my own. Keeping our taxes low is a key objective. I put a lot of due diligence in reviewing budgets to make

association, and current President,

sure that the town gets an appropriate return on its investments. Having an amazing town manager and town staff who also understand the importance of being good stewards are such an asset to our Town

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

During my first term on the Council, I voted to limit the number of unrelated students renting a single house to promote housing affordability. I supported the bulk zoning ordinance to discourage overbuilding in our neighborhoods, and I have been actively working on a short-term rental ordinance to address a disturbing trend of out-of-state investors buying up homes for the sole purpose of short-term rentals. My priority is to support policies that protect the interests of year-round residents and families. Attending the Narragansett High School graduation these last two years during my term made me realize how important it is to ensure young talent stays in our community. It has become a goal of mine to promote housing affordability and more owner-occupied properties. I would love to see more families thrive in our community.

### 4. How will you address the

### town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

We have to make continued capital investments in our water treatment and distribution systems while balancing conservation efforts. In the long term, we are going to have to consider regional water solutions to ensure a reliable supply of clean drinking water. I voted to use a big portion or our ARPA funding to the Town to make water, our most precious resource, a top priority.

Stormwater management and sea level rise are other important issues. I feel it is essential that we plan for resiliency as we consider future developments in our community.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

My efforts to highlight the current leaseholder's dereliction and underutilization of this property resulted in the state reconsidering a long-term renewal with the current leaseholder. I ultimately would love to see the vision in our Galilee Special District plan come to fruition. I challenge the state's position that the state is immune to local zoning, and I would like to see more local enforcement to ensure landowners and leaseholders

comply with local zoning requirements outlined in the Galilee Special District ordinance. Specifically, land side parcels on the southern end of Galilee solely used as surface parking does very little to support the fishing industry. Galilee is an important economic engine for the blue economy, and I am confident there is great potential to catalyze economic growth in fishing, water transportation, and recreation industries. The future of this site is complicated and may require the support of our state legislative delegation. I would rather see the Town collect parking revenues on these parcels than private leaseholders until an appropriate land use strategy can be implemented.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

The parking issue is simple. We have a lot of demand in the summer and little parking available. There was a recent parking study that outlined several solutions to make more parking available. Some of these solutions may not be popular and we have to take a hard look at the solutions such as metered parking and one-way streets. I would like to hear from more residents on what people want to solve this issue. I also think it's important we vigorously protect our

public rights-of-way from abutting property owner encroachment so that we can continue to enjoy on-street parking near our designated coastal access points.

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordi-nances? Please explain.

Over the last two years, I have voted for policies and ordinances to protect the interests of vear-round residents. I have been actively working on a short-term rental ordinance. I have learned it takes a nuanced approach to balance the property rights of investor-owners and yearround residents so that we have a healthy and safe community that we can all enjoy. The overarching goal of a Short-term rental ordinance, bulk zoning, and the 3-student ordinance was to promote safety, affordability, and resiliency of our neighborhoods

While I have no intention of dismantling the bulk zoning ordinance, I am always willing to consider any recommendations or "tweaks" that would improve it.

8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)



**Steven Ferrandi** 

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I have always been interested in Narragansett Town government. For the past 20 years I have been attending council meetings to keep informed on the Community. If you've watched town council meetings, you may have seen me address the Council as I have strongly advocated for both the four unrelated and the three student ordinances. As a member of my Neighborhood

I helped lead an effort to collaborate with many other neighborhood associations in Narragansett to discuss common ground issues on quality of life. Being involved with these neighborhood associations brought out many issues, but the one common thread was the preservation and the protection needed to ensure that our Narragansett Neighborhoods are safe and stable. In my working career which is in sales and business development I have acquired skills such as budgeting, managing projects, working with owners developing fiscal management policies as well as developing programs to grow their businesses. If you believe like I do that Narragansett needs to do a better job regulating the rental community for the overall viability of the town- then I'm your candidate. My name is first on the ballot, and I ask for your vote.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

The first responsibility of the town is to ensure all the essential services to the residents are in place and prioritized. These services include Police, Fire, infrastructure, schools, senior services, and the overall public safety of the town's populous. Therefore, prioritizing these essential services will ultimately lead to fiscal responsibility. After funding "essential services" the town council should then look at the

'second tier" of less essential services and prioritize funding. I would also encourage all Department Heads to seek out and apply to Federal and Local Grants to offset town costs.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

Narragansett is a wonderful place to live, and the town's popularity has resulted in high sticker prices for housing. Past town policies have exacerbated the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett. These policies allowed for development of small lots into huge homes, many of whom's main focus was on how many bedrooms could be built. What is needed are Planning and zoning policies that create sustainability for full time residents, both owner occupied and yearly rental. Currently Narragansetts demographics have changed and there needs to be a balance between full time residents and residential investment properties to ensure the town's viability for affordable housing. If we don't tackle this issue now it will be too late for Narragansett, and we will have lost our town.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply, and stormwater runoff?

The uniqueness of Narragansett

being a coastal town with seasonal and tourist activity, requires special consideration in terms of water quality, supply, and storm water runoff. Careful oversight of development, wa ter usage, water capacity and coastal features must be thoroughly studied in an overall plan as to sustain and improve the current situation. Metrics based data usage of seasonal water supply, seasonal water usage and coastal stormwater runoff should be included in any improvement plan. I would work with the town manager and his staff to understand what options Narragansett has, as we must correct these problems.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

The Towns involvement should be in strengthening and maintaining the fishing village of Galilee. This requires working with all the stakeholders involved within the existing parameters. A collaboration of ideas for future uses should include a feasible practical approach which will preserve the uniqueness of the fishing village. Future plans should take into consideration the scale and character of the existing and surrounding landscape.

An example of a possible use can be a visitor information center to include a museum-like exhibit of historical maritime history of the Galilee Fishing village.

Infrastructure that can meet and

support the needs of the existing fishery, and retail and other amenities should be included in future plans.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

The Narragansett parking situation is varied throughout the town. There are some areas of town that the parking subject is working adequately. There are other areas of town that there may be a need for parking adjustments to solve a particular parking issue. Parking issues can be prioritized in the town to address the most important areas of concern. Many of these concerns are seasonal due to the large influx of summer residents and tourists.

When working on solutions to this the town must again ensure a balance between its full-time residency and the needs of the tourist trade. Narragansett is a beautiful area and destination which attracts many visitors who enjoy the town's amenities. We must ensure our natural resources and our quality of life will not be compromised by overcrowding. We should have a development plan that can predict how the town will grow, and policies to bring more full-time residents into our town, and prioritize seasonal parking issues.

7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

Yes It is evident that townwide there had been an incremental increase in investor driven property ownership, resulting in a change in the fabric of our single family residen tial neighborhoods. This trend has created an influx of a more transient population within our residential neighborhoods, including the increase of short-term rentals, student housing, air bnb and seasonal rentals. Many Narragansett neighborhoods are now experiencing significant quality of life changes due the imbalance of the increase of investor driven properties vs full time residential ownership. As stated in my response to the affordable housing question, planning and zoning policies that create sustainability for full time residents/ full time renters need to be explored and addressed by the town.

The town also can examine the tax structure to create more equity between full time residential ownership/ full time rentals and income generating investor driven properties within our residential neighborhoods. I am in favor of re-examining zoning ordinances.

### 8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published

Yes



### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I have been involved for over 30 years in helping make Narragansett a better place to live. I would like to continue doing that and focusing on bringing young families to Town while maintaining the quality of life that we are accustomed to.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

By looking at each request and how

the department has performed over the years.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

By investigating possible tax incentives for families moving in and landlords willing to rent or sell them

4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

Investigate the Town Water supply and determine if we need another water tower in Town.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

To put as much pressure on the State to do the right thing.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

Parking will always be a problem as there is really no way to expand

what is already here. There might be a feasible way to bus from the school parking lots, but there would be a lot of moving parts to get that accomplished

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

Yes. This decision needs to be based on facts and not what people perceive is correct. Right now, it is just a, "he says, I say", decision and not based on any facts.

8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)







Laurie Kelly

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for Town Council to counter those previous councilors who did not respect democracy and the will of the people. I believe the townspeople should decide the direction of the town and councilors who disregard referendum votes by the people are dangerous to this town and the country. I'm currently the Chair of the Library Board, and as such have executed a plan to improve the town services by expanding the current library, as well as successfully pursuing and obtaining state funding,



### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

The town of Narragansett needs to look forward and plan for the future. This means setting priorities now, and realistically structuring the financing going forward. It is important to remember that major infrastructure continues to increase in price, and to not plan is akin to burying one's head in the sand.Just as the library project was brought in under the \$5.8 MM budget by focusing on State Aid and donations; councilors must be willing to examine the costs and commit to a reasonable plan to finance these infrastructure improvements.The former councilors who repeatedly talk of " "cutting taxes", defunded the library and lost over \$400,000 in state aid - a fiscally irresponsible treachery to the Narragansett taxpayer.

Narragansett General Election Candidates

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# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

Many years ago, I attended several meetings that had " think outside the box" ideas for affordable housing. It seems that these intriguing ideas were not put in place, and the town of Narragansett has made little headway on addressing these issues.I would say that the lack of affordable housing is coupled with rental issues and it takes the skill to sit at the table and hammer out a plan to improve this situation.Local businesses have suffered because of the lack of affordable housing for employees, and a coherent plan is needed to insure the health of Narragansett's economy. This will not be an easy or simple fix, but I believe we can implement a multi pronged plan that can help us expand our affordable housing.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

The Town has struggled with water quality issues for years, and our summer supply is increasingly restricted regardless of actual rainfall. These two issues have garnered some money from the ARPA distribution, but both issues will require more funding to solve. Both issues require substantial infrastructure, and I would like to examine addressing these issues as soon as possible. Since it certainly looks like we do not have the ability to expand our water resources, I think it is time to examine a desalination plant as a possible solution to address our future and continuing water shortages. Threatening to shut homeowners water off ( as happened this summer in phone calls from our water company) is unacceptable to our residents, and we need to seriously address these issues with long range plans.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

First, many thanks to a number of Narragansett advocates that closely examined the lease documents and raised many disturbing issues that perhaps would have gone forward unremarked upon. At this point though, the Town should sit at the table with the State and try to iron out differences in an adult fashion.so that we can go forward with a cohesive and inclusive plan to help our major industry, commercial fishing. While I would love to see Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium in Galilee, there is no private or municipal funding for such a wide ranging"plan". I also wish the advocates had put out a November referendum that spelled out what is envisioned specifically and the cost to the Town of Narragansett taxpayers. The only way to gauge public support is to ask the question with a

price plan and a clear vision - something that I felt was not presented forthrightly in our RFP( although I do think it mentions a \$54 million price tag to the Town.) The town voted twice to approve the library building project (70%approval), but until you have a vote, you can never be sure of a project's support. If the majority of voters support a \$54 million plan, I will support the will of the people; I believe that is a councilor's main job.

# 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

Parking is integral to the smooth operation of a town. Businesses and restaurants do not rely on patrons who live down the street, rather, our fantastic and diverse commercial community depends on visitors, and these same business ventures greatly help the town through alleviating some of the tax burden on the homeowners. We therefore need to plan for parking solutions particularly in the summer months. In years past, Trolleys ferried visitors thru town, utilizing school parking lots for the public. This should be revisited, as well as possible expansion of public lots in particular neighborhoods. But this should be done with the help of our commercial businesses; they have dealt with issues like this for years, and have a clear headed view of what will work in their environment.And let's not forget that parking is also integral to coastal access; the State of RI supports water access for all- not just the lucky few who own property at the water's edge. This issue should



also be worked on with a round table of stakeholders- reasonable people can always come to terms with a compromise.

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

I think that with so much of our community involved in rentals, this has to be an ongoing conversation between all the stakeholders. By some reports, one third of our housing stock is rental. This means we have to start where we are, and make incremental changes toward the Narragansett we would like to see. Jesse Pugh had many eye opening statistics on our rental community, and implemented the 3 unrelated. I would have preferred to start with 4 unrelated, and then revisit it in a year or two to see if more restrictions were needed. Part of this rental property issue that has not been addressed is the weekend or wedding event short term rental that morphs into a blowout party in a quiet residential neighborhood - this should also be examined immediate ly. Again, adult behavior on the town council leads to a balance between a citizens right to " quiet enjoyment " of their property, and the inherent right of the owner to rent his property, if he so desires.

8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Deborh Kopech

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I have been a town council member for the past two years. Initially, I ran because I felt my background in corporate management and municipal Human Resources could be of some value to the Town and I was particularly interested in environmental, coastal, housing and fiscal issues as well as ensuring that our library project could be completed. While well under way, the library is not completed and certain climate mitigation initiatives are underway but incomplete and my intention is to move these issues to completion.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

Narragansett is fortunate in that our tax base is one of the lowest in the state but is able to cover budgeted costs. We still struggle with infrastructure issues with regard to maintaining roads and our sewer and water infrastructure. Besides the \$4.5 million provided through the ARPA funding as a result of COVID, funds are available through grants supplied by the Federal Infrastructure bill and I intend to support the town's ability to obtain funding in that way. I am extremely conscious of the budget and ways to keep tax increases as low as possible. But we then have to be mindful of future issues and ensure that our planning accounts for potential future costs.

# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

I am not a member of the Affordable Housing Board but I have attended meetings and support innovative ways of creating opportunities to help solve this very definite problem in Narragansett. Several solutions in-

clude housing density projects, using underutilized property to support public housing projects (for which state and federal funds may be iden tified), examining the possibility of mixed use land or revising zoning requirements in some cases to allow for mixed use (Commercial/Residential). My vote to limit student housing to no more than 3 students was in part to free up housing stock in the town for families and young and senior singles to purchase or rent homes that are currently used as commercial properties seasonally. I will continue to pursue those avenues.

# 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and storm water runoff?

As noted above, I have been working on climate change mitigation and infrastructure activity both of which include a component with regard to storm water runoff but which require infrastructure improvement to our drainage and sewer systems. We also need to ensure that individual septic systems are properly managed and meet town ordinance specifications. Regarding water, more than anything we need to educate our residents about water as a precious and scarce commodity. With limited options for sourcing additional water at an affordable rate, requiring conservation techniques in households as well as the town system also need to be

explained. I intend to work on those issues.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

The town has a somewhat limited role in this as the state of RI owns the property. That being said, there are problems that have not been solved by DEM and their Lessee that may have resulted in local ordinance violations with regard to the parking lots in use. The town has sent a letter to the parties requiring that they obtain the proper permitting going through our planning and zoning board requirements within a certain time frame that has not yet expired. Our role is to ensure that no one violates our Ordinances or Comprehensive Plan and that is what is being done at this time. In addition, the Town council has approved providing fund ing to URI to pursue coursework to update a 2016 plan that was proposed for Galilee that incorporates climate change mitigation, port improvements for the fishing fleet and a more robust and interesting town to attract and educate visitors. I look forward to the results and hope to be part of the solution by determining next steps upon its completion.

6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

There are two parking issues in Narragansett.

1. The Pier area, (Ocean Road to the Beach and several blocks to the west) especially from mid-June until mid-September. The issues are how to manage the parking and the council and Planning Board have been working to identify solutions. Public hearings were held and suggestions are being considered. This is a problem complicated by several factors. Solutions include:

• Charging for parking in certain areas and/or, • Placing time limits on parking and

enforcing both; · Identifying a long term parking facility some distance from the Pier and providing public transportation (trolleys or buses) either for free or a

small fee, • Reviewing other restricted parking spaces to ensure that they function as designed.

• Making Boon St. one way, which would allow parking on both sides of the road.

The Town Council should receive a potential plan from the Planning Board in the future but determining the ultimate plan will be the responsibility of the new council.

2. The second issue is coastal access. Along with my colleagues on the Town Council, we modified parking regulations in an area with 3 Coastal Access points to allow parking on one side of the street with specific restrictions. I voted in favor of this plan as

Coastal Access Point with no local access largely inhibits the access.

# 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

This is a very broad question. With reference to student and short term rentals, I would be in favor of re-examining the results of the 3-student ordinance after a few years to allow time to determine its impact and whether or not housing stock has been freed up for families and affordable housing.

If this refers to short term seasonal rentals we are in the process of examining and working to solve the concerns of our residents regarding this issue and another reason I am seeking another term in office is to ensure an ordinance that will meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Zoning is a complex issue. Concerns have been raised about some elements of the new Bulk Zoning ordinance and the Town Community Development Department has been working on modifications but in general I believe no major modifications are necessary.

8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SOUTH COUNTY

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1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you

bring to the council?

I served two terms on the Town Council (2016-2018 and 2018-2020) and would bring a wealth of insti-tutional knowledge. I have carefully watched each Town Council meeting over the last two years. One observation I have made is that in many instances the current Council, in my opinion, has made decisions not in



Matthew Mannix

# Narragansett General Election Candidates NARRAGANSETT TOWN COUNCIL

keeping with a high level of fiduciary responsibility toward the town residents. Motions are made, and votes have been taken based on "feelings and not facts. Multiple Committees have been formed to address the agendas of special interest groups and a great deal of time was prioritized discussing these issues. We need to get back to the basics and focus on those issues that touch the majority of town residents. Fund our schools, police, and fire departments and senior center. Address town Infrastructure needs: replace/repair roads, solve water and sewer issues while keeping taxes low.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

My community needs or priorities are funding our schools, senior center, making sure police and fire departments have all they need to keep our town safe, improving faulty infrastructure such as roads/sidewalks and correcting quality/quantity of water and sewer capacity. The remaining needs of the community need to be assessed, analyzed, and then prioritized. The town has been successful paying for additional town "needs" by applying for state and federal grants and this should be applauded and continued.

1. Why are you running and what

I grew up here in Narragansett and

have dedicated myself to public ser-

vice after graduating from Narragan-

and law school. I have volunteered

my time as a member of the Bonnet

Shores Fire District and St. Thomas

More Parish. I served on the Narra-

gansett Town Council from 2012 to

2020 and am committed to preserving

Narragansett's best qualities now and

I understand that maintaining Nar-

ragansett's unique identity, protecting

its neighborhoods and keeping its

families safe requires commitment

from its elected leaders. During the

cused less on Narragansett's residents

town special interests. We need to fix

past two years, the council has fo-

and families and catered to out-of-

that problem and put Narragansett

sett High School, Princeton University

expertise and experience do you

bring to the council?

into the future.

families first

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

The average price of a home in Narragansett was already out of reach for many, then came the pandemic. In 2020 Narragansett housing inventory was bought out by out -of-state buyers for either investment purposes or to work from home". Narragansett, Newport, Portsmouth all found themselves in the same situation- an influx of Short Term Rentals overtaking residential neighborhoods. Without doubt there needs to be a balance of seasonal rentals in our community, but no neighborhood should be dominated with a transient population. Narragansett needs to create Short Term Rental (STR) ordinances as the other coastal communities have done, which would state minimal days of occupancy, additional fees, and rental requirements. Other communities have already experienced that STR ordinances have created turnover of property as investors gross profit declines. I'm in favor eliminating the Homestead which does not offer an incentive for year round rentals and replacing it with a residential tax that would tax both owner occupied homes and year round rentals at a lower rate than properties rented seasonally. This provides an incentive for year round rentals and continues to provide a tax break for owner occu-

2. How will you balance the

responsibility?

needs of the community with fiscal

Narragansett has a long history of

low taxes. Each year, we need to pri-

oritize the town's needs because each

and every budget item cannot always

be funded. Our key priorities should

public safety (Police and Fire) and the

3. What will you do to address

the shortage of affordable housing

We must put Narragansett families

first. The town council needs to enact

policies that encourage yearly rentals

to families because real estate prices

have gotten too high for many - if not

most - young families that wish to

be our roads and infrastructure,

education of our students.

in Narragansett?

live here.

pied homes.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

I'm not an engineer, nor am I an expert in public works. The good news is that Narragansett employs experts in both disciplines. I would ask the Town Manager to conduct a public workshop with his staff to provide a deep dive into these issues and detail all options available to the town residents and the Council. It's clear that Town Residents are fed up with not having an adequate supply of water in the summer. Quality of drinking water is also a major concern. The Town Manager asked for and the TC allocated a good amount of American Rescue Money to address this problem. This should be a priority for the new Town Council to address.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

Galilee is a thriving seaport with an even brighter future in the making. The Town needs a seat at the table and to become a partner with DEM and the Commercial Fishing Industry to determine the future of Galilee. This needs to be accomplished not with well-intentioned resident

activists, but with a Council and Town Manager determined to sit side by side with the DEM creating a collaborative relationship to hold all sides accountable with mutual respect. We all love Galilee; we all know that change is needed. To my knowledge a meeting with all stakeholders (DEM/ Town/Commercial Fishing/Galilee businesses) has never occurred. A Stakeholder meeting would be a good place to start.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

The main issues I hear about with parking exist in the Pier.

Many of these complaints are due to short term rentals. A STR ordinance would address parking issues so many of these issues would be resolved. I would also implement a three-hour parking restriction on the seawall utilizing a meter-less pay system used in many cities. Narragansett residents would receive a resident parking sticker and park for free while still being held to three-hour restriction. This would allow for more people to enjoy our seawall to watch the waves or enjoy some takeout. Three hours also allows for restaurant patrons to enjoy their meals, so would be supportive of the restaurant community. I'd also like to re-examine parking ticket fees. The fees are so low

increase the amount of parking at that site. This proposal was supposed to be reviewed – and hopefully approved - by the State Properties Committee, but never came before the committee. I do not know why this proposal never got on a State Properties Committee agenda, but am committed to a proposal that is in keeping with the character of Galilee and does not expand parking at the former Dutch Inn site.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

A lot of consultants, outsiders and so-called experts provide their opinions about parking in the Town of Narragansett. But the opinions that should matter most are the ones of the families who live in the neighborhoods where parking rules and restrictions may change. To that end, parking in town should be reviewed from the bottom up, not from the top down. Changes to parking rules and restrictions in town should be made

on a case-by-case basis with the primary focus on whether the addition or removal of a parking restriction is best for the people who live in the neighborhood that will be affected by a new parking restriction or proposal

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

The town's rental and zoning ordinances must always be re-examined because the town is always evolving and changing. The key to any change is to always remember that Narragansett is a small town and our rental and zoning ordinances should encourage the construction of single-family homes for Narragansett's families.

