

Precinct 1 Town Meeting Candidates

Eight to be elected, ten on the ballot, one write-in candidate

If no candidate profile is shown, the candidate did not submit a profile.

(* indicates incumbent)

Enzo Rascionato

Email address enzorascionato@gmail.com

Community Activities

Winchester Finance Committee Chair (Current)

Winchester Finance Committee Member (3 years)

Candidate Statement

My name is Enzo Rascionato and I am running to become a Town Meeting Member for Precinct 1. I have lived in town for 5 ½ years. I am currently the Chair of the Winchester Finance Committee, where I have served for the last 3 years.

During that time, I have learned a lot about Winchester's departments and services and have developed a deep understanding of how the town functions. Winchester's budget this year is \$136 million, and my time in 'FinCom' has given me a detailed understanding of where that money comes from (mostly property taxes) and where it goes (mostly into the schools). As Chair this year, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Select Board and various other Winchester committees to build the budgets, understand future plans, and review in detail each town meeting article.

Our biggest challenges as a Town are balancing our property tax level with rising town costs, especially for our schools. From my perspective we should have several areas of focus over the next several years:

- New Schools – Both Lynch & Muraco Elementary Schools will require replacement in the next decade. Lynch has already been approved by the MSBA for the first phase of replacement, and will be a key project for Winchester in the next couple of years. Muraco will follow next, but in the meantime will require several projects to ensure the school can continue to be operational until the new school is built.
- Town Investments – We have to make the Town's services work better for residents by picking the right areas to spend our limited resources. That would include more community engagement projects, investments in the Transfer Station, and a Sustainability Director that will help Winchester take advantage of new green grants & subsidies.
- Controlling costs – COVID has really impacted our budget estimates this year, and costs are also rising in many areas of the Town budget. We must make balanced decisions in upcoming budget cycles to avoid large property tax increases in the next couple of years.

Winchester does a lot of things well. It has a strong school system, a great downtown, and beautiful public spaces. Those things coupled with its proximity to Boston make Winchester an incredible place to live, and I would love the opportunity to represent Precinct 1 as we work to make it even better.

David W. Heinold*

Susan Verdicchio*

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Community Activities

While my children were growing up, I was a library volunteer at Muraco school, served as co-chair of the McCall Parents Association, and then was an active member of the WHSPFA. After being elected to the School Committee in 2013, I served for two terms, served as the representative to the Educational Facilities Planning and Building Committee, and was vice-chair and chair. I am currently vice chair of the Select Board.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

In the short term, responding to the shifting phases of the pandemic and re-opening later this year is critical. Longer term, managing real estate activity to advance the town's Housing Production Plan and Master Plan; coping as a community with the Winchester train station project; and ensuring there is adequate support for the school system while enrollment continues to grow.

What does Winchester do well?

Winchester residents cherish the town's excellent schools, and it's important to acknowledge the dedicated, flexible, and hard-working educators trying to support all students through this pandemic year. On the town side, the DPW, first responders, and administration have risen to the challenge, with many public works projects moving forward (pedestrian safety, bridge and infrastructure repairs, and working with the MBTA to finally start the train station renovation). The town is making progress on affordable housing with the Waterfield Rd. project. Implementation of the Climate Action Plan is moving ahead. It's encouraging to see more conversations and greater awareness of the need to foster mental health, support diversity, equity and inclusion in the community. Winchester knows well how to come together in a crisis.

What could be improved?

There's always room for improvement. The town is managing its finances, but the wait is still too long on many public works needs. Communication and coordination among government boards and committees could be improved.

What is your opinion on the Winchester Spring Ballot Question, the proposed override for the Muraco Culvert and Muraco School Life Extension?

I fully support this debt exclusion override. It's the right time to complete this final culvert-widening project and, with it, the full town-wide flood mitigation plan. We knew it was ambitious, but I don't think anyone expected it to take over 20 years. It's also a critical first step toward a new, bigger Muraco building because it will shrink the area of flooding on Muraco Field. The Life Extension repairs will support the school's learning community for the time it takes to finish Lynch and work with the state on a project for a new Muraco.

Robert F. Deering*

Richard E. Humphrey, Jr.