### 8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Candidate did not respond with ves or no.



vears of experience, most recently as the head of the Commercial Legal Department for the 12th largest bank in the US (Citizens Bank). As such, I had substantial experience in handling complex financial matters. Earlier in my career, I was General Counsel of several companies, a Branch Chief with the SEC in Washington, and an Assistant DA in Manhattan. I have a degree in Math from Boston College and a Law degree from Fordham. Most importantly. I am a husband. father of three daughters, and a grandfather While everyone brings their own skills and experiences to the job, I think the citizens of Narragansett would benefit from having someone with my background working for them on the Council. And while I respect the decision of many of my fellow candidates to pursue endorsements from political parties, I've chosen not to, which means that. if elected, I'll answer to no one but the citizens.

and prosperity. No Town can "cut" its way to growth and a better future. For example, completing the library, and doing it right the first time, will be an investment that will pay profound tangible and intangible benefits for generations. Aside from helping to inform, educate and entertain the citizens, its presence will help spur growth and new investment around it. I feel the same can be said of completion of the bike path all the way to the ocean.

### 3. What will you do to address

By starting at the end and working backward.

While mostly out of sight/out of mind, much of the stormwater runoff, sewage, etc., generated in Narragansett ends up going to treatment plants before being discharged back into the environment. The quality of the water depends on the quality of the treatment. We currently have a crazy quilt of some homes on sewers, while neighbors are not. Those that are not must instead pay for and maintain their own septic and leach fields

should be done to enhance and optiilee. Turning its heart into a parking lot is not one of them.

At the same time, we need to be

about the most recent study, but if elected, I assure you we will. Hopeful ly that study, prepared by experts, will offer thoughtful, workable solutions to these complex problems (if not, I'll want our money back!)

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

Sure - I will always be willing to re-examine any and all existing ordinances - including rental and

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

No municipal water system is designed to handle the automatic irrigation systems and automatic sprinklers that seemed to have multiplied in Narragansett since the pandemic. The drought and the increased summer population have only made this problem worse. We all need to conserve water and not waste it, especially during this dry summer. Conservation should be everyone's responsibility.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

In 2019, the Galilee Lease Advisory Committee, on which I served at that time, approved a proposal for a small commercial space on the former Dutch Inn property. A key element of that proposal was that it did not

> lot plan. There is much that can and mize the value of the area around Gal-

realistic and accept that the property is owned by the State - NOT Narragansett - and that it will ultimately be the State that determines what will happen there. So, while Narragansett certainly must continue to be vigilant to ensure that our interests are respected and that all applicable local zoning and land use regulations are complied with, we really need to have our State representatives (House and Senate) do their jobs and make sure that this once in a generation opportunity for responsible development is not squandered. That is why we elected them.

staffed. The fines associated with this ordinance will pay for this position and potentially some part time officials. Although the current TC voted to keep the Three Student Ordinance on the books, they failed to add additional penalties to the enforce the ordinance. I would also like to reward landlords who provide year round rentals with the same tax rate as other properties who don't rent seasonally I am in favor of re-examining Zoning Ordinances

that some people understand they

will be receiving a ticket when they

park and opt to do so anyway because

of the low fines. Higher ticketing fees

will discourage "beach parking" in

parking spaces for local business

area such as Boon Street and free up

7. Are you willing to re-examine

the town's rental and zoning ordi-

Yes. As detailed above I would

like to establish Short Term Rental

establish a full time position in the

Building Inspectors office to handle

Ordinances. I would also like to

seasonal rentals; they are under-

nances? Please explain.

### 8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published

Yes

**Robert Patterson** 

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running to help ensure that the progress made by the current Council in returning civility and productivity to the Town government is maintained. We cannot afford to be dragged back into the toxic atmosphere that prevailed just a few years ago and that caused so much damage to our community. The resultant conflicts and needless lawsuits served no purpose other than to waste time and money, especially as relates to the library. Paradoxically, those who caused the chaos are now trying to blame others for the financial consequences.

I am a corporate lawyer with 40+



Alicia Vignali Henry

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for Narragansett Town Council because I believe each of us can contribute to the decision-making processes within our community. I care about the success of Narragansett and am

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

This may be the area where my financial background will be of the most help. Unlike others who seek to curry favor by advocating for nothing but constant cuts and shrinking of programs, and whose answer to every suggestion for improvement is always "NO", I understand the difference between "spending" and "investing". To be clear, wasteful spending needs to be identified, rooted out, and stopped. But just as you invest in your home, your (or your children's) education, and for your financial future, so too must Narragansett invest wisely to assure its continued vitality

### the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

Based on my own non-scientific analysis, the farthest anyone standing in Narragansett can be from the water is about half a mile, and real estate in ocean-front towns like Narragansett is always going to be expensive, which makes the search for affordable housing solutions very challenging. But what we can do is to make sure we identify and get every nickel of available funding from state and federal governmental housing programs. Equally important, we need to focus on making sure that families, especially young families, are drawn to Narragansett because they will see the value they will get from living here. We will do that by keeping taxes low, by insisting that our public schools aim high and are the best in the state, by keeping the Town clean, welcoming, and safe, and by respecting and protecting our most precious resources- the ocean, beaches, and waterways.

4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

Large scale reliance on privately maintained leach fields for disposal of raw sewage is not a good plan, especially given the proximity to the ocean and beaches. Many of us have heard, or been told, that the reason there is a limit on the number of homes that can be connected to the sewer system is because of a lack of capacity at the treatment end. So, we need to add to that capacity. In preparing for this election, I have learned that there are currently well-designed proposals to do exactly that, which I will support. Infrastructure work isn't glamorous but try living without it!

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

I think the best thing the Town can do is to continue to act as a watchdog. I am grateful that many in the Town, including on the Council, called attention and vociferously objected to the plan to turn one of the most valuable pieces of property left in Narragansett into a parking lot, and we owe them our thanks. Sunlight is the best disinfectant, and in this case it worked, as the State has halted, at least for now, the proposed parking

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

There are many different "parking issues". The first thing that often comes to mind is in the summer. with the overwhelming demand for visitor parking around the beaches. But businesses and restaurants rely year-round on having adequate and convenient parking for customers. There are also "parking issues" related to academic year and summer rentals, when renters sometimes bring more cars than can be accommodated in driveways and garages, the result being cars parked on lawns or overnight on streets. Each issue is unique, and there is no single answer. But on two occasions, including as late as last year, the Council commissioned professional, comprehensive parking studies, which included proposed solutions. We haven't heard much

or different facts arise that warrant such a re-examination. But I am not in favor of re-examining existing ordinances simply because of turnover on the Council. To be direct, the recent changes in the rental and zoning ordinances were the subject of extended debate, with persons of good faith engaged on both sides of the issue. In the end, the Council was required to make a tough call and did so, no doubt fully aware that not everyone would agree with the result. But that is the role of government. I believe there is value in closure, especially when it comes to things like regulations, where consistency, certainty and clarity are essential. If, as time goes by, and with the benefit of experience, facts arise that suggest the regulations are not working as expected, or are causing unintended negative consequences, then at that time I would certainly be open to re-visiting the topic.

### 8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

With the cost of living on the rise Narragansett needs to continue to implement policies that ensure a high quality of life for residents while

considering the financial situation of families has shifted. Investments need to be made in infrastructure, housing, and recreational spaces, which need to compliment inclusive, equitable and strategic policies that ensure the investments are beneficial to the community at large.

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### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in Narragansett?

Narragansett needs to continue to explore options for building affordable units in Town, the Affordable Housing Committee has started this work and we need to make sure it continues. We need to come together as a community to expand incentives that encourage landlords to offer Reasonable Rents that benefit families with children and people who work in Narragansett. These are the people who engage with and are invested in the spaces they live. There needs to be balance, Narragansett has a population that changes with the seasons, and each group is vital to the makeup and economic success of the Town so working together to capitalize on these strengths is important.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of

### quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

There needs to be investment in the water systems to support seasonal influxes of people combined with increasing climate related issues. Our community: the water company, residents, businesses and landlords need to come together to fix an issue that has an effect on each one of us; these problems are not going to go away. Those facilities and homes that put the most stress on the systems need to be creative in conservation and should be required to contribute more solutions to fix the situation. We need to look at other environmentally sensitive, tourism communities and see what they have done.

### 5. What is the town's role in addressing the issues around the Lighthouse Inn property in Galilee?

The mismanagement and gross neglect of the Lighthouse Inn in Galilee needs to be addressed: someone needs to be held accountable. The Town deserves an explanation, at

the very least, on how the RIDEM and Procaccianti have allowed this to occur. If due process was not followed when the RFP was granted, then it needs to be voided and redone. I support the Town having a voice at the Table, and the interests of Narragansett and the Narragansett businesses in the area need to be considered. This is a very multi-layered issue, with varying interests, and the revitalization of that piece of Galilee is the responsibility of many entities I do not think it is in the best interest of Narragansett to be responsible for the entire project, but I am in support of ensuring there is collaboration between the Town, RI DEM, the fishing industry and developers. I personally like the concepts that include open space, housing options and fishing industry support outlets alongside the parking.

### 6. Describe the parking issues in town and how you will address them.

Parking in Narragansett is difficult because the Town and our local businesses hold exceptional events, offer delicious dining and the open spaces are places people want to be. Impact-Conscious Tourism practices can be explored, and implement-

ed throughout the Towns policies, business and recreational offerings, creating a culture of sharing space and promoting a less negative impact Offering parking in alternative locations with reliable shuttles along with safe biking and walking areas allow for people to enjoy the area.

### 7. Are you willing to re-examine the town's rental and zoning ordinances? Please explain.

Yes. To ensure Narragansett remains a community there needs to be compromise from all stakeholders. We must come together to make sure we are capitalizing on the benefits of everyone who lives, works and visits Narragansett. Representatives from each group should offer ideas, solutions, and compromises to build a thriving community with a sustainable future. While each Town has different needs, looking to other communities that face the same issues we have is always a great way to get inspired.

### 8. Do you support the successful completion of the new library? Yes/ No (Only a response of yes or no will`be published)





Jennifer Armstron

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

The reason I am running for Narragansett school committee is because I believe that educating children is the key to a strong community and society. Our world is constantly evolving and education should follow suit in order to prepare the children to become their best selves and citizens. This will help ensure the best future for all of us collectively. I want to help guarantee each child in Narragansett fulfill their potential throughout their schooling. My family and I feel a responsibility to serve our community to help it grow and prosper. I find great joy in watching students find their own gifts and talents and to thrive in education.

I am a certified RI teacher, have a dual masters degree in education and the arts, and have been teaching for more than a decade. I have offered many hours in local after school and community music and arts programs. I am a parent of two children who attend Narragansett Public Schools. I have the inside perspective of a teacher and a parent and have the passion to share my knowledge to take us into a new chapter in public education.

2. How will you ensure a diverse,

### equitable and inclusive learning environment?

Narragansett General Election Candidates

I would like to help orchestrate important conversations and make educated decisions about how children should learn during this time. Personalization and differentiation is key in providing the best education for each student. I would start with looking at NPS strategic plan and ensuring action steps are taken and data is collected on what is working and what might need to be revised. All learners should have the opportunity to discover what path suits them in being successful in public education. I would suggest we gather information from all parties who are a part of the students learning ie. teachers, families, community, and the students themselves to initiate learning plans for each student.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain

A committee of teachers, administrators, school committee members and parents should be formed to help determine and revise curriculum. Public School curriculum has evolved over many decades. Throughout time there have been standard texts that

have been used to teach students about important pillars of educational knowledge and structure. I don't believe those should be taken away without a lot of thought and consideration by curriculum committee members, educational researchers, admission officers from institutions of higher education and students. However, our society is progressing and though we can't erase our past we can learn from it and move forward in positive ways. 4. How do we ensure the health

### and safety of children in school?

In my opinion this is on the top of the priority list. Children and families should not have to worry about safety in school. Sadly there are dangers associated with schools today. The school committee, superintendent, commissioner and local leaders should work together to come up with a strict plan for school safety. What is in place now is not enough. Laws might need to change in order to accomplish this. Again important conversations should be had and research should be done about what has worked well in other communities. Action steps should be taken in a short period of time. One possible action step could include unannounced safety checks in schools. As for health considerations, this should

be led in most part by the Department of Health. However, in Rhode Island law, many parties including school committees should help ensure safety and health matters among students and teachers. In situations like communicable diseases, every child and staff member should be considered. If individual plans need to be made and met then that should take priority.

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

Declining school enrollment is based upon many factors among Narragansett's low year round populated community. As a teacher and parent I see low enrollment in both a negative and positive light. I have witnessed first hand some of the benefits of low enrollment. One benefit is the smaller classroom size compared to our neighboring towns. This ensures more personalized instructional time per child. On the negative side, Narragansett doesn't offer as many programs for children as other districts. We don't receive as much funding. The school committee should work with the town in discussion about this issue and figure out reasonable incentives for more families to live here year round. Balance is key for our community and a plan should be made to address education growth

over the next five to ten years.

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### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Absolutely! Arts and Music are essential to not only students but to all members of our community. It is one aspect in today's fast and electronic world that connects us all in a positive light. Research shows that children who take art and music in school significantly outperform other students who don't take art and music classes academically. Today's culture puts pressure on students and families to perform at a very high academic level in order to get into the best colleges and universities. While this is a wonderful goal to have, it only factors in one aspect of the childs' education, academic growth. We need to work harder at changing our culture to include creative arts and activities in order for our students to find a healthy balance and to discover hidden talents and skills.

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school grad-uation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Tony Jones

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I have a long track record of public policy work and civic involvement along with a traditional communications background and skill set, yet I am also well-versed in technology, web-based media, also with new and social media which makes me uniquely qualified to assist in advocating for better transparency and communication in the education sector. For example, in my past civic involvement, I served as a School Committee member, as well as on the North Kingstown Arts Council and the Charter Review Commission, so I have been involved with some form of civic/community involvement for most, if not all, of my adult life. I do this because I truly enjoy it and find it to be personally fulfilling, but I also do it because I feel that good people have a duty to get involved in their community (when they can) So, I see the important role of a school committee member as a natural continuation of my work as a civic-minded citizen. I also truly believe in the importance of providing a quality education that ensures that all students are prepared for their choice of post-secondary pursuits, while also being mindful of the costs.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

A diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment involves collaboration from parents, schools, administers, and our elected school committee members, as well as from the larger society which can help to ensure that all students feel part of their community and with the hopes of creating a sense of belonging for each student that will prepare them for a productive life in the community in the future. Given the benefits of an inclusive learning environment, our schools should continue to strive to build up these partnerships. When serving a diverse student population, it also becomes important to consider a wide range of learning modalities in order to support different learners and different learning styles. I also support opportunities for respectful public discussion and creating space for students to express their thoughts and feelings not only on subject matter in the classroom but also on worldwide issues which can promote a respectful space and a trusting relationship with both the educator and their peers.

### Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material?

While the school committee does have a vote on the final curriculum, good curriculum is never a one-anddone initiative because there's no single best method for its evaluation in general as the effectiveness will depend on the desired learning outcomes, as well as the learners, the teachers, and support materials. In the past, I have been able to work with some very knowledgeable subject matter experts who are an invaluable resource for determining school curriculum and in regarding how curriculum is developed. It is an active process with some time-tested and traditional methods being used while also considering emerging delivery methods. It has also become increasingly important to consider good instructional design models for all curricula.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Most importantly, I support innovative and technology-based solutions to school security. Also, I have a background with, and I

am experienced in facility/campus security and served on the facilities management and planning sub-committee at my former school committee role, so I would look to bring that knowledge to the table. I also feel that it is important to seek input from, and increase open channels of communication with, those who are working on the "front lines" of the school district. This would not only be regarding general health and safety, but also for information on the overall upkeep and hygiene of the facilities. I also support the option of the ability to file an anonymous ethics violation report through a solution such as EthicsPoint etc.

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

Firstly, I support and respect any family that decides that homeschooling, an alternative program, a charter school, a career and technical education program that is not offered in our district, etc. is ultimately a better 'fit' for their needs and for the needs of the student. However, in this time of increased choice, public school systems do often offer more program and curriculum opportunities than some of their charter and private school counterparts, yet they do not do a good job of promoting those

choices. This means that polishing and promoting a school district as a "brand" has now become a key factor for any district. The Narragansett School System currently does do a nice job with this (especially when it comes to cross promoting the career and technical education program options offered in Narragansett) but it is a mindset that should continue to be explored and developed in order to attract students from across Rhode Island.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels?

As a former musician myself, I will always support arts and music education in all grade levels (as I have in the past) My support also extends to extracurricular arts and music opportunities as well as to emerging extracurricular activities such as esports, robotics, blockchain clubs etc. which, much like arts and music, also tend to reach students who may otherwise be disengaged from the school community.

### 7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation?

Yes

1. Why are you running and what

appropriate and supportive policies

teams to ensure there is a coherent

well aware of the significant mental

hard to retain students in the district,



**Tammy McNeiece** 

### expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

The main reason I decided to run for re-election is to ensure that the district continues to grow and improve, maintains high standards for all students, and supports the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. I have been the Chair of the Narragansett School Committee for the past 14 years, and I am very proud of the work the district has accomplished with expanding our preschool programming, completing significant capital projects, and supporting budgets and programs to support the needs of all learners. I have spent the past 20 years working in the field of education as a teacher and a building principal in another school district, and I hold 3 degrees in education. I am well versed in the issues and challenges that schools face on a daily basis, and I bring this perspective and experience to the School Committee.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

One of the most important roles of the School Committee is to write and revise policies. These policies provide the framework to ensure that all students have equitable access to opportunities, and are able to learn in an inclusive learning environment. With

in place, expectations are clear for all students, families, and staff members, and school administrators are able to align their student handbooks with district policies. In addition, over the last term the district established an Equity and Diversity sub-committee. This sub-committee will continue to discuss ideas and make recommendations to the School Committee, to ensure that all students feel safe and supported. The School committee will continue to examine, revise or write new policies to afford all students with equitable opportunities in inclusive learning environments.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain

All curriculum units of study for all content areas should be derived from standards. Instructional resources and materials that are purchased to support curriculum units of study are aligned with specific standards, whether it is Common Core state standards, or content specific standards. In Narragansett there is a long-term curriculum revision plan to ensure that curriculum for each content area will be revisited and revised by teachers and administrators, to ensure curriculum units of study remain aligned to state and national standards as they become updated. Teachers from each school meet periodically in vertical articulation

curriculum scope and sequence at each grade level.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

The physical safety and emotional well being of all students and staff are top priorities. The Narragansett School district worked exceptionally hard to keep all students and staff safe throughout the ongoing pandemic. The district diligently followed all recommendations from the RI Department of Health throughout the pandemic, and will continue to do so to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff. The district was able to keep students in school, and was able to successfully pivot to more restrictive or less restrictive protocols in response to COVID data.

Students need to feel safe and cared for to achieve at high levels. Narragansett schools have revised their safety protocols and plans in response to increased threats and incidents that have occurred across the country. The school department has responded with a multi-tiered approach, including security upgrades in the physical environment at each school, continuing our partnership with the town to support our School Resource officers, and increased mental health support.

The district will now shift its focus to continue to support the social and emotional needs of all students. All school districts across the country are health crisis students in all schools across the nation are experiencing, as a result of the pandemic. Narragansett will continue to personalize learning, and focus on building strong positive relationships and connections with students, to support the social and emotional needs of students.

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

Narragansett is not alone in facing enrollment challenges. The housing and rental crisis has made it extremely challenging for families with young children to find affordable housing in Narragansett. Narragansett has made a concerted plan to expand preschool classes and programs, based on the high demand and need for high-quality preschool. High-quality early childhood programs such as the preschool programs in Narragansett enable students to develop a strong academic and social-emotional foundation, to prepare them to be very successful in Kindergarten. The purposeful expansion of preschool programming based on need and demand, is one way the district is addressing enrollment challenges

In addition, the district has worked very hard to expand and improve its CTE programs at Narragansett High School, which has resulted in significant increases in enrollment at the high school level, as more students tuition in to participate in the vibrant CTE programs. The district works

and to promote the varied opportunities for students to excel at every grade level.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

I enthusiastically support the arts and music education at all grade levels. Narragansett has outstanding opportunities for students at each school in music, theater and the arts. Our high school musicians have received several awards and accolades throughout the years at various performance festivals. The School Committee has financially supported and planned for a significant renovation of the high school auditorium, which includes exciting improvements to the stage, lighting and sound system. This renovation project will greatly enhance the environment for students performing in Band, Orchestra, Chorus concerts and Theater performances. We are very proud of our talented students, and are grateful to our experienced and skilled educators in the music and the arts. I will continue to support these programs at the School Committee level.

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



# VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

**OCTOBER 9, 2022** 





# Narragansett General Election Candidates ★ ★ NARRAGANSETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE



**Alexander Menzies** 

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

The greatest honor of my life was when Narragansett residents elected me to my first term on the School Committee in 2020. I ran for the Narragansett School Committee under the premise that it is important for a student's voice to be heard at school committee meetings. Since then. I have been able to fulfill mv promise to give back to the schools that gave me so much. I grew up in the Narragansett School System and attended kindergarten through twelfth grade. I believed that it was important for a former student who attended all three public schools to be able to provide a unique perspec tive and reflect on the years spent in Narragansett. I am grateful every day for the education that I received. I have had the privilege of serving on

the Health and Wellness, Diversity Team, District Technology, Special Education Advisory, and Knights of the Rockingham Arch subcommittees. I am thankful for all the community members, teachers, parents, and students for their valuable input, hard work, and dedication that made these subcommittees successful. I was also recognized by the Rhode Island Board of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for successfully completing the Rhode Island Association of School Committee's Leadership Academy. I will continue to fight hard for Narragansett students and teachers. It is my hope that every student that graduates from Narragansett will hold the memories they have made in their hearts the way I continue to do so my own.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

I am proud of the leadership role that the Narragansett schools has taken over the last few years. We now have a Diversity/Equity Team that is composed of teachers, parents, students, administrators, principals, and school committee members. Our mission has been to ensure that all students in Narragansett receive an education that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. It is important to encourage and support each other. We need to continue to make sure that every student and teacher has access to all resources that will ensure that every student continues to receive the best education. The school committee recently approved the new District Technology Plan for 2022-2025. As a member of the District Technology subcommittee, we have made it one of our goals to support digital equity. This goal states that we will "ensure all students have access to and ownership of the tools that best support

them as learners, help students develop the skills and competencies they require in order to best take advantage of these digital resources and communicate the value of using these tools to engage with learning experiences that are targeted, authen tic, relevant, socially connected, and growth-oriented." I want to personally thank all members of the District Technology Committee for their exceptional work at putting this thorough plan together. I will continue to support blended learning and making sure that all students have access to various forms of education.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

There is a lot of time and research that goes into determining the school curriculum and deciding on which instructional materials to use. The school library is a fantastic place to find a variety of authors and secondary sources to do research. Focus groups of teachers, students, parents, and administrators will research different programs and will provide their feedback. It is important to hear from as many voices as possible and to make constructive decisions based on current research. Being a student doesn't stop inside the classroom. We are students for life. We will never stop learning and experiencing new things. Every day, people are learning new and improved ways to administer an education that will adhere to the learning style of every student. High quality math, science, reading, and writing programs should follow the current studies on these topics. We are thankful to have a Director of Cur riculum in the Narragansett schools who takes on a great leadership role throughout this process. There are many training and professional

development opportunities that are offered to provide the best programs and methods in Narragansett. Once the focus groups have provided their feedback to the Director, the School Committee will be presented with the options and will vote on the new curriculum.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

The health and safety of all members in the Narragansett schools will always be the number one priority. We went into a pandemic with a lot of questions and unknowns. I am grateful for the tireless work of our teachers, administrators, nurses, maintenance crew, custodians, cafe teria workers, and bus drivers. It took a village to get us through the most challenging months in the history of Narragansett. Your efforts have successfully supported our students and have allowed Narragansett to bounce back stronger than ever. We will continue to abide by the guidelines from the Rhode Island Department of Health. Over the last two years, I have witnessed the countless updates from the school nurses and the superintendent regarding information on COVID and best health practices moving forward. Parents, teachers, and school committee members were regularly informed, and this communication allowed for complete transparency throughout this process. With many concerns in the world today, the Narragansett schools have stepped up their security in each building, revised procedures, utilized technology, and provided staff and students with training. We have also partnered with the Police Department to have School Resource Officers present in our buildings and have emphasized mental health awareness programs in our schools. Building mental health awareness and providing helpful sup

port through resources to all students, teachers, and members in the school community will continue to be a top priority for the Health and Wellness subcommittee.

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

School enrollment has fluctuated over the past few years but continues to decline. It is important now, more than ever, for anyone who qualifies for free or reduced lunch to apply. It is an unfortunate truth that the cost of living in the town of Narragansett and many others has increased significantly. The housing market is at an all time high and interest rates are through the roof. Families are finding it very difficult to move into this town to raise their children. My parents moved to Narragansett before I was born because of the quality of education that the public schools would provide, the beautiful resources all around town, and the many small businesses. Narragansett is seen as a town of opportunity and a place to grow. Since being elected, I have seen how marketable the Narragansett schools and programs are. There are opportunities offered in Narragansett that many other districts can only dream of being able to provide. We have a fully redeveloped school webpage and a monthly newsletter that gets sent out during the school year. We have some of the best resources and the best educational opportunities in the state. The problem is getting families to be able to afford living here. Families want to come. We hear it all the time. We will continue to be mindful of how we budget each year and make the proper adjustments to ensure that every student continues to receive the best education

6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels?

Please explain. We are so lucky to have incredible leadership in the Narragansett art and music education departments.

I have seen the joy that the concerts, art shows, and theater productions continues to bring to all members in attendance. The School Committee just recently approved the renovation project of the high school auditorium. Input was gathered from the music and theater departments so that we could incorporate their wishes. I cannot wait to see the new productions at the college-level auditorium once it is complete. My family always looked forward to attending Narragansett school concerts for my brothers and me. One of my brother' played the saxophone and the other played the trumpet. I grew up singing in the chorus. In our junior year, we performed on stage during the variety show. My parents would attend the art shows at the town library or at the towers to show their support for the work we had done. It is important to support the multiple modalities of learning. Every student has a differen preferred way of learning, and it is important to offer these opportunities to help all students to grow. Many will find their passion in music and the arts. This creative outlet is mentally stimulating and stress reducing. I encourage every student to pick up an instrument, pick up a paint brush or pencil, to find your creative outlet, and to try new things. I will absolutely continue to support the many arts and music education opportunities in

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school grad-uation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

Narragansett.



**Diane Nobles** 

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

My motivation for running is to provide a quality education for our students at an affordable price to our taxpavers. And, to make sure that every student crossing the stage to receive a Narragansett High School Diploma has the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them to be successful at their next step.

Having served on the Narragan sett School Committee since 2004, with the exception of one term, my experience has a historical perspective, as well as, a broad-based working knowledge of the purpose and function of the NSC. During my time on the Committee, I have served, and continue to do so, as Vice Chair, Clerk, Policy Committee Co-Chair, Contract Negotiations School Committee Representative, and RI Association of School Committee (RIASC) District Representative.

Educationally, I earned a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in Educational Human Resource Develop ment. As part of my doctoral studies, I was the main researcher and designer of the Texas Skill Standards System Model. Professionally, I retired after a 35+ year career in Community College Administration in Oklahoma, Texas, and Rhode Island.

Committee, a special DEI Committee for Technology, and is represented on the town's DEI Committee to address this effort and ensure that our learning environment is serving all of our students and providing them with equal opportunity.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain

The School Committee approves the educational materials used in our classrooms when it is an agenda item(s) at our public School Committee monthly meetings. Our Director of Curriculum presents and explains the instructional materials and describes the work of the teacher committee in the selection process. In addition to this responsibility, each year the School Committee, again in a public monthly meeting, reviews and takes a vote on the Narragansett High School Program of Studies. The School Committee, as the elected representatives of the community, performs this oversight function and is answerable to the taxpayers, for the instructional materials and curriculum content.

measures to ensure the health and welfare of our students and staff by adjusting the daily routine protocols for students, establishing set groups of students in pods during the school day, and in all our schools installing high quality HEPA filters, ensuring fresh air was circulating in our buildings and keeping our schools as clean and germ free as possible.

During my time on the School Committee, we have taken many important steps to protect the safety of our students and staff, including implementing the Sandy Hook Promise protocols and trainings and having School Resource Officers in our buildings as a daily presence. From a physical point of view, we have 'hardened' our three schools by instituting new procedures for admittance to our buildings, installed door alarms and new locks on all classroom doors.

While all these many steps were necessary and are important, perhaps the most important aspect for ensuring our students well-being is promoting a caring school culture, where the physical, mental and social-emotional health and safety of our students matter. That our students are seen as the unique individuals that they are and our professional and support staff meet them where they are and encourage their growth, both intellectually and personally

with the addition of our Career and Technical Education Programs. These popular programs, which prepare a student for college, apprenticeship, and/or employment, have attracted an influx of students, not only from our own school population, but from other area school districts. Presently, we offer Agricultural Science, which offers four pathways where students can earn certifications: Floriculture, OSHA/Equipment Safety, Pesticide

Safety and Pet First Aid; Educator Preparation, which uses the nationally accredited Educator Rising curriculum and prepares students to take the Praxis Core Assessment; Information and Computer Technology, which offers curriculum in coding, cybersecurity, virtual reality animation, web design, programing and CISCO Networking Certification; and Mechanical Trades/Plumbing, which offers hands-on training with RI Local 51 in plumbing, construction management, pipe fitting and welding at their state of the art training facilities, which results in the student being certified to begin an apprenticeship with full membership in Local 51.

Our Pre-School has provided affordable educational opportunities for parents of three/four year olds and has been fully subscribed since being established. As a result of this early learning opportunity, more of our third graders are reading on or above grade level and require less support services.

offerings, extracurricular activities, and athletic programs to remain one of the best school districts in the state.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain.

Arts education and music education is appropriate and important in all grade levels. Both allow students to develop their creative skills, talents and open another avenue for expression and communication. According to Americans For the Arts, art and music education inspires kids to excel in and out of the classroom and can be a key motivation for a student to remain in school. According to their research, "A student involved in the arts is 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement".

The Narragansett School District has very strong arts and music education programs at all grade levels. The students' instrumental and vocal performances, plays, musicals and art displays at all three schools are outstanding. And, the number of awards that our students earn in state, regional and national competitions is very imp

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

The district has established a DEI

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

The health and safety of our children while in school, as well as, the health and safety of our professional and support staff, is a primary responsibility. During the recent Covid pandemic, our schools took extraordinary

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

While Narragansett has seen a decline in enrollment over the years, it has somewhat leveled recently,

Another equally important strategy for stemming declining enrollment, is to be continuously improving and strengthening our district's academic

### 7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school grad-uation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



### Justin Wolf Skenyon

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I have had the honor of serving for three terms on the Narragansett School Committee and wish to use my knowledge and experience to serve our students, parents and teachers. I recognize a high performing school system is critical to the success of our community and want to continue to contribute toward this goal. I have chosen a career as an Ocean Engineer, having earned my degree from the University of Rhode Island. I grew up in Narragansett, I am an Eagle Scout and a proud member of our local Lions Club. Participating in serving our community is important to me. I am proud of how our committee has worked together to smoothly address issues and situations that have arisen. I have served on the capital and budget subcommittees and I am proud of working to

maintain a reasonable budget while undertaking large projects to improve our schools

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse. equitable and inclusive learning environment?

This is a very important issue. I encourage the celebration of diversity in our student population. We know that when students have access to an equitable and welcoming environment there is a positive impact on their education. I will work to provide an environment within our schools where all student voices are listened to and understood. We all bear the responsibility of being positive role models and as a school committee member I intend to support our teachers as they navigate the different learning styles within the classroom.

3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instruc-

### tional and school library material? Please explai

Our school curriculum is determined by an open and collaborative process led by our dedicated staff of excellent teachers and administrators as well as input from parents and students which is critical to a robust curriculum. Since I have served on the school committee Narragansett has strengthened and expanded its Career and Technical Education programs. We have used our library to take advantage of the one to one laptop program to ensure each student their own individual device to expand their access to educational material.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Students are best educated in a positive environment where they are physically and mentally healthy

and safe. During the spread of the coronavirus, we followed professional guidance while including additional measures to protect our students' health. In addition we are working on providing programs to address the stress a student may be experiencing. Over the last several years we have also made numerous efforts to upgrade our school security measures. further protecting the safety of our students. Improving students' wellbeing will continue to be my priority.

### 5. How will you manage declining school enrollment?

We have been able to take advantage of retirements, reorganizing teachers each year, and shrinking class sizes. I am proud we have been able to maintain the size and scope of our school curriculum available to students despite the decrease in enrollment. I will continue to advocate for our CTE which attracts students

from out of district who wish to take advantage of our programs. If the declining trend continues we will take on those challenges.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Yes absolutely, the arts and music are fundamental parts of ourselves and should be taught at every grade. The arts are communications of our minds on display for the world. Music, art and entertainment all provide color and beauty to our lives on a daily basis. It is essential we work to ensure students benefit from the introspection the arts can provide.

### 7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation?







Katherine Anderson Democrat

### Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for re-election as the only Town Council candidate with a 360 degree view of our community: I am a working mom of two young kids, and my parents - both retirees - live



I am a licensed clinical social worker currently practicing in community mental health, serving those with significant challenges to their health and well-being. I have a background in public policy, non-profit fundraising and development, and healthcare management. In sum, I have dedicated my career to helping individuals, families, and communities achieve a higher quality of life.

Since my first term began in 2020, we have made tremendous strides in preparing for and mitigating climate change, restoring and expanding school funding, improving town services and assets, and updating environmental and water protections. Despite global financial challenges, we maintained a strong fund balance. We passed a budget that was fair to taxpayers in these trying times, while still allowing our municipal and school services to function at a high level. However, we have more work to do.

Looking forward, the next council will allocate rescue plan funds to new, innovative projects to ensure improved quality of life for our residents. We must continue investing in education, supporting our residents and town workforce, and helping the town navigate through crises like inflation and the protracted COVID pandemic.

North Kingstown General Election Candidates

**NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL** 

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

Our municipality maintains a strong fund balance and an AA+ bond rating - evidence of our accountability to taxpayers and strict adherence to our fiscal responsibilities, even amidst uncertain economic times. We can incorporate innovative funding solutions, like the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, to ensure our ambitious future projects - to possibly include a recreation center and new public safety complex, among others — are prudent investments. Similarly, I proudly championed North Kingstown's participation in the Municipal Resiliency Program, which saw almost \$675,000 in grant money come to our town for infrastructure projects related to climate and environmental hazards.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

There is no one answer for how a municipality can solve our unprecedented housing crisis. This is a crisis I see daily in my role as a social worker. Everyone from working families, to young professionals, to seniors feel the shortage acutely. We must partner with community-based groups and adapt best practices from other municipalities. We must look to intentionally funnel any development through appropriately zoned, transit-friendly hubs to avoid sprawl and think sustainably to ensure we address our housing and climate crises jointly.

Earlier this year I asked the town's Economic Development Advisory Board to consider hosting a forum on affordable housing. I look forward to seeing further conversation on how we might tackle this complex issue.

Last, the Council proudly passed a Homestead Exemption to help keep homeowners in their homes — an effort to not add to the housing crisis by driving people out of their residences.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Yes. I supported the Chamber of Commerce's budget requests in both budget cycles since I have been elected, and I voted in accordance with their endorsement of the town's state of emergency declaration. The declaration granted businesses more flexibility to operate outdoors or in other amended ways without the typical "red tape," thus allowing them to survive the pandemic.

# 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

The Post Road corridor is appropriately zoned for both residential and business expansion, and both must grow in tandem to be mutually supportive. Business will not grow or thrive without housing, and housing will not assure quality of life without the small businesses that allow a community to flourish. I look to findings from the Council's first Post Rd workshop and the Economic Development Advisory Board's forum on growth to support this. I would support the town continuing to draw upon lessons learned from these discussions from experts, stakeholders, town staff, and community members

# 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

Town Manager Mollis and the current Council have been in ongoing talks with the Department of Transportation on issues including traffic through Wickford, sidewalks along Post Rd and through Wickford, and



possible shuttle or bus service. The Council gave preliminary authorization for the Town Manager to explore using ARPA funds for the sidewalk project in particular. I voted in favor of the Public Works' budget — which includes provisions for road repair in each budget cycle since I was elected. I support any efforts to improve our infrastructure and traffic safety.

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

We must continue learning from issue experts including our municipal staff, RIDEM, URI, the US Geological Survey, our town committees, and others. This last council passed a sweeping and comprehensive update to our groundwater ordinance. The ordinance is in line with current best practices and has the flexibility in its verbiage to address both current and future threats. We must protect open space and acquire new open space.

8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Kalen Arreola Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

Born and raised in Rhode Island by teenage parents, I grew up watching them work incredibly hard to stay off welfare and build a janitorial services company. My mother's dream was to make enough to buy a house "down near the beach." She battled Lupus SLE and passed away months after our family moved to South Kingstown in our brand-new home, that she and my father worked so hard to purchase.

At age 14, I had to become a leader in my own small family, by taking care of laundry, sometimes my little sister, doing dishes, buying groceries, cooking, and cleaning house. I was hired at Shaw's Supermarket in Wakefield at the age of 15 and by the time I turned 17 I was a shift manager.

After 9/11 I knew I wanted to serve our country, so I joined the Army Reserve and worked as a Public Affairs Officer for ten years. I earned a Bronze Star for Leadership during my deployment to Iraq from 2007-2008. I launched a marketing agency in 2010 and continue to serve clients nationwide. I have served on the boards of numerous nonprofits but have since focused all my spare time on raising my daughter.

I love North Kingstown and would be honored to serve the people here from all political sides. I believe that we can work together without divisive rhetoric, and I'd like to help champion that.

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

This is truly the most difficult thing that is asked of every public servant, but I think it can be simplified if political posturing is taken out of the equation.

In business, clients want to understand the ROI, or "return on investment" of any activity they're paying for. I think we should be looking at financial decisions with the same lens. Taxes come from hard working people who are spending more and more every year just to enjoy everyday life. Leaders should be able to ask where is the money going, why is it going there, and who is it benefitting? If the taxpayer doesn't see an ROI of some kind, then we need to have a discussion.

# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

The state will need to enforce quotas by developers to build affordable housing. I saw how they failed to do that in San Diego and it caused massive housing shortages. By the time they acted, families had already been forced to leave and homelessness skyrocketed. We cannot allow that to happen here.

4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain. Absolutely. I was raised in a small business household, and I have had the most freedom as a single mother being a business owner. It has been incredibly difficult, but also extremely rewarding.

Whether elected or not, it is a goal of mine to spearhead local programs that help teach entrepreneurs of all ages how to start and grow a business.

The greatest thing about entrepreneurship is that the market doesn't care if you are a woman, a man, young, old, or any label you'd like to insert. If you bring value to others through a product or service, and you can be paid for it, then you've got something to build from.

5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

If done well, Route 1 could be a thriving business corridor that supports our growing town.

6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and

### increased traffic?

Our town is expanding, and these issues will continue, making it a necessity to keep the roads maintained, expand them in areas, and add adequate sidewalks. This will take leadership willing to engage with the State of Rhode Island.

# 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply, and stormwater runoff?

Our town has excellent water quality, and systems in place that are working well for both quality and supply. As far as stormwater runoff, this will take leadership willing to engage with the State of Rhode Island.

8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes.



### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I was born in NK in 1939, educated in the public schools, and raised by depression-era parents who instilled in me a sense of service. I served as a professional soldier for 20 years, then worked in private industry another borders. Roads, housing, small businesses, sub-contractors to industry, bigger schools, new government center, new police and fire complexes and many other very large projects must be closely coordinated with Quonset leadership. Quonset is the tail wagging the NK dog and we need to clearly understand what that means going forward.

by developers to the detriment of the community...it is not accomplishing what the taxpayers expected. I have been in meetings with the RI Planning Department and served on the latest 10 year rewrite of the NK Comprehensive plan. I witnessed the overbearing power of the unelected state bureaucracy and the wrong direction our state is headed in. The town of NK can do nothing about it short of reponu"Post Road North" expansion of the completely upgraded and enlarged Quonset sewer operation that would allow significant commercial upgrading. Instead, cheap, state politics got involved and Post Road North became Post Road South. Again, North Kingstown had no power against state politics. It is now even more important to sewer Post Road North.

### performance.

# 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

- Quality: NK already has an excellent track record and internal process for water quality.

William King Republican 25 years reaching executive positions and business ownership. I served on town and city boards wherever I was stationed. Since returning to NK in 1990 I have served on all the key town commissions.

- Serving my town is a request to someone who they trust. If elected I must demonstrate good, reasonable judgment and honor that trust.

- In my professional career I volunteered to evaluate the best factories in the world who competed for an international award of excellence. I will constantly ask every requested town action to demonstrate knowledge of what town, city anywhere in the world is the "Best-In-Class" for comparison. - NK is driven by the Ouonset

- NK is driven by the Quonset Point industrial miracle within our

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

NK has very competent management and financial professionals that do an excellent job balancing need and cost. I will ask the proper questions at budget time to ensure the taxpayers are honored as the paying owners of their town.

# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

"Affordable Housing" is 100% controlled by the US and state governments and is being gamed in NK lating the state legislature.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

- Yes

- I also encourage NK to adopt the Quonset "Shovel-Ready" business property program that has been a key to the Quonset successful expansion.

# 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

Rte. 1 from Quonset to the East Greenwich line is ripe for expansion. In 2002 the RI state encouraged a

# 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

- Roads: I chaired the town Asset Management Commission for several years. Re-paving was always a priority issue and funded well enough for most residents with very few complaints or issues.

- Traffic: Post Road is a mess; it is 100% controlled by the state of RI. From Quonset south it should be expanded with more lanes. New laws are needed to require any new or repair construction to include deeding and installing 6 feet of frontage with new sidewalks. Compare to Michigan and other states for "Best-In-Class" - Supply: NK already does an excellent job managing the several water sources, some shared with other communities.

- Run-Off: I live on the ocean with a clean, well-maintained and easily accessed Right-of-Way abutting our property. I am very aware of run-off/ environmental issues that are regulated by the state of RI, not the towns.

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Gregory Mancini Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for town council to participate in our democracy and try to make a positive contribution to our community. And I believe that the record of our town council for the past few years demonstrates that there has been positive change in

our town. These accomplishments include ensuring that our vacant town hall will be successfully renovated. resolving numerous lawsuits with little liability to the town, increasing town reserves by 80%, lowering the tax rate from \$18.06 in 2018 to \$14.06 this year, attaining a AA+ bond rating, establishing a homestead exemption, significantly improving our town water quality, improving town parks and beach facilities, and increasing funding to our underfunded school system. Accordingly, in the short time Katie Anderson, Kim Page and I have been on the council we have accomplished so much, but so much more needs to be done, and if re-elected we will get it done.

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

Balancing the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility is always challenging. I strive to do this by thoroughly going through the proposed budget department by department of town government and reviewing what is really needed versus what is wanted. I weigh that against what I hear from constituents as well as a review of our economic climate and then make a decision what to fund. It is not easy because I know that there are a lot of people struggling but I also know that our town has needs that cannot be overlooked. This past year our council unanimously passed our budget that has an approximate 2% increase. In addition, for the first time ever we also included a limited homestead exemption.

# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

Municipalities have very limited legislative tools to assist in addressing the dire need for housing, particularly affordable housing. Having said that, I have tried to promote housing developments on major throughways and near mass transportation. In doing so, I have also focused on trying to maximize affordable housing units within these developments. All projects approved must have a reasonable percentage of units designated as affordable.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

I believe I have supported a business friendly environment in several respects: during my first term on the council I asked our town administration to conduct a community workshop focused how we as a community can support economic

development on Post Road (COVID hampered our ability to conduct a follow up workshop this term); worked with the town to have all NK businesses on the Boom Local Internet Directory (https://www. boomlocalusa.com/north kingstown?search&page=1), a directory that people in our community can utilize to find any business in town; supported a grant to the North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce to allow them to promote businesses; and, initiated and supported a grant to the Wickford Village Merchants' Ass'n to also assist them in promoting commerce in the village.

# 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

As indicated in the prior question, the condition of Post Road caused me to ask our town administration to conduct a workshop to see how we can improve the business climate on Post Road in my first term. Our Economic Advisory Board along with many citizens made a significant contribution to this workshop.

The following suggestions in the workshop that our town has acted upon are: an ordinance that allows for easier access for an administrative review as opposed to going through the full planning process; an ordinance that increases penalties for not properly maintaining properties; a commitment to re-shape our town economic development position; more aggressive town involvement in the state site readiness program; an updated database of residents and businesses on an email listserv.

However, this is only a start. More needs to be done. And if elected, we will hold yet a second workshop to assess what we have done to date and see what we need to do to support a vibrant economy on Post Road. Limited residential expansion along the Post Road corridor will also be part of any solution to making this throughway economically vibrant.

### How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

At the town level, we allocate what is affordable to our public works department to fix and maintain town roads. At the state level, I have met with the director of transportation multiple times to advocate for investment in state roads that go through North Kingstown. This not only includes advocating for fixing and maintaining our roads, but also putting in sidewalks and bike lanes. In meetings with the DOT we have also advocated for them to reevaluate our roads for increasing traffic patterns. If elected, this is something that I will continue to do with the DOT.

# 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

Ensuring water quality is one of, if not the most important responsibilities our town council has. As a town councilor I rely on the opinions and analysis of multiple experts to ensure our water quality. These experts include our in-house water department, experts at the University of Rhode Island, and outside engineering firms. To date, all have unanimously determined that our town has the strictest water quality standards in the state. In fact, our town is looked at as a statewide leader on water quality standards and maintenance. This past year we tapped into these water quality experts to upgrade our water quality standards. Upgrades that our town council unanimously passed into law.

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

# Be Sure to Vote on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.





Laurence Mandel Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for Town Council out of a desire to give back to my community. I retired from the State Department as a U.S. diplomat after a 32+ year career, and with my wife Judy (Curry) Mandel settled in NK, where she grew up. We love this community, which I first started coming to in 1970.

My experience as a diplomat, bringing people together to resolve problems and issues, is important at a time when our country is so divided. I have run large embassies overseas and have served on school and community boards - frequently in leadership roles. Before joining the Foreign Service I was an attorney and business executive. Currently I serve on the Town's Economic Development Advisory Board, the Audit and Personnel Committees and was an election official for the 2020 elections. I have the public service gene.

2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

The economy and Covid restrictions created a difficult fiscal environment for everyone. We are fortunate to have some federal funds that were allocated to us, which can help us address long-standing one-time needs such as putting sidewalks on Post Road and building an indoor recreation center. We can target residential growth where we have infrastructure, such as near the train station. This can help us in the long run to grow our tax base and invest where we most need it, including in our schools, while maintaining or improving our quality of life. As Town Council we will need to make strategic decisions about how best to use our resources.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

Affordable housing is a problem all across America, and needs solutions at the federal and perhaps state levels to meet the needs of people who are priced out of the market. The Town Council is currently exploring whether there is a way we can incentivize

the building of affordable housing; I support that effort. The addition of apartments and townhouses at places like Reynolds Farm creates additional opportunities; we need more such options. I favor the use of vacant land near the train station for further housing.

North Kingstown General Election Candidates

**NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL** 

### 4. Do you support a busi-ness-friendly environment? Please explain.

Businesses are an important part of our community, as they provide a key engine for maintaining our quality of life. I support working with the business community to create more opportunities; at the same time our businesses need to be good citizens and help North Kingstown remain an excellent place to live and work. North Kingstown is exceptionally lucky to have a wide variety of locales - business areas, Quonset for industry, land for farming, our outstanding beaches and marine life, town and suburban life-styles, etc. We need to keep this wonderful balance.

5. What is your stance on

### residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

North Post Road needs and deserves additional attention. An indoor recreation center located along the Route 1 corridor could be an important anchor: at the same time the town has had difficulty finding an appropriate, available and affordable parcel of land (if anyone knows of a potential site please let us know!). The electric company's right-of-way along Post Road is a complicating factor, but I would encourage further dialogue with the (new) electric utility to try to find acceptable solutions.

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) plays a key role in helping with traffic management, and we partner with them for solutions such as to the long-standing traffic problems in Wickford at the 3-way junction of Brown and Phillips Streets. At the same time, we need to be smart and look for other transit op-

tions such as bike lanes on Post Road to tie into the bike path at Quonset, and from Wickford Train Station into the village of Wickford.

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

By all objective standards we are blessed with excellent drinking water; our goal is to maintain that quality. We have major water run-off problems at the municipal parking lot in Wickford that the Town is working to correct. So far we have been able to balance the usage of commercial and agricultural interests with our overall supply; we need to keep looking ahead to ensure we maintain that balance.

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



**Matthew Mccoy** Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am running for a seat on the town council because North Kingstown is my home and I care about how it is governed. As a U.S. Navy veteran, I want to continue to serve. I bring the experience, leadership, and management skills that come with twenty-three (23) years of military service (enlisted & officer) and the business acumen and experience from more working in the aerospace and defense industry. I also bring the expertise derived from my volunteer work in our community and with veteran's organizations. My advocacy on numerous issues has given me a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local government and how they interact and support one another.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

The taxpayers of North Kingstown, many of whom are seniors on fixed incomes, have been greatly affected by high inflation, increased property assessments, and other demands for their limited income and savings. As

a member of the Town Council, I will work to ensure that we keep property taxes as low as necessary while concurrently providing oversight of the town's expenditures to ensure that appropriated funds are not wasted. I will work with the Town Manager and others to identify other sources of revenue and financing that may be used by the town. If the voters approve of having cannabis dispensaries in town, then I support using the 3% municipal sales tax to help pay for additional public safety costs and mental health and substance use education, counseling, and treatment.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

The shortage of affordable housing is a complex national problem that is also seen throughout Rhode Island. I think that the first thing that I would do is to work with the other members of the Town Council to identify a reasonable affordable housing target for our town. North Kingstown is required by Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) to have at least 10% affordable housing. I think that we can and must do better. One thing that the Town Council can do is to ensure that existing housing stock in town is being used appropriately. I believe that there should be a cap on the number

of short-term rental properties (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) I think that the Town Council also needs to keep an eve on outside real estate investors who are driving up property values and real estate assessments.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Yes, I support North Kingstown having a business-friendly environment, with caveats. I believe that there are certain types of businesses which are preferable over other types and are better suited for our town. My preference would be to see more small businesses established than big box or chain stores. I believe that the Town Council's role is to properly manage the commercial property tax rate and relevant town ordinances to attract new small businesses and help them be competitive. Collaboration with and support of organizations like the North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce and the Wickford Merchants Association are vital. Having the right mix of businesses in the town will help to promote tourism and increased economic activity.

5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

I am not opposed to residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor. I think that whatever is considered needs to be fully aligned with the town's Comprehensive Plan and the community's vision for the future.

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I will address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic by first listening and hearing the concerns of the town's residents These may be expressed during public comments at Town Council regular meetings or at meetings of the town's advisory Boards, Commissions, or Committees. During the annual budgeting process, I will work directly with the other members of the Town Council, the Town Manager, and his staff to identify the required local, state, and federal funding needed to prevent the deterioration of the town's roads. Likewise, I would seek the advice and recommendations of the Town Manager, his staff, and experts from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to find solutions to concerns about increased traffic.

7. How will you address the

### town's water issues in terms of quality, supply, and stormwater runoff?

The Town Council is ultimately responsible for protecting the town's water supply. Any new development in town needs to fully consider potential impacts on water quality and supply. As a member of the Town Council, I would seek the advice and recommendations of the Town Manager, Director of the North Kingstown Water Department, the town's Conservation and Groundwa ter Committees, and experts from the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). I would work with the other members of the Town Council to adjust the town's ordinances, if required, to ensure the protection of the town's water supply I believe that the town's water supply can be protected while still allowing for further residential and commercial development in North Kingstown

8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I am currently on the Town Council and if reelected, I will be able to give my time and talents for another term. I am an attorney and bring my knowledge of the law to the Town Council meetings. I have a doctorate in educational leadership and bring eight years of serving on the NK School committee to fostering a better relationship between the town governance and the school system. I am a lecturer at the University of Rhode Island where I teach business law and discuss business start-ups. I work with new businesses in my law practice. I am active in the community as the President of the Board of Directors at the NK Food Pantry, and a trustee at my church. I was trained a mediator by the Center for Mediation and Collaboration of RI. I can bring this wide experience in many areas to the Town Council.

ings each year, we must listen to the various town departments and the school district as they justify their proposals, and we must keep in mind the wants and needs of the town. We count on the Town Manager to lead us in being fiscally responsible as well as being realistic about the increases in costs. The heads of each of the NK departments must justify any in-

projects that propose new housing in town must include a percentage apportioned for affordable housing.

4. Do vou support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

I support our North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce by attending

to making Route 1 more attractive. Prior to the pandemic, the Council had a workshop to discuss Post Road revitalization. As we are now putting the pandemic behind us, it would be a good time to host another workshop to discuss what we can do next.

6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and

### quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

Our Water Director, Tim Cranston, assured the town and the Council that North Kingstown has a healthy quality and quantity of groundwater. The town regularly monitors the water and publishes reports on the town website. All North Kingstown water reports are positive and we have repeatedly won awards for being the best water in the state. The Town Council unanimously passed all proposed upgrades requested by the Water Department. As Council members, we took a tour of our wells within a month of being sworn into office. Our Council made clean water a priority by preserving this valuable natural resource through the funding of infrastructure improvements for our wells, and through updating the groundwater ordinances so we could preserve and protect our water supply.



**Kimberly Page** Democrat

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

When we hold our budget meet-

creased costs to their budget. Council members do not want to increase the budget, but as state costs rise, we want to maintain our quality of life for the citizens of North Kingstown. In 2022, the fiscal budget of the town was passed by a 5-0 vote, meaning all the council members agreed to the final numbers of the budget. We passed the Homestead Act in 2022 to lessen some of the increase in the tax burden.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

I am an advocate for affordable housing in all new construction projects for North Kingstown. When we build new residences, we need a balance of affordable housing as well as new residences. Residential

the ribbon cuttings of new business and various chamber events. I shop at local stores and eat at local restaurants. I support the Town Manager's efforts to give grants to businesses who remodel their business façade on Post Road. I support the Chamber's grant for taking business outside. I want businesses to feel they can come before the Council with their requests and we will listen.

### 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

There are areas that are already zoned for business which are deteriorating. I would advocate for new businesses to take over such areas so they can be revitalized and renovated before starting a business in a new area. I see that as a means

### increased traffic?

Each year the town and state list their priorities of roads to repave and improve. Our director of Public Works, Adam White, supervises and prioritizes the roads and public buildings that need to be fixed. He advocates for upgrades to town roads that need to be repaired, but the state has final say in the ranking of state road work. Public Works yearly prioritizes the local roads that need to be repaired and works on those issues in the spring and through the fall. I see the increased traffic and am sometimes stuck on Post Road; I am an advocate for the state to look for improvements for this frustrating situation.

7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



1. Why are you running and what

I am a seasoned professional that

has been involved with North Kings-

town town government for 12+ years.

understand budgets, planning and I

recognize the importance of listening

to and understanding the facts to

expertise and experience do you

bring to the council?

make informed decisions without bias. If elected I will listen to residents and be involved for the betterment of North Kingstown. From A (Asset) to Z (Zoning), I

consistently attend North Kingstown Town Council, numerous Sub-Committee's and special meetings to learn "and" understand the challenges and goals of our town government. Unlike our Town Sub-Committee's, I have found that our current Town Council has become fragmented as the current Town Council majority exerts its will on the full council and residents alike as they either offer partial to improper substantiations and or they turn their deaf ear to their constituents. Unfortunately, it is apparent that our Town Council majority has forgotten that residents are at the top of the North Kingstown Organizational Chart.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

North Kingstown has experienced substantial budget surpluses over the previous 6 years at the same time our Town Council majority has voted to levy increased property taxes on residential and business properties. Additionally, beyond adding annual surpluses to an already bloated Town Undesignated (rainy day) Fund, op-

posed to utilizing budget surpluses to reducing property tax levy's, our Town Council has also approved diverting a budget surplus to yet another account for "possible" future use i.e. gone and maybe forgotten. The fact of the matter is that North Kingstown budget surpluses are Taxpayers' money such that I would support and vote to use surpluses to reduce or reject an added tax increase.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

North Kingstown's approved and proposed development plans are required to include a "minimum" of 10% affordable housing which applies to both apartments and homes. Current, approved and proposed North Kingstown development is on a path of meeting Rhode Island's requirement of 10% affordable housing.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

I believe that an essential characteristic of a vibrant town is a balance of residential, retail, service and restaurants. I also believe that added businesses contribute to the growth of existing businesses. Beyond Quonset and as identified

in our Comprehensive Plan, North Kingstown currently has multiple commercial districts that include available and shuttered commercial buildings. Additionally, the Taxpayer paid for Market Analysis supports our Comprehensive Plan's identification of commercial districts also indicating that North Kingstown has excessive commercial space. I fully support our commercial districts and I am in favor of our Town Officials assisting to stimulate outside businesses to relocate to existing, revamped or rebuilt North Kingstown commercial space.

### 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

Post Road (Rte. 1) continues to experience increased residential development such as Saw Mill, Reynolds Farm and much more in process and planned. I support eliminating the burden of the Post Road Corridor Plan commercial constraints. Additionally, although there have been some commercial wins, I believe our town officials need to be proactive in promoting and attracting commerce to our Post Road commercial district. We only need to look to our south and north to understand that Post Road can and should be be a viable commercial district.

- I support relocating Post Road power line poles away from sidewalks and outside of business parking lots as well as the overdue installation of Post Road north sewers without raising taxes

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I will continue to support the town's effort to identify, budget and re-pave town roads. Per RI DOT's (road diet) standards, the Post Road Diet traffic count has exceeded its recommended maximum (diet) count. I will support and vote to revert Post Rd South to a four-lane road to allow for improved Quonset and new development traffic flow

- North Kingstown experiences a high volume of diverted RT 4 traffic due to the delays and backups caused by the West Allenton and Oak Hill biased traffic stop lights. Additionally, these same traffic stop lights create excessive delays for West Allenton and Oak Hill crossover traffic. I support and I will persistently petition RI DOT to move forward with the state's original plans of overpasses to eliminate the RT 4 traffic lights, increase traffic flow to eliminate the need for RT 4 traffic to divert onto North Kingstown roads.

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

- North Kingstown Town Officials have indicated that there are no town water supply issues.

- As a regular attendee of the Groundwater Committee meetings, I have not heard nor am I aware of any town storm water runoff issues.

- The North Kingstown Water Department issues an annual resident Town Water Quality Report and while the report is extensive, it is difficult to understand. Past history has demonstrated that this quality report lacks contaminate information completeness simply because our Water Dept is not required to list below level contaminates. I will support and vote to re-establish our drinking water aquifer and wellhead protections recently downgrad ed by our Town Council majority and require that water quality reports are simplified and include all contaminate levels.

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)





**Richard Welch** Independent

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I have served on the North Kingstown School Committee for one term as Chairman and three terms on the town council, one term as President. I have served on many town committees and boards since 1978 which has given me a lot of knowledge that comes with that firsthand experience. Many of the present and previous members of the town council have not had this experience and that lack of knowledge and background has proved costly to our town. It is hard to know how to plan for the future when you do not know where you have been and why you should not repeat the same mistakes.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

When you understand that time in grade gives very valuable knowledge and experience, you have a feeling what is important to our citizens and what the priorities are. Having run

my own business for many years I understand the need to proceed with caution and understand the responsibility for making very careful decisions that may affect the community for years to come. This combination of work experience and many years of involvement in the town will help our community.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

The State of Rhode Island has mandated that every community have not less than 10% affordable housing. At present our community has over 8% affordable housing and has approved new development not yet built that would put us over 10%. The law cannot accomplish its goal since our young firefighters, policemen, teachers do not qualify according to the salary limits. Furthermore, owning an affordable housing unit will not allow the owner to build any equity in the home, it is like paying rent.

4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

North Kingstown General Election Candidates

**NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL** 

I am not sure what you mean by support. I encourage the protection of our environment by any business doing business in Rhode Island or in our country. For too long we as a country have taken advantage of low-cost fuel and non-existent government controls on the environment and we are now paying the price.

### 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

We need a plan to redevelop existing real estate along the route 1 corridor to make it more attractive to new investment for retail and housing This housing is needed for the employees at the Quonset Industrial Park which is attracting new employers and building investment every year. Most of the empty buildings on Post Road were built when the Navy was in town and our population was over 30,000, a number that still has not been reached almost 45 years after the Navy closed the base. The zoning along the Post Road Corridor should

be changed back to the way it was before it was changed some years ago. Post Road will never be like Wickford or Main Street in East Greenwich

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

We have been spending millions of dollars upgrading our town roads recently making up for the lack of spending on our roads in previous years. Past town managers did not budget for road paving, this has changed in the last 6 years with an eye towards a 20-year cycle to repave our roads before they need to be replaced completely. Increased traffic comes with more employees and businesses at Quonset together with any new residential development in town which is eventual growth in south county.

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff.

This issue came up when I was last on the town council The Water Dept.

It certainly has that appearance now. Post Road should not be a stretch of road that you must endure, so you can get to that place you want to be. It may be hard to envision now, but Post Road can be, and should be, a destination. At the moment, Rhode Island Energy has a 66ft easement on Post Road. Working around that is cumbersome, but with the removal, elimination, or relinguishment of that easement, we would have more, and better, choices for the development of Post Road. This is understandably a very difficult task for the next council, but also one of their most important issues. As Chairman of the Zoning Board of Review, as well as a board member for the NK Sewer Appeals, I've seen numerous applications for residential and business development along this stretch of road, and all have been reviewed/considered with rigorous attention to the overall NK Comprehensive Plan, NK Zoning Ordinance, and the Post Road Design Guidelines. I believe the key is appropriate, reasonable, and responsible development that meets the needs of North Kingstown residents and taxpayers, as well as the needs of the NK business community.

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

With the development of Post Road, will come more congestion. It's hard to have one, without the other, but we can make it better than what it is. Although the road itself

about \$20 million to accomplish the work. About \$9 million is already on hand and work should be in process at this time starting with the leaking pipes once they have identified where they are. The availability of new federal funds to pay for water utility improvement will be a plus to help pay for this construction. I am not aware of any storm water runoff issues that have not been addressed. I support returning to the former water department regulations that were recently changed by the town council, no explanation was given why we needed to have less restrictions on our water and who wanted this change. We also need to explore the need for new filters on our water to take out different minerals and PFAS which are everlasting chemicals that can cause cancer.

proposes to up-grade existing old

pipes over the next ten years spending

8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



**Randy Wietman** Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I grew up in a small northern Minnesota community into a very blue-collar family where a solid work ethic was thought to be at the core of all meaningful success. I still believe in, and honor, those values because I know they always apply. I joined the Navy soon after I graduated from college, because I felt that service to my country was an expectation. I retired a Navy Commander with significant leadership experience both at sea and ashore, and also have extensive

manufacturing experience in running several major OEM product lines for Texas Instruments. After retirement, I decided to continue my service on the local level, and I am gratified in knowing that I have, indeed, made a meaningful contribution in my community. I am the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Review and have been on this board for the past 11 years. I am also currently a board member for the NK Charter Review. NK Sewer Appeals, Historic Wickford (HistWick), Parades Committee and Wickford Yacht Club. I'm proud of my record with the US Navy, and with my community. If you want to know what a candidate will do if elected, look at what they have done, and continue to do. Look for a demonstrated commitment, through continuous and consistent involvement. I raised my two daughters in North Kingstown. As such. I've invested in NK and have a very real interest in seeing that we continue our proud legacy for the next generation.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

As a board member of the Charter Review, I was involved in the development of the Town's Charter to include several questions that will appear as ballot questions this Nov 8th. Among those are questions concerning fiscal responsibility as it relates to the stewardship of town assets. We need to set aside funding that is specifically targeted for maintenance/repair of our town assets. The Old Library,

Town Hall, Old Meeting House, Wickford Elementary were in such derelict condition that all had to be shuttered. These were all lost opportunities for NK residents and taxpayers. The result is that some assets were sold off. Some required a bond to resolve. Ideally, and much more appropriately, our assets should be maintained via a much more effective asset management process that includes a funding source in the budget, so we don't have to go to bond for maintenance & repair. We also need to develop, and guide Alternative Energy in North Kingstown through a common sense, comprehensive plan for solar and wind. Alternative Energy is part of our future. We must make good decisions on this topic and that takes professional guidance, as well as citizen involvement. Lastly, we need to continue the development of Quonset Point. It is the preeminent economic engine for the entire state of RI. Although NK receives revenue through 3 sources (rents, property taxes, and PILOT programs), we need to continually reassess opportunities to maximize our return from this hugely successful state asset in our own community.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

The State of RI requires that each city and town provide affordable housing for its citizens. The goal for all communities is 10% of all year-round housing. North Kingstown is among the very highest in RI in reaching that

goal of 10%, but there is still room for improvement, so that public and service workers who desire to live in the community where they work, can afford to live here in NK. In following a deliberate and responsible plan to meet that goal, the town, as well as developers, have the opportunity to have control over where and how this requirement is accomplished within NK

### 4. Do vou support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Through my role as Chairman of the Zoning Board of Review, I had the opportunity to support numerous applications for the purposes of reasonable, responsible and appropriate development through out North Kingstown, to include the Old Town Library project, Reynolds Farm, Wickford Woods, Wickford Elementary, Rolling Greens, New Town Hall expansion and repair. Auto Dealerships on Rt 2, the Olde Theatre, Wickford Junction, and the addition of town sewers, along Phillips, Brown and Main Streets.

### 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

I would ensure that there is a comprehensive plan specific to the Post Road corridor. At the moment, we don't have that. Funding is important but without a thoughtful plan, we end up dumping money into an effort that still has the appearance where each

and every business is "on their own."

(Post Road) is largely a state issue,

I see no other solution other than additional lanes, possibly utilizing the utility easement on the east side of Post Road. We have the funding to adequately maintain the town owned roads, but must get better at the execution of a repair/maintenance schedule.

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

This is a passionate issue for many and it should be. Our water is critical to our ability to properly develop as a community, but more importantly, it is critical to our health. The facts here are important. We have excellent quality water here in NK, and it is plentiful, but as a community with a sole source aquifer, we are also quite vulnerable. Safeguarding our ground water is critical and it means vigilance on behalf of the EPA, RI DEM but most critically, our own water depart ment and planning department. The 11 pumping stations/wells, reservoirs recharge areas and 177 miles of distribution piping, must all be continuously monitored. Despite a significant amount of housing development in NK, with the extensive oversight that marks this community's commitment to protection of our water source, we can expect plentiful, high-quality water into the future.

8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees?

Yes

practices.



Christopher Zanaari Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

As a Town Councilor I would to work to secure funding for a new Middle School, consolidating and closing Davisville Middle School and Wickford Middle School, support the Town Police Department, create and enterprise zoning along Post Road from the Police and Fire Station to the Town line, promote new housing stock, and continue to promote experienced growth minded residents to Town Boards and Commissions.

I served as Assistant Town Solicitor in varying positions since 1999 for the Towns of North Kingstown, Jamestown and Charlestown. Specifically, I have served as Assistant Solicitor for Police Prosecutions for North Kingstown from 1999 through 2000 and 2002 through 2006; Assistant Solicitor for the Zoning Board of Review for the Town of Jamestown in 2000 and 2001; Assistant Solicitor for the Zoning Board of Review for the Town of

Charlestown from 2003 through 2006 and Assistant Solicitor for the Zoning Board of Review for the Town of North Kingstown from 2002 through 2006. I am presently a member of the North Kingstown Zoning Board of Review.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

I will follow the Town Charter. The needs of the residents will be considered and met within the bounds of the law, desires and non-essential expenditures will be vetted and likely sent to a referendum for voter approval. Fiscal responsibility is also a community need. Tax burdens should represent the least amount required to perform the functions of government required pursuant to the Town Charter.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in North Kingstown?

I would support density bonuses for housing development along Post Road as well as projects that include twenty-five percent or higher of affordable units as defined by HousingWorks RI. I would also support zoning amendments to allow for an increase in multifamily housing. These affordable housing units will help to revitalize the Post Road corridor with potential clients, customers, employees and new business owners.

### 4. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Yes, I do. A thriving economic base will support the tax base and reduce the burden to residential real estate taxpayers. I would support making the Post Road corridor an Enterprise Zone, a tangible tax exemption for the first \$40,000.00 for all small business es defined as Micro businesses in Rhode Island General Laws §37-14.2-3(4).

### 5. What is your stance on residential and business expansion along the Rte. 1 corridor?

I am in favor of both residential and business development of the Route 1 corridor as I have discussed in the previous responses.

### 6. How will you address concerns with deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I will review the current Public Works capital expenditures budget for road maintenance in 2022/2023 and audit how we are spending the funds available as well as those funds provided by the State. I will support the Traffic Calming mechanism currently in use and promote and implement additional Traffic Calming devices along with educational technics to alert drivers to the posted speed limits and surrounding neighborhoods and environments to internalize and ingrain safer driving habits and

### 7. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

I would continue to support the groundwater protections in place to protect the Town's aquafers as those regulations and protections have protected the water supply to date. I would balance the suggested actions in the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension assessment with the prudent development of the Town while giving significant consideration to the analyses and conclusions of the Groundwater Committee.

### 8. Will you commit to reviewing town beach access and fees? Yes/ no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



In the 20 days leading up to Election Day, you can vote in person at your city or town hall or at a designated location during regular business hours. This is a great option if you are unable to vote at your usual polling place on Election Day, or if you have run out of time to request a mail ballot.

### Early voting runs Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – Monday, November 7, 2022 until 4:00 p.m.

Narragansett Town Hall - 25 Fifth Street, Narragansett, RI 02883 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

North Kingstown Town Hall - 100 Fairway Drive, North Kingstown, RI 02852 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

South Kingstown Town Hall - 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI 02879 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

# ★ ★ ★North Kingstown General Election Candidates★ ★ ★NORTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Thomas Briody Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

North Kingstown has been a battleground in recent years, due to a scandal at our high school and divisive behavior at school committee meetings. I believe the root of this divisiveness is Trumpism and rightwing extremism. A small segment of the community seeks to keep us rooted in antiquated ideas and practices

I want to be a voice of reason. The world is changing. The demographics of our community are evolving. Our community has to adapt, while still respecting our history and our constitutional principles.

I have lived in North Kingstown for almost 25 years. I am a trial lawyer with an emphasis on criminal defense, civil rights and personal injury work. My legal training, along with my ability to resolve conflict and to achieve compromise will allow me to be an effective member of the school committee.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

I favor the DEI audit being conducted in North Kingstown Schools and look forward to seeing the results and proposed changes. There are more people of color, different ethnicities, and an emergence of LGBTQ individuals. Our schools and administrators must grow and set an example for our community.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) provides curriculum materials to Local Education Agencies (LEA). Under Rhode Island law, LEAs must adopt high quality curriculums that are in line with academic standards and geared toward successful performance in statewide standardized testing. I expect our school department to follow this law with input from members of the school

committee, teachers, and parents. I believe our school libraries should follow similar standards. I reject the general notion that libraries should be "censored" or that books should be banned.

# 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Our schools must be secure. Access must be controlled during school days and for extracurricular activities. I reject the notion that teachers should be armed, or that weapons should be available to anyone on school grounds with the exception of law enforcement. I am in favor of proposed changes in school safety procedures suggested by Attorney Oliverio and Judge McGuirl in their reports on the Aaron Thomas situation. Students need to feel comfortable in reporting inappropriate behavior by teachers, coaches and administrators. Everyone in the school system must be sensitive to issues such as bullying, hazing or mistreatment, and must be prepared to act to stop it. Anyone who works in our schools who is found to have placed a child in danger must be removed.

### 5. Is the school budget adequately funded? Please explain.

This is a difficult question. School systems can always use more money, but our resources are not unlimited. Our school system has received funds from the federal government due to the pandemic, but use of these funds is time sensitive and must be used wisely. There will always be areas where more resources are needed. For example, mental health is a significant problem for students and teachers, and I am aware of complaints that there are insufficient resources in recent years. I hope to be a wise custodian of public funds, and to make sure that they are used for the benefit of as many students as possible.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Yes! I support arts and music for all students, and believe our school budget should provide for education in these areas.

### 7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

### 8. Should the athletic department be restructured? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published

Yes



Erin Earle Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I am running for School Committee for a variety of reasons but the most important one is to serve the students of North Kingstown. As an educator at a higher education institution, I have seen firsthand the impact a strong K-12 education can have. As a product of the NK schools and now a mom of children in the schools, I have a personal connection and want them to be exemplary. Last fall, I began attending the school committee meetings and it became quickly apparent that strong leadership was needed to help navigate the multiple challenges facing the district. As I learned of the hurdles we are facing, I could not shy away from them.

My past experiences have prepared me for this position including my

professional experience as an administrator at the University of Rhode Island. I have worked within complex bureaucratic systems that impact budgets, purchasing, personnel, and employee unions. Another experience is my experience as President of the New England Association of Admission Counselors where I oversaw a membership of 3,500 including high school professionals and led official business meetings efficiently utilizing Robert's Rules of Order. In this role. I learned of the challenges our colleagues have in their schools across New England. Lastly, I will bring my experience in studying, researching, and teaching educational leadership and communication. My doctoral work focused on defining problems, asking the right questions, thinking beyond the obvious, developing and testing several alternatives, and choosing the option that maximizes the results.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment?

I believe that all children have the right to an exemplary education beginning with quality early childhood education through graduation. It is essential that we provide opportunities, challenges, and support for every student's educational journey. Ensuring a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment is essential and begins with a review and updating of district policies and practices. It is important to consider data in your decision-making practices as well digging deeper into the numbers to understand the why. I have a proven history of advocating for diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity in an educational setting. I have chaired many committees and participated in many initiatives to ensure that education is an available opportunity for all students. This work has included focused advocacy for historically excluded populations including students of color, the LGBTQ community, women, and veterans. I have a proven track record in working with others to make incremental progress and also the stamina and persistence it takes to continue this often challenging work. I am happy that North Kingstown has a Diversity subcommittee focusing on these topics and making recommendations to the school committee. I also look forward to seeing the data generated from the equity audit as it will allow for a non-bias evaluation of how people experience our schools. I also believe ensuring DEI in schools includes well-run and valuable professional development. This allows people to better understand the importance of diversity, what equitable practices look like, and how inclusion can help all community members.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

There are many stakeholders that have an influence over curriculum development including state departments of education, school committees, teachers, parents, administrators, and students. Curricula and instructional decisions should be made on the district, school, and departmental levels. It is the school committee's role to identify educational needs in the community, to de velop education policies to meet the needs of the community, to provide for and ensure the implementation of federal and state laws, provide for the evaluation of the performance of the school system, and to establish policies governing curriculum, courses of instruction, and textbooks. I believe the district should support the Director of Curriculum and the Curriculum and Assessment Committee in their selection of what they feel is best for students. I am a strong proponent of curriculums and pedagogy that are inclusive and materials in schools that are representative and diverse. Inclusive systems provide a better education for all children and are instrumental in changing discriminatory attitudes.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Students' health and safety need to be an extreme priority for our district. We have seen the impact a crisis in a school can have on a town. In order to move the district forward and repair the damage and hurt caused by the reports of sexual assault on students. it will take a strong administration to help the faculty, staff, students, families, alumni, and the community heal from the tragedy and ensure it doesn't happen in the future. Clear policies, procedures, and proactive leadership will create a safety net for our students and teachers. Accountability and action are essential to regaining trust and moving North Kingstown forward and ensuring kids are safe in school. Additionally, it is important to educate students, families, and schools about sexual assault prevention and the right to an equal education free of sexual harassment. Conversations about sexual assault should be a part of the safety conversations like knowing when to speak up, how to take care of friends, and how to listen to their gut. As a daughter-in-law of a former Newtown School Teacher, our family knows all too well the tragedy school violence can have on a community. I believe that our district needs to pursue the approaches that have been shown to be effective to keep guns out of schools including addressing students' mental health, empowering teachers to identify and intervene if a student is showing warning signs, and improving our school's physical security.

### 5. Is the school budget adequately funded? Please explain.

School funding is a challenge for public schools across America and North Kingstown is no exception. Although our town is supportive of providing exemplary education to our student's additional resources would allow for more to be done. The Covid-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on inequity in schools and has also provided new challenges we are facing which will need additional resources. Things such as assisting students with learning loss recovery, additional mental health challenges and teacher retention are important issues that need to be addressed through funding. ESSR (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) funds have assisted our district in being able to provide additional resources but when this money runs out, it will be essential to find funding to sustain helpful and beneficial programs. Budget management and forecasting are important pieces of ensuring schools are adequately funded. Additionally, being proactive in acquiring additional funding sources such as grants and partnerships is important. An example of an opportunity that increased funding would impact student learning is through the expansion of the town's early childhood education program. Additionally, adequate funding can assist in maintaining and enhancing our physical school buildings allowing them to be places that support student learning. A third example is by hiring employees that will support students with individual education plans and support additional opportunities for students such as foreign

languages at the elementary level.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Absolutely, as my children call them their "specials," art and music are a huge part of their learning and development. Arts and music education is shown to increase engagement development, and critical thinking. It also is a wonderful creative opportunity for students to explore and express themselves while learning about their interests and talents. I believe that is important to adequately fund the arts and music education programs at all levels to give students a wonderful foundation. I also believe that the arts, music, physical education, and libraries give students an opportunity to build confidence. I would like NK to continue to offer strong options in all of these areas as well as look at ways to strengthen and expand them. If you attended the Mama Mia performance at the high school this spring as my son and I did, you would have seen the immense talent and passion for the arts our students and faculty have. It was a prideful moment for our entire town plus a wonderful entertainment opportunity for our citizens. Supporting the arts and music can benefit all.

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

8. Should the athletic department be restructured? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)



Robert Jones Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

The district faces tremendous challenges between multiple lawsuits and investigations, a funding formula likely to penalize North Kingstown in the future, and persistent learning outcomes gaps. With the Chair and Vice Chair leaving and no permanent Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent in place, the district more than ever needs experienced leadership to restore trust and confidence in the town's educational system. There are no candidates besides me with prior school committee experience. which means potentially the district could be headed into one of the most challenging periods in its history with a majority having no experience leading and managing a school district.

In addition to my eight years of experience on a school committee, I have also served on the town's audit committee, the charter commission, and the Veteran's scholarship committee. I currently serve on the NKHS improvement team. I was handpicked by the Board of Education to serve on a 25 member K-12 strategic planning advisory team for the state in 2015. As a former career Army officer with degrees from West Point and Harvard, and now an administrator and teacher at Bryant University, I have been a leader, manager, and educator with a record of success in planning, policy analysis, research, teaching, and problem solving at the highest levels of military and higher education organizations.

Both of my children were educated in NK Schools. The school system is an integral component of a town – it's vitally important to have informed, experienced, and engaged community members leading it.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

The best places to start with DEI initiatives are understanding and analyzing the district's data so we can assess and prioritize what to do and where to focus. It's unfortunate the current committee and related advisory committees in general didn't hold the administration more accountable in analyzing and discussing learning outcomes, specifically outcomes gaps, and workforce diversity.

I am one of the few people to have a data relationship with RIDE. I have provided on a volunteer basis educational statistics to the committee from outcomes to workforce and student diversity. In my current job, I serve on two inclusive excellence groups that have advanced student outcomes and increased student and employee diversity.

Most candidates talk in generalities; here are a few specific actions I would propose:

(1) Piloting a 24/7 tutoring service that has been adopted across the country, including Massachusetts, with success. This capability puts learning support on the students' and family schedule, not on the district's ability to provide a "late bus" or compete with other demands on students and parents.

(2) Hiring universal design consultants (a better use of ESSER funds) to advise and support our teachers and administrators. We know students learn differently. Differentiating, individualizing, and personalizing instruction and assessment based on student learning needs can help address equity gaps based on learning styles.

(3) Leveraging our LMS. There are tremendous capabilities in the district's CANVAS system that can identify early at-risk behaviors and thus direct resources and supports early before students fall behind.

# 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

The district has policies (five!) that answer this question. The problem arises when the policies are dated, are not understood both within the district and externally, and then not followed.

RIGL 16-2-9 (20) establishes the school committee has overall responsibility for curriculum and instructional material. It's important committee members have understanding in these areas. The committee exercises oversight through policy, so the committee has to adopt well thought out and coordinated policies and ensure those policies are disseminated and communicated effectively.

Second, curriculum, instructional material, and related material must support the learning objectives, corresponding courses of instruction, and related educationally purposeful activities. This portion is best done by the teaching and library professionals and specialists supported by administrators. This work must align with state mandated "high quality curriculum" and other requirements, including guidance from the school committee.

Next district policy requires a curriculum committee that ensures community stakeholders provide external perspectives after district members explain how curriculum and supporting content were selected. Finally, the Superintendent reviews and recommends to the committee, who hold open meetings to inform the public.

This process is onerous for library material – that selection should be done by the education professionals in conjunction with the administration but with technology, the content titles should be visible to parents and stakeholders.

However, district policy rightly allows parents/guardians an ability for their individual minor children to question and understand why certain items are selected and request, for their child, that accommodations be made as determined by the parent.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Health and safety are broad areas, so committee members have to know the breadth and depth of these areas.

(1) School safety plans must be reviewed annually and in conjunction with district personnel, appropriate town officials and experts, and if necessary third-party experts. These plans are kept close hold, but assessments must be done to learn from other schools' experiences. We should consider specifically vestibules and refining access control measures.

(2) The mandated health and wellness committee needs to have more community members, discuss more than just state mandated topics, and present recommendations publicly. This committee has operated in a silo and the district should leverage it more to discuss wellness more holistically.

(3) Student social and emotional health needs must be assessed to ensure adequate student supports exist and experiment with other delivery methods and capabilities students can leverage when and in manners more aligned with their comfort.

(4) We have to ensure required tests (radon, water, etc.), safety equipment, and preparedness exercises are done, and results communicated to the public.

(5) We must discuss existing student survey findings (Surveyworks,Youth Risk Behavior survey) to inform decisions about resourcing appropriate district supports and provide insights to the town for community supports.

(6) We need to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place and create a culture where students feel empowered to report concerns and an expectation of accountability that the district will respond appropriately while respecting all legal and other processes.

There are much more in this area to discuss.

### 5. Is the school budget adequately funded? Please explain.

Yes. The school budget and stewardship over school resourcing are critical responsibilities of the committee. The school system is the biggest expense for the town. The detailed school budget is almost 500 pages, with thousands of UCOA expenditure lines and multiple revenue sources.

With the exception of the "COVID year" (where the district had vastly reduced expenses), the town has consistently given the school department greater than 3% increases in appropriations. Since 2012, the school budget has increased by over 22% while enrollment has fallen by 11%. While state aid fluctuates (school committee members must understand the funding formula mechanics), the level is still higher than five years ago despite a decline in enrollment.

We hear employees (and parents) have to pay for school supplies (for the classroom) yet the most recent district's accounting report in June showed only 87% of funds in that area were spent. Curriculum and field trips had over \$100,000 unspent. Curriculum development had over \$300,000 unspent. The district in total was showing a \$3M surplus, not counting supplemental state and federal funds.

An analysis of the recent school budgets indicates the issue may be where and how the district is spending its resources. The recent committee spent less than an hour in total talking about the school budget and almost no time discussing in public the execution of the budget. The public needs a committee that will spend more time discussing and analyzing school finances.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

I do, especially since such components of a well-rounded education are required by the state. In 2017, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously endorsed the National Core Arts Standards that address learning expectations and student outcomes from pre-K through high school. All Rhode Island school districts are required to align their curriculum to these standards. It's one of the responsibilities of a school committee to ensure the district is meeting the standards.

We have strong evidence that arts and music educational experiences have positive impacts on students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes. NK has a strong record in these programs, including developing a Music Education and Performance CTE program at NKHS. So for me, the issue is less "supporting" these programs and more how are we assessing the curriculum, teaching, and supporting co-curricular and related educational activities? Do all of these items enable all students to achieve at a minimum the basic standards and then progress to even higher levels of proficiency?

We know resources are limited. It's vital the committee has members who demand and then understand evaluation and assessment, so resource allocation is directed to both reinforcing programs of strength and addressing areas of weaknesses.

### 7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

### 8. Should the athletic department be restructured? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)





Karen Kuminsky Independent

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I am running for School Com-mittee to offer a new perspective and a different voice than what is currently there. The job of the School Committee is to represent the whole community and our current School Committee is not representing all voices within our community. In fact, it only represents a select group of people. I bring with me a strong moral compass to insist that there be transparency between the School Committee, the parents and the community. I bring curiosity to inquire with depth questions including those about policy and to search for answers when none are apparent. I bring 20 years of experience advocating for my own children within the public schools and an understanding of how intimidating that process can be. I have tremendous persistence and stamina when it comes to fighting for the rights of children. Placing the well-being of children above all else needs to be the priority of the school committee. The reputation of a school district should never come before the safety of students. I am also experienced in working for a community through my five years of holding the position of Program Coordinator of the former Swinburne School in Newport, RI. Two of us ran this continuing education center and listened and responded to the needs of the community, working with a tight financial budget and organizing a strong and reliable group of volunteers.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

Diversity, equity and inclusiveness within a public school need be centered on education. I will help to ensure that children with IEP's and 504 learning plans are accommodated appropriately and respectfully according to school policies. I will support advanced placement and honor courses to continue to be offered to students that need to be academically challenged. Learning environments need to acknowledge all learning styles and support all levels of academic ability, Each and every child needs to be included in the classroom setting and not be discriminated against or bullied in any way, by teachers or other students, for having any learning challenge.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

Parents and teachers need to be the ones who determine instructional and school library material. Teachers are the experts on curriculum and parents are the experts on their own children. Together teachers and parents can determine age appropriate literature. Parents and teachers need the opportunity for clear communication in regards to literature and parents ultimately need to have the final say over what school libraries contain. Literature should be thought provoking and inspiring with classical literature remaining available in school libraries. Our education system is no place for politics. The divisiveness of the political climate is proving to be damaging to relationships and there is absolutely no need for any student to know their teacher's political stance or affiliation. Teachers need to stick with offering many different perspectives and not push any one point of view onto students. Students need to be given space to discover their individual perspective through their unique lens.

## 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

We ensure health and safety within the schools by insisting that the schools follow their own policies set up to protect children from abuse of any kind and school administrators and teachers need to follow the law. Every incident of abuse needs to be filed with the police and with DCYF. All schools must abide by the law. There also needs to be adequate mental health care providers in the schools to support the mental health of children of all ages as well as school teachers. Currently there are not enough mental health care professionals in the North Kingstown school system. The local police must be utilized if there is any threat of violence or reports of abuse. Parents and the community need to hold school officials accountable to report all incidences promptly. We need to bring transparency back into the North Kingstown School District, so that parents can trust that our schools are safe and our community can begin to heal from the abundance of past incidences of abuse and prior neglect of school policy and Rhode Island law.

### 5. Is the school budget adequately funded? Please explain.

The budget in North Kingstown is adequately funded, but has been distributed poorly. There has been a clear lack of transparency to the community in actual uses of funds. For example, giving unnecessary raises in salary and additional pay to administrators and those in interim positions is not wise spending when there is a glaring need to hire additional mental health care providers within the schools and use money in ways to directly benefit our children's education. The Town Council and the School Committee need to work together more with budget managing. I am in support of having a Town Council liaison work within the School Committee to ensure financial transparency.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Yes, I strongly support the arts and music education in all grade levels. The inclusion of art and music is crucial in giving children a well-rounded educational experience as well as cultural literacy. It offers students an important opportunity for self-exploration and self-expression. Many students gain self-confidence and a stronger sense of self through an exploration of art and music. These subjects need to always be included in public education.

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes

8. Should the athletic department be restructured? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



Krystle Simas Independent

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

My name is Krystle Simas and I am running for School Committee because I am confident I can offer a new perspective to the NKSC. As an alumnus of the University of Rhode Island, I received two BA degrees, one in secondary education and one in Spanish, and also earned my MA in secondary education from URI. After college, I began my career as a high school Spanish teacher and have been working at Coventry High School for 20 years. Throughout my tenure at CHS, I have been extremely involved in curriculum development, been a member and chair of a School Improvement Team Committee, and participated in NEASC accreditation committees. Additionally, I have led professional development workshops in differentiated instruction and on various technological platforms, and I have been on many interview committees for new hires. Our students need someone who has the knowledge and experience of what the demands are in a 21st century classroom. Many people who are in charge of making important decisions that greatly impact our children have not been in a classroom in decades. As a public educator for 20 years and mother of two children in the district. I am invested in the education of our students.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

inclusion are ideas that are paramount in today's educational systems, these concepts should not be polarizing. It is crucial that all of our schools foster a culture of mutual respect for all. By promoting unity in the student body, students feel more connected, engaged, and motivated to do well. It is important that when creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community you address the needs of all students and not just a select group. Equity can be measured in many ways ranging from socio-economic, race, gender equality, to education. It is critical not to focus solely on one sub set and try to address all. I personally advocated for the educational equity of students four years ago when it was proposed that students at DMS that were enrolled in band would not be able to take Spanish. Along with a group of other parents and educators voiced my concern over the injustice that this was for students. Fortunately, after some debate, the district revisited their plan and allowed DMS students to take both classes concurrently. However, this was not the case at WMS, and those students were not afforded the same educational opportunities as their peers and that is unacceptable. Equal opportunities for personalized educational opportunities should be provided for all students. A wide range of courses should be provided for MTSS students with IEP's and 504, as well as Honors and AP courses for students wishing to be challenged.

3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material?

When discussing curriculum it is important that all stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their concerns. The district must adhere to certain regulations, parameters, standards, and metrics that are placed by the Rhode Island Department of Education. When writing a new curriculum the district must be cognizant of these demands by RIDE to ensure that they are in compliance. In some disciplines RIDE has some specifically approved curricula that the district must choose from. In those cases the teachers should vet those options to pick the one that they feel is the best fit for their students and the district as a whole. In other disciplines it is up to the content specialists to create their own curriculum because none are offered from RIDE. Having written several curricula along with colleagues, I have expertise in this process. Before a new curriculum is adopted, it should be approved by the teachers in the content area, administration. and made available to parents to have the opportunity to offer their input. Lastly, the school committee would then adopt the curriculum. Curriculum is what drives daily instruction. It is beneficial to have students offer feedback during each unit to ensure that their individual needs and concerns are being met as well.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Every educator knows that safety and security are one the foundations of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

security, to financial security. Students cannot perform well if they do not feel safe. Being a teacher for 20 vears I have personally been involved in many training sessions to ensure that my students feel safe while at school. To provide a physically safe environment, faculty and staff should be trained in active shooter training such as ALICE, establish clear fire drill and evacuation plans, keep all doors closed and locked at all times, and regularly identify any problematic areas of concern. Additionally, video cameras and school resource officers should be provided to schools. To provide emotional security faculty and staff should be trained in trauma informed care and in social emotional multi- tiered systems of support. Furthermore, school psychologists and social workers should be provided for all students who may need their services. The social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to students' education and when a district fosters a strong SEL students are more engaged and motivated.

### 5. Is the school budget adequately funded? Please explain.

The North Kingstown School budget, in my opinion, is adequately funded, which is evident in the surplus of over \$10M. That being said, there are some areas where I feel the funds may not have been appropriately dispersed. As a district we appear to be very top heavy in that we employ a lot of administration in the central office. We have a great deal of administrators, directors, assistant directors, etc. and perhaps some positions could be consolidated to be more fiscally responsible. With the revenue that would be saved by the consolidation, funds could then be allocated for student use for classroom supplies, field trips, clubs, and other extracurricular activities.

### 6. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

Students who study the arts are four times more likely to receive recognition of academic achievement and are three times more likely to be present in school and not be truant. am a strong advocate of the arts and as previously stated, I advocated to keep both band and foreign language at DMS. In addition to their private piano lessons, my two children have been members of the band at Stony Lane, DMS, and NKHS. Several studies have identified a strong correlation between language learning and musical aptitude. Taking an art or music class fosters creativity, increased concentration, self-expres sion, and positive risk-taking. These are all qualities that can be transferred to many facets in the students lives.

7. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

les

### 8. Should the athletic department be restructured? Yes/no (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Please explain.

These basic needs can range from health, personal security, emotional



# South Kingstown General Election Candidates SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL



Patricia Alley Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what experience do you bring to town council?

I am running because I believe my educational and personal foundation in human services paired with over 20 years experience as a business owner, makes me well suited for a position on the town council. I am empathetic and resourceful and understand that there are always three sides to every argument. I am skilled at finding common ground and building consensus. As a business owner, caretak er and mom, I know all too well about addressing multiple priorities within an environment of finite resources. I am by nature prudent and fiscally responsible.

Î am a big picture thinker and highly strategic; I am not afraid to think outside of the box and I will fight hard for my constituents. I am smart enough to know what I don't know, and I am adept at finding the information I need to make an educated decision.

At this moment in history it is imperative that people stand up and contribute what they can to the common good. I became involved in politics after my sister used her partner's unsecured gun and took her own life in June of 2020. I learned there was no law in RI requiring guns to be stored securely and as a result I began to advocate for responsible gun storage legislation in my sister's memory. I am not afraid to fight for what I believe in and I will bring that same dedication in working to help conduct the town's business.

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

One area of concern for me is the school system which consumes a large portion of our tax dollars. There seems to be widespread agreement that the high school, in particular, is inadequate and poorly suited for the needs of students. Despite the shortcomings, we are a town that is passionate about our schools, with generations having taken pride in them and we want to continue to feel this way into the future.

I believe we are at a significant crossroads in the future of our town. The existing school board; including both elected and appointed officials, the school building committee and the architectural firm behind the plans for the schools will hold public meetings this fall, before the Stage 2 application is submitted to RIDE. This will be a once in a many generation opportunity to lay the groundwork for the future success of our community. We need leaders on the town council who are able to look at the big picture and understand the needs of our students both now and into the future. It is vitally important that we look at future trends and programming needs to ensure our students are prepared to compete, whatever their path.

To make this happen, we need to work together. We need to look at our assets, our liabilities, the opportunities and the threats that exist and chart the path forward. I believe that I can help facilitate that dialogue between diverse groups of people, to establish common ground.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

The shortage of affordable housing is a crisis nationwide and South Kingstown is no exception. As young families have been increasingly priced out of the market, the enrollment in our schools has dropped and our population has gotten older.

I believe that zoning and planning ordinances should be regularly evaluated for revision to allow for changes to density regulations.

As a URI graduate in Gerontology, I have always been an advocate for seniors and their families. I am lucky to have known and loved family members and friends in senior housing all my life. I know that there are long wait lists of seniors wanting apartments; some have houses that are now too large for them, that they would like to sell to younger families. I would like to add senior housing units locations around South Kingstown to provide people with options for remaining in their hometown, as this is associated with greater levels of health, happiness and functionality in later life.

Identifying some existing, underutilized buildings in town for housing is one solution I would like to explore. My dream would be to have some mixed use for something with young children, so there could be joint programming. I believe this would be a win-win situation.

### 4. What will you do to address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff ?

Like states and towns across the nation and the world, SK needs to accept that water is our most precious resource. Like it or not, it is in our shared interest to be smart with how we utilize it.

I would talk with business owners whose livelihoods depend on availability of water, in agriculture, for instance. If there are no farmers, there is no food, flowers or trees and we need those things. I would find out what they need to continue to produce and make sure town policies were acceptable for our growers,

I would like to learn more about the rain barrel program educational resources available through the EPA, NEMO and URI. I would assess the feasibility of having a town wide sale to encourage people to water their plants and gardens with rainwater.

As a longtime Girl Scout leader, my natural tendency would be to want to pair with youth organizations for service projects involving sustainable irrigation for town landscaping.

Town administration is currently in discussions with Veolia Water and the town council and those should continue. I would bring what I learn from businesses, community leaders and residents to the meetings to ensure concerns are heard and priorities are managed responsibly and sustainably into the future.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain

I believe that local businesses are the backbone of our community; they contribute to the local economy by hiring local people, contributing to the schools, sponsoring sports teams and supporting community events. They are a vital part of the local economy and the lifeblood of the community.

I feel this way so strongly because for seven years, while our daughter Morgan was in the South Kingstown school system, my husband and I owned a small bakery called Patticakes in the Quo Vadis Plaza. I can appreciate and understand the everyday struggles of being a business owner; the highs and the lows, the planning, decision making and endless hours bringing all of the pieces together. Having the opportunity of being involved with the community and school system as our daughter grew up falls into the category of priceless and remains a core value for me; I will always be a supporter of local businesses.

I will work to build strong relationships with local businesses to understand the needs of their particular industry. I understand what it is like to wish that people making the decisions had taken the time to talk to those actually doing the work. I will take the time to understand the perspectives of business owners and advocate for policies that will be good for the town as well as for businesses. I like win-win situations and will always be on the look-out for these types of scenarios

### 6. What Real Estate Exemptions will you support?

 $\star \star \star$ 



In addition to existing exemptions; I support an income based tax exemption for all elderly homeowners ; I believe that current exemptions are not adequate for the rise in property values and tax rates.

I would like to consider property tax exemptions to incentivize individual property owners with acreage to add year round rental units to their owner occupied properties. I would like to encourage year round rentals, rather than academic year rentals or short term vacation rentals.

### 7. How will you address deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

The State of Rhode Island is responsible for just under 500 miles of total roads in South Kingstown, many of those roads are our most traveled thoroughfares. These roads provide access to URI and a large commuter population as well as serving our beaches and business communities. They are too often overlooked in the state budget; I will work to be an effective advocate for the town in getting our roads prioritized.

Our town road department and administration has an active plan for town road projects. As situations evolve and road issues are brought to my attention, I will advocate with the appropriate individuals, following up as necessary.

I will make it my business to learn about the new possibilities to improve mass transit options under recent climate legislation. I will advocate with existing agencies to maintain and increase existing routes.

8. Do you support Dredging of the Narrow River

 $\mathbf{x}$ 

 $\mathbf{X}$ 

 $\star\star$ 

SK needs a career fire department

merging EMS. The current system is

continue. Should it stop working then

entertained. A property tax exemption

system longevity would be a good and

7. How will you address concerns

We have a big town that is a des-

tination spot for a host of activities.

Driving and biking most of the town

roads I see significant need for repav-

ing and areas that have been redone

has received a significant amount of

federal funds as part of the recovery

should be diverted to the ongoing roads improvement plan of the high-

We will never be at 100% as this

is a dynamic need. It would be good

to improve biking/walking access as

roads are redone. Bike lanes need

more thought than a painted line

that ends abruptly and may require

widening of some roads to facilitate

pedestrian and bike needs. Sidewalks

are good for pedestrians unless there

Traffic is difficult. We have some

roads laid out 200 years ago. Increas-

help. The town should be maintaining

walkways in the winter, the concept of

the property owner being responsible

needs to be revisited. If the bike path

can be plowed, so can the sidewalks.

URI has a traffic engineering

program presenting opportunity for

not desirable, speed enforcement is

critical. To that end I would like to

see a program of violators given com-

munity service options versus simply

8. Do you support dredging of

the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only

a response of yes or no will be

collaboration of best practices. While

ing pedestrian and bike access will

is a telephone pole in the middle,

however these are not bike lane

act. If applicable some of this funding

with very good results. The town

for volunteer firefighters in conjunc-

tion with the fire districts to ensure

about deteriorating roads and

prudent start.

increased traffic?

way department.

substitutes.

paying a ticket.

published)

No.

working and with proper care can

a regionalized approach should be



# South Kingstown General Election Candidates SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL



Nathan Barrington Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

Watching many council meetings I see a council disconnected with the community. As Fire Chief in Kingston for 30 years I am a stakeholder driven problem solver receiving my MBA from URI in1998. As Chief I have collaborated with partners at local, state and federal levels for operational and fiscal successes. My goals for the council are operational and fiscal transparency better serving the taxpayers of SK.

The primary mission of the council is effective running of the town and management of our tax dollars. Currently I believe the council does not appreciate tax dollars are real, looking for revenue versus better budgeting or pending practices. Having managed budgets, I understand public spending and treating those funds with care.

Currently the town operates in a silo in many areas. My experience says we can look at regionalization and collaboration across the board. We manage a transfer station and shelters with another town. Certainly, there are critical public safety and other matters that could be shared with other communities. URI is a city within the town with vast untapped resources which properly coordinated will leave both stronger.

A multi-generational resident of South Kingstown, I grew up here, volunteering in the fire department and ambulance corps. During the 1980's I worked metro Atlanta in Fire/ EMS paying my way through college and graduating in 1989 from the Emory University School of Medicine

Physician Assistant program. This total experience has afforded me a broader view of what we can change for the better.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

Fiscal responsibility starts with a desire to be fiscally conservative. Taxpayers understand the need to pay for services. The process needs to be thoughtful and transparent. We need to demand significant background to find the best solutions before spending money. While the town is fiscally healthy, we spend more and less efficiently than we could to achieve the same results. While critical to have financial reserves, ours are some 17% or more of the budget. This represents an excess of 15 million dollars in the coffers. Some of these are comprised of unrestricted accounts, meaning money can be spent outside of the normal budget process.

This past budget cycle troubled me, with recession looming a tax increase was approved and justified downplaying historical surpluses and ignoring strong reserves. Better planning would have minimized or negated an increase. Taxpayers are tightening their belts. The town needs to tighten as well.

The budget created new jobs paid for with short term federal funds increasing spending some 8%. After two years, federal money ends. Where will the money come from to pay for these jobs afterwards?

Our school department demonstrates sub-par educational and facility performance. We are spending almost \$20 million more per year than comparable districts who are getting better results. If elected I will demand answers. We need good education and school facilities. Despite taxpayers always paying more, we don't have them.

We need a clear approach to maintain fiscal health, spend appropriately and generate only necessary tax

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

It's clear after reviewing meeting minutes and comprehensive planning documents of the Affordable Housing Collaborative Committee; members have committed a great deal of energy into this critical area.

First. I would attend these meetings to understand what action steps are required and what barriers exist and how I can help them move this along. The documents demonstrate a desire to resolve this issue and it needs to be on the front burner.

My extensive background in Healthcare and Emergency Services give me a broad perspective into these issues impacting residents. Ensuring access to housing, health care and education is a vital role of government.

The Affordable Housing Collaborative Committee demonstrates the good in our community. It is the type of active participation that is needed. This model should be used more for local engaged subject matter experts rather than the disturbing trend of consultants.

As important as this work is in addressing those with low and medium incomes, I would like to look at options ensuring our increasing demographic of residents over 55 can afford to stay in their homes. Increasingly in speaking with people the concern of not only leaving due to expense, a worrisome inability for their children to buy a house in SK. This highly essential matter of affordability in housing must be addressed.

One area I would like to see expanded is working with agencies like Habitat and drawing their expertise into decisions such as the Broad Rock Road property. Is there a viable town NGO solution?

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

The South Shore water issue has been dismissed as "too expensive' to fix. The current budget report mentions the problem with no hint of a solution or even failed attempts to correct it. Funding denials are important when applying for grants. After 9/11, critical infrastructure projects have been a huge priority for federal funding. High priority for me would be understanding where responsibility lies for these corrections and determining a course of action.

Water Supply in this area is critical every day, much of the built-up areas in the southern part of town are within significantly dense woods. This drought not only creates water shortages to which we have no reserve, but the increased fire danger for these homes must also be appreciated. As the fire districts have worked on cisterns in subdivisions with wells, expanding these where possible with storm runoff should be a priority. A wildland fire in the Gravely Hill area (site of historic significant wildland fires) could be problematic, with reduced water capacity it could be catastrophic.

Corrective action may require more storage; an identified issue in storage is stagnation during low use periods. A challenge listed in interconnections to allow flow based on need is varying approaches to water treatment affecting drinkability. There are 4 water systems within the town. We must sit down with these various providers and come up with a consistent water treatment model so that interconnections can easily happen as needed; be it a fire, low usage, or maintenance requirement.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Business support is critical to our success as a diverse community with literally 10's of thousands of visitors each year. Route 1 is a conduit to the beaches, we are blessed to have an Amtrak station, a new bus hub is in the works at URI, and the campus itself. This translates to many different opportunities for a variety of businesses.

Supporting this environment is a dynamic ongoing commitment. As a council member I will be supportive of our town staff. They are capable and supportive of individuals seeking to start a business. The current system seems easy for people to work within. The Town provides a checklist to

follow. A change I would propose is eliminating the need for a new business to make a presentation to the Town Council prior to opening their doors. This creates unnecessary delays to businesses already trying to get the doors open and meet capital needs. If the checklist is completed according to the relevant town officials, the business should be allowed to open. Council involvement should be minimal excepting controversy

have a mechanism to understand why and what if anything the town could have done better.

Open dialogue with the chamber of commerce is critical as well as businesses not in the chamber. Additionally, I would engage the URI School of Business and or Public Administration to constantly review our practices for improvement opportunities and consider competitive scholarship awards in these areas.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

Tax exemptions are an important component in budget development weighing the exemption against the fact nonexempt may pay slightly more. Existing programs should be maintained. We need improved homestead protection. A person who has paid off their home should not be driven out secondary to continued tax increases.

modification of the timeframe.

Additionally, I would advocate working with the Fire Districts to provide tax relief for active volunteers. Both districts have firefighter retenthe member. It would be in the best interest of the town to help this retention. We are blessed with professional volunteers who provide hundreds of every year.

In the past it has been argued

and how and why to conserve water

There are educational programs and

initiatives we can share with the com-

increase our use of native, drought-re-

ways to conserve our individual water

use and consumption. We must pro-

vide our community with the water it

needs, especially in the high demand

One possibility now being researched

with our state and federal delegation

system in Green Hill that was capped

months. A long-term solution will

eliminate the summer water bans.

is the repair of the water filtration

5. Do you support a busi-

ness-friendly environment?

years ago.

munity on how to collect rainwater,

sistant plantings in our yards, and

to the microphone while others approach me at the grocery store to let me know they would like a homestead exemption. With the public's input and participation, I would support this initiative for our residents.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I support a comprehensive approach to address our town's infrastructure needs. Our five year Capital Improvement Program that is updated annually as part of the budget process. I support projects and programs that maintain and enhance our roadways, not just with our local tax dollars, but we also need to leverage state and federal funding resources, as well as any eligible grants. It is also important to have a good working relationship with RIDOT and our state leaders to ensure that the state roads in South Kingstown receive needed attention. During this term we were successful in having RIDOT clean up Old Tower Hill Road, removing litter, weeds, and plantings and repairing the damaged stormwater grates. This is one example of collaboration that I believe the council should work to continue.



### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

Thank you to the League of Women Voters for this opportunity. My husband CJ Bergner and I have lived in SK for 25 years and raised our children (Casey-27, Hailey-25, and Michael-22) who are proud graduates of SKHS. Residents are invited to contact me: debbergner@gmail.com or 401-515-5771.

I was elected to the Town Council in 2020 and have served with a straightforward voice that advocates for our community, pays close attention to local issues that impact us, and is cognizant that the decisions made by the Council have both immediate

responsible decision-making with our tax dollars

Hired a new town manager who will work with the Town Council addressing the multitude of housing issues we face, implementing a municipal court, exploring a homestead exemption for residents, and leveraging federal, state and private grant money to advance town-wide improvements.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

This is one of the very reasons why I chose to run for office in 2020 - I truly believe that as a town council member, I must listen, do my

we have, while considering the cost to the taxpayers.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

Affordable housing is one of the most important priorities we face as a town. Real estate property assess ments have increased exponentially, resulting in higher tax bills. Home prices have soared and are out of reach for many of our neighbors. Yearly rentals are scarce and expensive. I support policies that will result in increased housing that is affordable for both young and old. Since elected, we have adopted the long stalled Comprehensive Plan and approved

When a business fails, we should



tion plans based on participation of hours of service to the community

**Deborah Bergner** Democrat

and long-term consequences. I have prioritized the importance of giving the community a seat at the table where their voice can be heard and have done my homework and asked questions before making decisions. If re-elected, I will continue to be responsive to constituents, manage our tax dollars wisely, and work collaboratively with others on issues that impact our town.

Over the past two years, I am proud to have:

- Expanded the elderly tax abatement program for our most vulnerable seniors

- Advocated for the construction of an optimally located EMS facility to reduce response time when our neighbors need immediate emergency assistance

- Showed fiscal responsibility and

research, ask questions, and make decisions always with this principle in mind. The needs of the whole community must be met while being mindful of the financial impact our decisions have on the taxpayers. The cornerstone of good governance begins with responsible long-term decision-making of elected officials. We could have not predicted how COVID would disrupt our lives, nor could we anticipate higher prices we now pay on the essentials we need. From food to fuel and everything in between, we make our household decisions on how to spend money efficiently, striving to get the most bang for our buck. This same fiscal responsibility needs to continue to be prioritized by our Town Council. By thinking of the big picture, I look for long term solutions that add value and address the needs

Cottage Zoning and Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinances to help expand and diversify the housing stock for residents. This is just the beginning; we need to better promote these community programs and continue to devise new strategies to address this complex problem.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

It is critical that we address this most basic necessity. This summer's water ban highlighted the critical need for both short- and long-term strategies. The community is clear that full water bans are not the solution. We must begin with community outreach about this finite resource

Absolutely 100%! Economic growth and support for our local businesses is essential to the vibrancy of our town. We must support economic initiatives while maintaining the small town feel we know and love about South Kingstown. I want to provide opportunities for local businesses to meet with the town council to share their ideas and concerns. We have an amazing business community that I want to ensure thrive in South Kingstown.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

Tax exemptions for our fragile elderly are in place and are reviewed annually prior to budget adoption. Consistently, residents have come

### 8. Do you support dredging of the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



1. Why are you running and what

Continuous rising property taxes

for residents of South Kingstown are

Kingstown municipal spending went

struggle to pay bills. Student enroll-

while school costs are rising. The

Town Council can do a better job

at allocating our tax dollars. I am

up nearly 10% in 2022 while residents

ment and performance are declining,

another burden in the face skyrock

eting inflation, with higher costs

for food, gas, and rent. The South

expertise and experience do you

bring to the council?

running for South Kingstown Town Council to help provide better services and accountability for our town our community, our schools, and our businesses.

As a former elected South Kingstown School Committee Member, I believe the South Kingstown Town Council would be better served with members having experience from both the public and private sectors. As a Technology Director and consultant for over 15 years, I have collaborated with diverse teams in developing innovative solutions that met budget, scope, quality, and timelines

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

I commit to collaborating with the South Kingstown Town Manager, Town Employees, fellow members of the Town Council, School Committee, and community in building a budget that is prudent, wise, and equitable to meet the needs of all our citizens.

During the last 10 years, per pupil spending in South Kingstown increased by 54% while student performance decreased. At \$28,000 per student, we spend 3 times as much as the tuition of a local private elementary school and our students should have the resources for higher academic performance.

In 2021, the existing South Kingstown Town Council and School Committee tried to force through an irresponsible \$85 million facility plan. State agencies characterized the town's proposal as incomplete and containing discrepancies. I will work tirelessly to provide the facts to

our community with transparency and the necessary data to support alternatives

The current South Kingstown Town Council is wasteful with the hiring of consultants to do the job that South Kingstown Town employees are more skilled and capable to perform.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

I support the efforts by the South Kingstown Housing Authority to provide quality affordable housing opportunities for low-and moderate-income families.

I support an investigation by the South Kingstown Town Council into a property tax stabilization program for low- and moderate-income families.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

The first step is to verify the data (infrastructure, issues, and known information) such as the Chipuxet drainage basin land area. This area totals 36.93 square miles in South Kingstown, Exeter, North Kingstown, Richmond, and Charlestown, according to the state Water Resources Board. The basin supports public water supplies, private wells, agriculture, and a recreational use (Yagoo), and provides most of the public water supply for Narragansett and South Kingstown.

I will collaborate with our community, local, state, federal government, and experts to determine the best

solution to provide the optimal water supply service to our town.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

The following are 3 ways that I would support and attract businesses to South Kingstown

South Kingstown needs to attract jobs that support South County's quality of life. Losing APC/Schneider Electric due to lack of elected officials support was a huge loss for South Kingstown. With decent jobs, our children will have the ability to choose to work and live in Rhode Island. South Kingstown needs to provide a business-friendly environment by not burdening companies with over regulation. We need to tap the valuable resources available at the University of Rhode Island to foster new businesses

### Education:

Business leaders and their employees require good schools to locate to a particular area. The South Kingstown NEA Union has wielded too much power, which has wrapped SK schools in bureaucracy, rules, and special interest groups. Despite S.K. having the highest per pupil costs, for districts our size in Southern NE at \$28.000. our students' annual assess ment scores are not improving. SK Student rankings dropped from 137th in 2019 to 155th in 2021 as compared to 254 cities and towns in RI and MA. We must have transparency in the schools and prove to parents and our

community that the curriculum being used is working.

### Fiscal Responsibility:

We need to find ways to hold down taxes, especially rising property taxes to support affordable rents and housing. When elected, I will work tirelessly to improve our town services, accountability, and performance at a price we can afford.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

I support the existing South Kingstown exemptions and tax credits:

1. Development Property/Foreclosed Property Exemption 2. Elderly Homeowner's Tax Credit

- Program 3. Farm, Forest & Open Space
- Program
- 4. Legally Blind Exemption
- 5. Veteran Related Exemptions 6. Specially Adapted Motor Vehicle
- for Disabled

Several RI communities offer Homestead tax credits. I would support an investigation into South Kingstown offering Homestead tax credits, and/or any program that would allow residents to remain in their homes and/or buy an affordable home.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I support assessing the impact of increased traffic in South Kingstown, and upgrading our deteriorating roads using Federal money, grants

and investigating other financing alternatives. I support the following work which can be found on the S.K TIP - Transportation Improvement Plan: Upgrades to several major roads in South County are among 100 infra structure projects the State is aiming to complete using an influx of \$576 million in Federal money. In South Kingstown, paving along Route 2 from the Route 138 intersection to Route 102 was, opportunely, moved up six years, from 2028 to 2022, and will be completed this fall. The budgeted cost of the project: \$8.3 million.

As refers to question #8 below: Narrow River spans North Kingstown, South Kingstown, and Narragansett. The scope of dredging is not defined (50 feet, 1 mile, etc.)

or whether this is a Town or Federal issue. This is a key reason that I am running for the South Kingstown Town Council to assess all the facts prior to making decisions

For instance, a "yes" or "no" response requires more information as to the environmental impact of such a decision. The University of Rhode Island study "Final Report Impact of Dredging the Lower Narrow River on Circulation and Flushing in the Narrow River" states that dredging scenarios will result in increased elevation of MHW and thus potential impacts to saltmarsh habitat among many other environmental concerns

### 8. Do you support dredging of Narrow River Y/N

Candidate did not respond with a Yes or No

gross income (AGI) would provide a

standardized benchmark that could

be used for some additional tax relief.

7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and

The major thoroughfares in town

are state roads under the jurisdiction

of the RIDOT; for those, we have to

advocate with state officials to get

higher priority in maintenance, par-

ticularly given our role as a tourism

destination and home of the Universi-

ty, with a large commuter population

For town roads, we need to prioritize

projects, and make maintenance a

higher priority in the town budget.

With regard to traffic, more opportu-

nities for use of mass transit (again, a

8. Do you support dredging of

state DOT / RIPTA issue) will help.

the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only

a response of yes or no will be

published)

Yes

increased traffic?





Mike Marran Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I decided to run for Council after serving on the School Committee for the last year, working with my colleagues there to make difficult decisions that needed to be made. Given our declining school-age population and limited budget, the Town Council and School Committee will have to work together in the years ahead to provide the necessary funding to improve education and stay within the town's means. My experience on the School Committee will help in making those decisions. I hope to bring to the Council my own experience from having lived in town for 3 decades. My wife Jennifer and I raised our sons, Patrick, Timothy and Sean here, and we are very grateful for the "village" of folks and organizations in town who helped us raise them. I also want to bring my professional skills and experience with all branches of government from my background as a Rhode Island attorney for more than 38 years, which includes the perspective of a

business owner / sole practitioner. Also, serving on the Southern RI Chamber of Commerce Board during the pandemic gave me perspective on the challenges businesses face.

South Kingstown General Election Candidates

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL** 

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

The bulk of the town budget, 75%, has been devoted to the school department for decades, which worked well during the town's growth years. We now face a future of declining enrollment, and continued underfunding from the state, requiring fiscal discipline, long-term planning and creative opportunities to address other needs of the community as well. The level funding of the schools budget for the last several years has resulted in changes in administrative costs and programs, and anticipated losses in state education funding will require us to continue to innovate.

3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

it is important that State or Federal

grants are sought at every opportu-

nity. The current Town Council has

been successful in avoiding expendi-

tures of Town money when State or

Federal grants provide such subsidy

opportunities. For example, in this

past term the Town has successfully

sought and obtained grant money to

fund improvements to the Peace Dale

Library and improvements to the boat

ramp at Ram Point Marina, both of

which provided the Town with sub-

money will remain a priority.

in South Kingstown?

stantial cost savings. Once re-elected,

seeking out all opportunities for grant

3. What will you do to address

To address the shortage of afford-

I intend to promote, monitor and expand the Town's existing affordable

housing initiatives (including cottage

intend to work with the Town Council

to modify zoning ordinances where

appropriate to provide incentives for

able housing in South Kingstown,

zoning ordinances, and auxiliary dwelling tax abatements). Further, I

the shortage of affordable housing

One factor in our decreasing school-age population is that young families are finding it more and more difficult to buy or rent in town. We ought to look at every part of town government that impacts housing, such as zoning and planning, reviewing their operations, ordinances and regulations, with an eye toward making it easier for our community to make housing available and affordable. That includes the Council looking at how we can foster planned growth, and not inhibit it. There are efforts being discussed now regarding allowing rental units to be added to private residences and commercial properties in certain areas in town, and I would want to continue these

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

There are already discussions going on between the town administration, the Council, and Veolia Water Co. about supply issues, and I want to continue that as a member of the

Council. We cannot prevent ongoing drought issues, but we can manage our natural resources better.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain

One example of the lessons of the 2020-21 pandemic was the quick adaptation of town regulations and procedures to allow for outdoor dining spaces and take-out operations in order for restaurants to reopen and stay open. It not only worked well, it opened the door to new long-term opportunities for business. The town has to be business-friendly if we want the community to thrive, and the Council has to be welcoming to those new opportunities.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

I suggested to the Town Council during its budget deliberations this year that its current exemption eligibility, tied to income, may be too restrictive, and that an exemption tied to a taxpayer's (federal) adjusted

Yes, I absolutely support a business-friendly environment here in South Kingstown. The success of the business community is critical to the success of the Town. The Town though its Town Council, must make all efforts to facilitate business creation and business growth. This will lead to job creation and increased activity among the downtown areas. Through its administration of its share of the American Rescue Plan money, the Town will be taking steps to enhance and improve our downtown areas to enhance its attractiveness and further support the growth of small businesses

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

I support real estate tax exemptions that provide meaningful relief to taxpayers that are also feasible for the town's budget. With approximately 20% of the Town's real estate base consisting of nonresidents, opportunities exist to provide real estate tax relief to resident homeowners in the form of a homestead exemption. Further, real estate tax exemptions to seniors is an area that must be expanded as well. To afford seniors the ability to maintain their way of

life, the Town Council must work to

expand tax relief to seniors through

real estate tax exemptions.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

Through its Capital Improvement Plan, the Town Council monitors and addresses the needs of its roads annually. This process allows the Town to address the needs of its roads, prioritizing those in most dire need. To accelerate the restoration of its roads, the Town looks forward to receiving its share of the recently enacted Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). These monies will aid in allowing the Town to make necessary improvements to its roads. As to increased traffic, the Town Council will continue to heed to the areas of resident concern and provide Town intervention measures where appropriate.

### 8. Do you support dredging of the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Yes



**Rory McEntee** 

Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

To help provide political balance to the council so that a larger fraction of the citizenry will have their wants and needs met while respecting the generosity of the taxpayer.

reduction in the student population. We now spend about \$28,000 per student. This cripples highly necessary projects like restoring our insufficient water capacity that leads to annual summer-time water bans. We need to give fair priority to necessary municipal projects by re-balancing our budget with real respect for local taxpayers.

to help create more affordable residences is to consider changing zoning to allow for more mixed-use locations (Old Tower Hill Rd for example). In this scenario, a business may exist on ground level with available residence above. Here small business AND local residents work together to the benefit of both parties.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Small business is creator of most new jobs nationally. They clearly play a critical role in every town and city across the country. Small businesses were severely harmed by the Covid-19 lockdown and in general face chal-

is fully conscious of local spending efficiency or inefficiency.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

When our budget is fairly balanced between current day school needs and municipal needs, municipal projects like road work can be better prioritized and kept up with. This has not been the case over the last couple of decades. The result has been the build up and back up of necessary projects to include road work, water rationing in the summer, tree trimming etc.

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

First off. I love this town, its community and all that it has to offer. I am running for re-election to Town Council because of the need for continued young leadership in local government. Although still in my 20s, I have served two terms on the Town Council and currently serve as Council President. In these past two terms, I have overseen the development of the Town's \$100 million budget, enacted affordable housing initiatives (including cottage zoning ordinances, and auxiliary dwelling tax abatements), and helped bring on a highly qualified Town Manager, just to name a few. Further, my professional experience as a Certified Public Accountant, and Law Student has assisted me and will continue to assist me in addressing any town issues that arise.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

Balancing the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility starts with ensuring that the Town

developers to build more affordable continues to provide high quality services at efficient costs. To address housing. The town will continue to additional community needs and to avoid increased departmental costs,

allocate money toward its affordable housing fund through its annual budget process to better assist and jump start new affordable housing programs. Additionally, I intend to continue to support a homestead exemption here in South Kingstown. This is something Town Administration is currently studying so that all potential tax reduction strategies are explored.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

To address water issues in Town, the Town Council will continue to hold water suppliers accountable; by ensuring we understand the issues and discuss and explore all possible remedial measures. Further, the Town is currently seeking earmark monies from the Federal government that will allow the Town to invest in additional water supply with the goal of mitigating future water bans.

5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Sean O'Donnell Republican

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

It starts with looking at the face of South Kingstown today, which has changed greatly in the last 20 years Over the past 20 years we have lost 50% of our student population and the number of residents over 65 has doubled. Our budget needs to fairly represent today's demographics. Balance should be restored so that school and municipal spending reflect the population dynamics of today. Over the last 20 years our budget has consistently been about 75% to the schools and 25% municipal. This has continued despite about a 50%

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

This has been an unaddressed problem for quite a while. First there are underlying fundamentals to recognize. About one third of the property in South Kingstown is protected from ever developing. We also are very tough on permitting for new property development. These are both supply side realities. Next, we live in a very desirable location by the ocean that makes demand very strong. GoLocal Prov reported that last year property values in South Kingstown increased at a higher rate than any other town in Rhode Island. One idea

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

This has been an issue for as long as I remember. Summer begins and the water rationing isn't far behind. Lawns and gardens pay the price. We have had a capacity issue that is exposed each summer. Water supply is a classic example of the municipal is sues (that touch every citizen) taking a significant backseat in every budget. Other issues like stormwater runoff, tree management, power outages, road degradation are also byproducts of budget imbalance.

lenges to survival on a consistent basis. One important way to support local small business is for local government to largely "stay out of their way". Don't overtax. Don't over regulate. Give them room to flourish. Their success brings great products and services to local townspeople and provides jobs at all age and skill levels.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

I think you can make a case for an income-based tax break for seniors and veterans. In general, I'd like to see taxes reduced across the board so financial responsibility is evenly spread to everyone and therefore everyone

### 8. Do you support dredaina of the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only a response of yes or no will be published).

Yes



**Alex Petrucci** Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

The decisions made at town hall affect everyone in town differently

so all residents must be heard when it comes to town issues. The current and recent councils have not done that very well. Whether it be the town water issues, runaway spending on narrow priorities, or an awful school building project, they have been tone deaf to the changing needs of South Kingstown. The failed school building project highlighted this perfectly. Elected and hired officials advanced a plan that, at every turn, created more questions than those answered. They ignored the voices of much of the town. And that's why I am running. To listen. To make sure that your tax dollars work for you. To be at the table as a young father, and accomplished electrician when certain questions need to be answered. And that all the decisions made for this town are thought about with its residents in mind

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

A major role of the Town Council is the stewardship of town resources. Many parts of town have suffered because our Council prioritizes one demographic over another. With 75%

of our budget going to one small, shrinking demographic of our town the rest of the town feels the sting. We need to do a better job as a town distributing our money to every department so that each might operate at the best of its ability. It is not fair to all of us picking up the tab when funds are mismanaged and funneled in one direction at the expense of others. Real fiscal responsibility balances the needs of all parts of South Kingstown, not just the politically expedient ones.

### 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

A key factor here is lack of inventory. With 1/3 of South Kingstown land conserved, serious decisions face us. Do we want to allow more housing to be built? Or do we want to keep much of our buildable land conserved? Achieving both presents a significant challenge. Government rarely makes policy that makes homes more affordable. Local attempts have barely scratched the surface and are dwarfed by broader and more regional supply and demand effects. The Council might make housing more affordable in South Kingstown, but it

would take a major shift in priorities. Zoning and planning regulations would need an overhaul for which the town does not have an appetite. For years, Council candidates have promised to address this, but then changed very little, while spending on political priorities. The demand to live in South Kingstown is high, and the only way to lower cost is supply. There may not be the will to fix this housing issue but putting blinders on to the economic reality ensures that nothing will change.

### 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff

The Council has been kicking this can for decades. When a few wells in the Green Hill area went offline for iron concerns, the entire south shore area needed intervention and support from a private company that today is known as Veolia. That area sees a seasonal increase approaching 1 million gallons per day in the summer months. For years, the Council has shrugged it off as a Veolia problem. Restoring those wells would help our water situation tremendously, but the

recurring theme has been that investments in THAT type of infrastructure are unwarranted. This is just one of the glaring examples of how the Council's priorities have left a big part of the community underserved for many years.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

Yes. Businesses must be free to operate the way they see fit. They know more than anyone how to keep their doors open and should have the flexibility needed to do so. We learned during covid how government hurt businesses. Many closed their doors completely. That's wrong. Businesses and their owners should be given the chance to adapt to their surroundings without others telling them what to do. Supporting businesses is one of the main reasons I am running for council, and I will support them by getting out of the way and letting them do what they have to do to be successful.

6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

I would support all real estate tax exemptions. Part of the reason people can't afford to live in South Kingstown is because of bad and imbalanced spending priorities, along with the tax structure that follows it. Any type of exemption that helps our residents would have my full support.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

Our roads are in the condition they are in because we mismanage how we spend. Many of our issues have the same root to the problems. For 20 plus years we have not been properly funding certain areas of town and they have suffered for it. South Kingstown's yearly budget exceeds \$3,000 per resident. Not taxpayer, but resident. We don't need to raise taxes to fix our roads, we need to make sure that we are distributing that \$102 million budget fairly and appropriately.

### 8. Do you support dredging of the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)







Jessica Rose Democrat

# 1. Why are you running and what expertise do you bring to the council?

I am running for re-election because I have realized over the past two years what a rewarding experience it is to serve my community. I have been able to connect with the people of South Kingstown in a way that I had never dreamed of. I truly enjoy being able to serve as a voice for those who depend on me to advocate for them.

I am fully invested in the future of South Kingstown. My family has been here since the late 1940's. I moved to SK full time as a URI student in 2003 and I never left! My husband (a lifelong SK resident) and I have enjoyed raising our two children here. Our son attends Peacedale Elementary and our daughter recently graduated from SKHS and began her college education at Montana State University. My parents and younger sister also reside in South Kingstown.

I have been a lifelong Democrat and activist. I am a member of the SK Democratic Town Committee, a supporter of Climate Action RI, Planned Parenthood, and The Human Rights Campaign, to name a few. I strongly believe that affordable housing should be available in all communities, and that there is a lack of such housing here in South Kingstown. I am also a strong proponent of sustainable living and practice it in my daily life. Sustainable communities are stronger and healthier. I will do everything that I can to insert sustainability practices into town policies.

# 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

One thing that I have noticed in my two years on the council is our over reliance on consultants. One example of this is the 3-2 vote where I voted against spending \$500K on a consultant to help us work out the spending of ARPA funds. The TC had already allocated money to certain projects. Most of those projects could be handled by our town employees, many of whom live here and have a vested interest in our town. We really need to start putting faith in our greatest asset- our outstanding and dedicated town employees, and rethink the need for so many consultants.

3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing

in South Kingstown?

South Kingstown General Election Candidates

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL** 

While I have always been aware of the affordable housing crisis in SK it wasn't until I joined the council that I realized the enormity of the situation. Affordable housing isn't an issue that can be solved in one two year term. I knew that we had to prioritize and set the stage for future councils to continue our work, whether or not I would still hold office. One of the first things that I did was demand that we finalize our town's comprehensive plan, which had expired long before I came to hold office. That was accomplished within my first six months. Today I continue to fight for affordable housing through open and frequent communication with our state leaders, the Affordable Housing Collaborative, the Planning Board, and other community partners. I have also been a strong advocate for a homestead tax exemption in SK.

# 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply, and storm water run off?

It is time to put an end to the yearly water bans in SK. I will continue

to work with Veolia and hold them accountable for updating their infrastructure to meet the demands of our community. While we may not be able to "shop around" for different water vendors, we most certainly can demand better infrastructure on the part of Veolia, and we can advocate to the Public Utilities Commission when they fall short of their responsibilities. Our town must also fortify its existing water infrastructure in order to best utilize it in the event that Veolia continues to not meet our water supply demands. This may include looking into reopening old wells.

# 5. Do you support a business friendly environment? Please explain.

Absolutely! Small businesses are the heartbeat of a vibrant and connected community. When we invest in them, we invest in our community.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

A homestead tax exemption, or some version of one, is something that I have wanted to see through since my first day in office. I believe in a multi-tiered system of taxation,



where year round residents would benefit most. Our new town manager, who I was instrumental in hiring, has expertise in this area and I am confident that if given the opportunity to serve another term we can bring such a plan to fruition.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

This has been a priority of mine, particularly over the past several months as we have witnessed the de terioration of the new design on Old Tower Hill Rd. I have been in constant communication with our town manager, who in turn has been able to put pressure on RIDOT to provide more frequent maintenance to that stretch of road. I look forward to working with the town manager to identify federal funds and grants through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act which can be used to upgrade our local transportation infrastructure and to add traffic calming measures where appropriate.

8. Do you support dredging of the Narrow River? (Yes/No)

Yes



Charles Greg Sweet Republican

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the council?

I have run a local business in town for the last 20 years. We have gone through difficult times and have had to make tough choices to adjust for downturns in the economy. Running a business has forced me to listen and ask questions. What is the importance of these skills? I will use the school facilities project as an example. I spent many hours attending meetings and looking into the project. I listened and asked many questions during the meetings and would not get answers, so I had to look for the answers myself. I spent a lot of time and my own money to find answers and present them to our residents. I felt if residents were voting on the biggest bond in our town's history they need to know as much about the project as possible. The majority of the present town council voted to ask the voters to vote on a plan with many important questions unanswered. If this 85-million-dollar bond had passed, we would have needed to borrow tens of millions more to complete the work and put our town at risk of a lower bond rating. With the facilities plan still being submitted now more than ever we need someone to look out for everyone. I've proven I can do that.

### 2. How will you balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility?

One must first define the needs of the community. Town officials need to develop a list of projects that need to be addressed, then prioritize them and make them available for residents to review. There is no shortage of projects that we should pursue. The new town council needs to work with the new school committee to responsibly address their budget. Rhode Island has other school districts with the same demographics with budgets significantly less than South Kingstown's and provide better results. We need to figure out how they do that and apply their techniques in our district. We need to use our funds much more responsibly. As an example, our town received 9 million dollars in Covid money. The present town council majority approved \$500,000. for a consultant to help beautify villages in South Kingstown. That \$500,000. could be invested directly into projects that don't need a consultant like road and sidewalk work, addressing the water problems and other problems that need to be addressed. The town receives roughly 1 million dollars from the state each year from the added 1% meals and beverage

tax. Beautifying the villages should come from that which was its original intended use.

# 3. What will you do to address the shortage of affordable housing in South Kingstown?

I recognize the problem our town faces with affordable housing. Home prices have skyrocketed for several reasons. I would suggest we work with local lenders or agents and lean on their expertise. Also, our town needs to look at what could be done to loosen building restrictions. Many of the restrictions inflate the cost of building.

# 4. How will you address the town's water issues in terms of quality, supply and stormwater runoff?

The water supply problem has been with us for years. It seems to be discussed every 2 years then nothing is done. What I would do if elected is keep the water issue on the agenda for every meeting until the problem is resolved. South Kingstown has knowledgeable people in town that know the workings of our water system and its problems. We need to ask them to advise us on what our options are and address the problem. If we don't keep the problem on the agenda, it becomes out of sight out of mind. We need to stop kicking the can down the road and finally address the problem.

### 5. Do you support a business-friendly environment? Please explain.

I do. The town needs to do a better job creating a business-friendly environment. A recent town ordinance says all business or business property owners in town are required to remove snow from in front of their businesses, within 24 hours, or risk being fined. This puts an added burden on businesses. The town owns equipment used for sidewalk snow removal. I've talked to several business owners that deal with the town on building projects. I was told that town officials will give direction then change it later. A set of guidelines should be developed so that the process is easier to navigate through.

### 6. What real estate tax exemptions will you support?

At a meeting in June the Town Manager said he and his staff are researching different options. I need to see what options are presented and listen to the pros and cons of the different plans before I can decide.

### 7. How will you address concerns about deteriorating roads and increased traffic?

I'm not sure if this was asked properly. I think it should be how will you address deteriorated roads and sidewalks. We first need an inventory of roads and sidewalks that need to be replaced within 10 years. Then a list that needs to be repaired. Then we need a list of roads that need to b maintained. All this needs to be addressed keeping the budget in mind. As near as I can tell our town has a reserve of around 20 million dollars. We need to question why we need such a high reserve, roughly 20%. If we don't, then we can use some of that money to do immediate work. Now to address the traffic problems. We need to have the police tell us what the problem areas are and give suggestions on how to alleviate them. Then we can decide what to do using their recommendations.

### 8. Do you support dredging of the Narrow River? Yes/No (Only a response of yes or no will be published)

Candidate did not respond with a yes or no.



# South Kingstown General Election Candidates



# $\star \star \star$ SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE $\star \star \star$



Michael Day Republican

### 1.Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I am a father of two and love my children. I own a small video production business and manage property. I chose to run for School Committee after watching first hand some of the troubling experiences with my children. The 9th grade assignment "Bite of the Mango," covered troubling topics that a reviewer for Ouill and Quire warned "its necessarily graphic nature makes it best suited for mature readers." The vivid pornographic descrip7on of a child geIng raped was extremely disturbing to my son. It affected his other classes and school work for weeks. In my daughter's 8th grade year, her social studies class featured a regular streaming of CNN alongside her teacher's one sided political views that went unchallenged by students for fear of reprisal. Most of us remember great teachers. It was incredibly rare for us to know their political leanings. In order to change our public schools, we need to bring back open debate and unbiased discussion with age appropriate content.

2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

The new trend that prioritizes equity over all other facets of schools has its pitfalls. Every student must be treated equally and fairly regardless of personal traits or characteristics. We should be meeting each child where they are, while recognizing that the schools are only a part of their development. One of the pitfalls introduced by the pursuit of equity at the expense of everything else is the culture that considers the child as a ward of the schools without need for parents. One particular policy (1236) in South Kingstown's schools authorizes the school to act without parental knowledge on the difficult topic of gender transitioning. While the ini7al intent of the language may have been protective, the explicit wording encouraging a student/staff relationship that circumvents the parent/child one. The public schools need to make sure every student, in partnership with their families are geIng what they need every day. Even if it is outside of the district.

# 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

Curriculum and material should be determined based on proven methods of education. In many cases, the school committee may need to steer that, especially by watching the modern political trends that influence education systems enormously. And under no circumstances should parents be kept in the dark about any content being presented to their children. Curriculum transparency is critical to establishing the trust of the families served by the district.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

As a former Military Police officer I believe School Resource Officers (SOR) play an integral part in keeping our kids safe. The SRO should become a member of the community and be trusted by students and families. Only then can each student feel safe in their schools. Stricter measures for profanity, destruction of property and violence need to be implemented and enforced. Only then can each student feel safe in their schools. Ensuring health is a more complicated concern. Much of that starts in the home, but the last 2 years have shown what a public institution can do to harm the health of students.

The obesity epidemic was made worse during the pandemic when gym classes, and recesses were abandoned. Physical activity, team building, and confidence exercises cannot be ignored.

### 5. facilities meet the educational needs of all our students?

The buildings in our district need serious work. Everyone knows it, but the realities of the last several years is that politics have interrupted some pretty necessary projects. Operational spending has inflated unnaturally, while major facility maintenance efforts have been sidelined. You might draw the conclusion that political influences have prioritized labor contracts over building needs. This is further evidenced by the ever growing spending in the face of ever declining student enrollment. Like every other facet of our district, we need to get politics out of the system and begin putting kids first.

### 6. Will you support reinstating the dual-language immersion program?

I thought the dual language immersion program was an interesting program. As I have studied this issue once it made headlines last year, I realize its sunsetting may have been an unavoidable necessity. With elementary school enrollment in free fall, it placed notable pressure on the placement process for staff. In recent years, School Committee turnover introduced elected officials that were no longer champions of the program. The political pressure on the program became too great. While second languages open incredible opportunities for our students, until we get politics out of the schools, comprehensive programs like DLI present incredible challenges.

### 7. Will you support Arts and music?

Yes, Arts and music are important for developing minds and should be part of the curriculum. Too often, the threat of "cutting" these programs appears to be a budget tool to draw engaged families out to meetings. So many programs, like computer science, shop, or culinary classes fall prey to the same activities every year. As an artist myself, I am an advocate for the arts and music programs and will champion these programs in our schools. The curriculum would not be complete without including music and arts.

### 8. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation?



# $\star \star$ South Kingstown General Election Candidates 📩 🖈 SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE 📩 🖈



**Katherine Macinanti** Independent

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

My reasons for running for a 2nd term with the South Kingstown School Committee are two-fold. Firstly, my main focus has been and continues to be working to move our School System forward in its mission of educating ALL of our Students. Having been part of the various configurations of our School Committee over these past 5 years, there has been a lot of "1-step forward, 2-steps back" that was driven by a variety of reasons - the most prominent being so much change in leadership. Over the past 8-10 months, the current School Committee has made some significant moves in order to stabilize and point our District in a positive & progressive direction. This brings me to my second reason being that I feel compelled to follow through on the changes our Committee has brought about. I feel like we have just started to gain some traction in making progress towards reestablishing South Kingstown as a top-tier school district, and I feel the need to follow key decisions all the way through.

2. How will you ensure a diverse,

### equitable and inclusive learning environment?

As a School Committee member, it is my role "to provide leadership and oversight of community supported goals, policies, and resources to make certain the South Kingstown public schools deliver a high quality education for ALL students". We have already made some very important leadership changes that have poised our District in becoming a learning environment that takes responsibility for our failures, maps out a plan to correct our missteps, and embraces a way forward to fill existing learning gaps that have grown exponentially over the past 2-3 years. The School Committee's role is governance and accountability. We have put strong Leaders in place, and now it is time to put the trust and respect into them, so they can do the job we hired them for.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain

Our State and Local Educational Leaders, alongside our Teachers, are the ones qualified in determining the curriculum that is being taught in our

schools - inclusive of library materials. The District's Educational Leaders & Teachers. by law, should be working with various groups in our community as part of the School Improvement Teams to help guide and focus this work, based on community values. However, at the end of the day, our Education Professionals should be ultimately responsible for the choices in Curriculum.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

Partnerships between Educational Leaders, Faculty, Support Staff, Maintenance/Custodial Staff, Municipal Leaders, Local Law Enforcement, and most importantly, our Families, should all be working together to help create and maintain open, clean, and safe facilities for our children to learn in. This can look like School Improvement Teams, Parent-Teacher-Admin Groups, Task Forces between School, Local Law Enforcement, and Families, and the like. It is not 1 single entity's responsibility, but rather, a full community effort to ensure both the Physical and Mental safety of our children in and out of school.

5. How will you ensure that the

### town school facilities meet the educational needs of all our students?

I currently sit on the School Building Committee and we are now kicking off the process to re-visit the Facilities Upgrade Program that will allow our Community to analyze and navigate towards updating/ renovating/repairing our Facilities in a manner that will not just catch up to the current educational needs for our students, but will work to look forward into the future and envision the learning needs 10-20-30 years in the future. I hope that in this process, we will solidify relationships with local initiatives, business, neighborhood communities, and our State's colleges & universities so that South Kingstown's facilities and programs reflect what is needed in order to offer to our students exactly what they need to be successful, contributing members of our local and global society.

### 6. Will you support reinstating the dual-language immersion program? Please explain.

South Kingstown needs to create and cultivate a premier World Culture & Language Curriculum and Framework, Pre-K through 12. Our students

should be prepared to understand and contribute in local, national, and global communities. This should be accomplished by having a curriculum that allows our students to become proficient in multiple languages and demonstrate competency in multiple cultures in order to be aware of and responsive to the community & world around them.

### 7. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain

I always have been and always will be a staunch advocate for a full and robust Fine Arts and Music Program in South Kingstown, PK through 12. Our current group of Arts & Music educators are exceptional, and have created a nationally recognized program. My voice has been, and will continue to be, pivotal in keeping it that way, and in fact, as far as I am concerned we need to cultivate it and ensure that it only continues to grow!

8. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation?

tion will need to be addressed.

ing opportunities.

Please explain

education.

Yes

That being said, it is important

for our children to be introduced to

world languages. I will support ini-

tiatives that bring early language in-

struction to our elementary students,

while encouraging our older learners

7. Will you support arts and

Absolutely. Art and music are

critical elements of education. Art

and music can show us perspectives

we never thought of and take us to

places we never dreamed of. They

can expand our minds while keeping

us grounded in ourselves. We learn

ourselves through arts and music.

been through without having to go

through it ourselves. They encourage

empathy and compassion. They are

an essential part of any well-rounded

8. Do you support a half credit

civics course for high school grad-

uation? Yes/no (Only a response of

yes or no will be published)

We can learn what others have

so much about each other and about

to continue to pursue language-learn-

music education in all grade levels?

Yes.



**James Restivo** Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

I'm running because I am a concerned parent who wants to see our district move in a positive direction. The reasoning behind some recent decisions has not seemed transparent, leaving many parents, including myself, confused about where the district is going. We have many crucial decisions coming with looming budget cuts and a continued decline in enrollment. I want to ensure we have rational decision-makers on the committee that can clearly explain their reasoning behind their votes.

As far as what I bring to the committee, I have many years of experience in the business world. I have a varied background, from working in payroll to running operations for a software company. As a key contributor to a small software company with a limited budget, I have to make decisions daily about where to allocate resources efficiently and effectively.

I have volunteered on the Executive Committee of the Rhode Island Sierra Club for the last 6 years and have gained valuable experience working with a varied group of individuals with varying viewpoints.

2. How will you ensure a diverse,

### equitable and inclusive learning environment?

When we implement programs in our school system, they need to be designed such that every student in our system is eligible to participate. We need to identify any barriers to entry and either give supports where needed or remove barriers where needed. It's my goal that every student has every opportunity accessible to them.

Through our polices, we can ensure that our children encounter an inclusive learning environment.

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain

Available curricula are given to us through the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The administration of the district is responsible for choosing and implementing the chosen curriculum. The School Committee can help direct this by making sure we have the right leadership in place to run the district. Leadership should take community input into account when choosing the curriculum. Whichever curriculum is chosen should be available for all parents to see.

As far as library material, I don't think there should be any limits on age and educationally appropriate material in each library. The foundation of a functional democracy includes the exposure to different points of view and philosophies that not all in our community will agree with. That being said, parents need to play a role in helping their children navigate their reading choices.

### 4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

We need to identify any health hazards, including updating old and outdated facilities, to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our children. Entrance and egress points need to be secured to ensure only those with appropriate access be allowed to enter our schools.

We need to encourage a positive environment for all of our learners, with robust anti-bullying policies. We need to invest in our children's social and emotional health, as well. Sexual harassment cannot be tolerated in our school system, at any level.

### 5. How will you ensure that the town school facilities meet the educational needs of all our students?

First and foremost, I am committed

to a new or updated High School. whichever makes the most sense fiscally. Whether we can update in place or need to build new is yet to be seen. But we can't keep deferring

maintenance. As our elementary schools, and even Broad Rock, age, it's important that we prioritize maintenance to keep our buildings in peak condition. Our annual budget must include line items to address deferred maintenance so we can continue to update our buildings on a rolling basis.

If our enrollment declines, it's important to right-size our schools and our district. Conversely, if enrollment increases, we need to be prepared to address the needs of those students as well.

### 6. Will you support reinstating the dual-language immersion program? Please explain.

I will support a new and improved version of dual-language immersion for our schools. The previous model was not given the support it needed to survive. If we were to bring it back, we need to ensure that all stakeholders involved are committed to making it successful and making it a permanent feature of our system.

At this point, we'll have to start from scratch, and if we do, the problems with the previous implementa-

ment you work in has a huge impact on how you feel and how productive

provide them a learning environment

it would also require the full backing of the district administrators. I would like to see the district develop a world language program that could benefit all stude eveloning thi

building level and the district level. Some of these committees include a special education committee on language learning needs, the "late start" committee at the high school, the superintendents stakeholder's ttee and various school im

with the skills they need to promote diversity in the classroom and create an inclusive learning environment. We also need to partner with community members and families; they can provide a wealth of knowledge to our district and help expose our to diverse people, experiences and identities that will help prepare them for life outside the classroom

on its website for easy accessibility to all stakeholders.

4. How do we ensure the health and safety of children in school?

you are. We owe it to our students to where they can be successful. part of this proces

at other dual-language schools. In or-21st century learning. The environder to make this program successful,



**Carol Vetter** Democrat

### 1. Why are you running and what expertise and experience do you bring to the committee?

We face many challenges as a district, but I will work hard to provide creative solutions and compassionate leadership for our schools. We have begun to make the difficult decisions to consolidate buildings, update district policies, and look at the infrastructural needs of our high school; but there is still much to do. I am running to continue this important work.

I have been active in the district for over 20 years and have served on many committees, both at the

provement teams.

My three sons attended our district schools from per-k through high school. I am very proud of their achievements and a large part of their success has been the wonderful education they received in South Kingstown.

I have an MBA in finance and accounting, giving me the ability to help prepare and analyze the district's budget, and I have served on the budget subcommittee for this past year. I am very involved in the SK community, serving on the board of directors for Peace Dale House and GEAR Productions. I have the skills and knowledge needed to move our district forward.

### 2. How will you ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment?

I will make promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within our school district a priority. This begins with having robust policies that outline and define the district's expectations and responsibilities. It is also important that we provide equal access to every school program to all of our students, across school buildings and grade levels.

Another important aspect is providing professional development to teachers and staff. We need to make sure that we provide our educators

### 3. Who should determine the school curriculum including instructional and school library material? Please explain.

Curriculum is crucial for maintaining high quality programs and improving educational outcomes for all students. It provides a framework for teaching and learning to ensure that students gain the knowledge they need to be successful. I believe the best method to developing school curriculum is to bring together a committee of highly trained teachers and administrators to evaluate curriculum choices that are approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

For school library materials, again I would recommend a committee of trained educators with a background in library science. Materials should be chosen with consideration for age social and emotional development. reading level and interest level.

Input from parents and the community is also important. We need to make our processes for choosing curriculum and library materials available and transparent. Once curriculum development has been completed, the district needs to make the curriculum for all grades available

res a high qua ity education in a healthy and safe environment. We learned a considerable amount during the pandemic on the importance of ventilation, cleaning and staff training. We need to continue to invest resources in these areas.

The safety of our school buildings is also crucial. As we get the needs assessment done by the district's consultant, we need to build in increased safety measures to any planned upgrades. Clearly defined emergency procedures and preparedness also need to be in place.

Another pivotal piece to health and safety is the mental health and emotional wellness of our students. This is becoming an increasingly vital area of concern. We need to provide social-emotional learning opportunities for our students and continue to give our teachers and staff the needed resources and curriculum to teach these essential skills.

### 5. How will you ensure that the town school facilities meet the educational needs of all our students?

We are currently going through a needs assessment of all our school buildings. This will help the district identify areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. The most critical needs are at our high school, as the building is not conducive to

design stage, with attention to natural light, improved air quality, acoustic environment, classroom design and shared learning spaces. The town council and school committee have recently created a school building committee to begin the design process for our school facilities. As part of this process, open forums must be utilized to understand the needs and wants of our community. By having a comprehensive, open, and transparent process, we can assure that the educational needs of all our students will be met.

### 6. Will you support reinstating the dual-language immersion program? Please explain.

I was not in favor of abruptly ending the dual-language immersion program. I felt we had an obligation to the students, families and teachers in the program to continue the program for at least those already enrolled. I wanted an open conversation to discuss the challenges with the program, and there were several. The biggest challenge, as it is with the district as a whole, is declining enrollment, and was this program sustainable given this challenge

I don't think that reinstating the dual-language immersion program is possible at this point. The talented teachers within the program have taken other employment opportunities

program will be a priority for me.

### 7. Will you support arts and music education in all grade levels? Please explain.

I have always been a champion for art and music education in our schools at all grade levels. Research has shown that studying art and music has a positive influence on math, reading, verbal skills, cognitive abilities, and critical thinking. This is especially true for students exposed to art and music at an early age. Art and music classes may also be the highlight of a students day, giving them the motivation to come to school.

Strong art and music programs can also help our district as it works to close achievement gaps. Children of more affluent parents often get exposed to art, theater and music outside of school. Lower income children may not have these same opportunities. This is another reason why having school based programs are so important.

### 8. Do you support a half credit civics course for high school graduation? Yes/No.





# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® SOUTH COUNTY, RHODE ISLAND

Charlestown
Exeter
Hopkinton
Richmond
Narragansett
North Kingstown
South Kingstown
Westerly

Open to US Citizens, 16 yrs. and older.

# Who Are We?

We are a nonpartisan political organization that works to build a better democracy through:

- active participation in government
- understanding of public policy issues
- the action of voting

# We meet the 2nd Wednesday every month at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

Please join us to make a difference in your community.

League of Women Voters South County P.O. Box 1636 Westerly, RI 02891-1636

# **MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name	
Name(s) of additional member(s) in hou	isehold
Address	
City	Zip Code
Cell phone	Home phone
Email address	

Please enclose a check to: *League of Women Voters of South County* to the address above. We will contact you soon.

Please check membership category:

# **Voting Member**

\$50.00 one member.

\_\_\_\_\_\$75.00 two members, same household.

\_\_\_\$25 Student, 16 years and older

# **Non-voting Member**

Any \$ donation. Receives all LWVSC communications and is welcome at all events.



You may also join online and/or donate to support our work.

<u>https://my.lwv.org/rhode-island/join</u> Dues and donations are not tax deductible.

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# JR VOTE YOUR



# VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE **OCTOBER 9, 2022**

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