Maura D. Sullivan*

Community Activities

Current - Town Meeting Member Precinct (10+ years)
Current - Town Meeting Committee on Government Regulations (10+ years)
Current - Co-chair, Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community (10+ years)
Current - En Ka member (5 years)
Current - Treasurer, Winchester Friends of Music (1 year)
Former - WHS Grants Committee Co-chair (2016-20)
Former - Superintendent Search Committee Chair (2014)
Former - Muraco PTO Co-chair (2 years)
Former - Muraco & McCall newsletter editor (combined 5 years)
Former - Muraco Building Committee (1 year)

Candidate Statement

I think the most important issue for Winchester – as with every city and town – is making sure that we manage our money well. Since we rely so heavily on taxpayers to fund our needs, we must be thoughtful and strategic about our budget and financial planning so that we do not overly burden residents. We need to continue to invest in and support our schools and public services. I am in favor of the override for the Muraco culvert and the Muraco school improvements. Although the two issues are unrelated, they are both critical. The Muraco culvert is part of a 20-year town-wide flood mitigation program and would be the last of 13 projects. The improvements to the Muraco school are necessary to provide a safe learning environment for Muraco students and staff. While the goal is to renovate and/or rebuild Muraco, that project is still several years away and we cannot afford not to address the current situation now. Winchester is a vibrant and busy community with many hard-working and dedicated volunteers. Areas for improvement: 1) Better communication between town boards so that coordinated decisions are made and 2) Increased transparency in government so that all residents are aware of and understand the decisions.

Christian "Chris" Nixon*
nixon01890@gmail.com

Personal:

22-year Winchester resident
Transplanted Texan loving New England
Married "Hockey Dad" with three kids ages 11 to 20

Favorite quote:

"A boy told me I skate like a girl. I told him if he tried harder, he could, too!"

Education:

Undergraduate degree in Architecture, Art and Art History - Rice University, 1993

Graduate degree in Architecture - Rice University, 1995

Education Policy Fellow - Northeastern University, Institute for Educational Leadership - 2011

Town Service:

Town Meeting Member: 2008-present

School Committee: 2010-present

Capital Planning Committee: 2014-2018, 2019-present

Educational Facilities Building and Planning Committee: 2010-2014

Audit Advisory Committee: 2012-present

What has Winchester done well?

What we see-- As a School Committee and Town Meeting member, I am truly grateful for the consistent support Winchester has shown for essential school building projects for our PK-12 students. As someone fortunate enough to be involved in the planning, design and procurement of these projects, I continue to be impressed by the learning environments and physical plant resources that we continue to deliver to our students and teachers. I am especially thankful for the sustained Town Meeting and broader community support that allows us to deliver on our 10-year School Facilities Master Plans-- with not one or two-- but multiple essential projects that meet the needs of our growing and changing district.

What we don't see-- Although there is always room for improvement, relative to many of our peer municipalities, Winchester is doing a good job planning for our legacy financial obligations to our retirees. Our pension obligations are over 80% funded and our OPEB obligations defined under GASB 45 and our periodic actuarial assessments continue to be a subject of continued focus and discussion each year. Although our OPEB obligations are significant, continued attention by the Audit Committee and Finance Committee mean that Town Meeting debates on personnel matters now take on a broader long-term view, something both helpful and appropriate for this deliberative body. I especially thank former FinCom chairs Patty Clewley and Michelle Prior for elevating OPEB liability to Town Meeting's attention, and their successors for keeping it "on the table"!

What could be improved?

Either improve communication between boards and committees or scale back on the number of initiatives so that we can all have the opportunity to understand, embrace, and ultimately rally for those things that make meaningful impact and improvement to the lives of Winchester residents-- young and old.

Shamus Brady – Mr. Brady is also a candidate for School Committee

Candidate Statement

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our candidates for school committee. My name is Shamus Brady and I humbly ask for your vote on Tuesday March 30th for one of the open seats on the Winchester School Committee. I am hoping to bring my 17 years of experience working as a teacher and a school leader to our school committee.

After graduating from Arlington High School and Williams College I was selected to join the Teach for America program and began my career as a special education teacher at a large public high school in Washington, DC. While teaching at Dunbar High School I earned my masters degree in teaching special education from Trinity University in DC. I moved on to study at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City to earn my masters in school leadership. I have worked as an assistant principal, principal and special education administrator at the elementary, middle and high school levels. My experience includes working in schools in Washington, DC, Virginia, and for the last 11 years in Massachusetts. Currently I am working as an assistant principal and special education coordinator in Melrose at the Winthrop Elementary School.

My wife Anthea and I moved to Winchester in 2014 and are the proud parents of Calder our 4-year-old and Larkin our 5-month-old. Since moving to Winchester, I have volunteered with Winchester A Better Chance (Winchester ABC) as both a tutor and a fundraiser. I currently serve on the board of ABC as the co-chair of admissions. This summer I was asked to join the Winchester Finance committee to share my expertise in school budgets and I have been proud to serve our town in that capacity.

I am running because I firmly believe we need current public-school educators on the school committee. Our school committee does not have someone who currently works in a public school and I think that perspective is essential and extremely helpful.

LWV Questions

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

I think long term planning for our schools is essential. We need to work to ensure we have administrators, including a superintendent, who can serve long term in the district and enact change. At the same time, we need to have a clear plan and explicit timeline for replacing Lynch and Muraco. Once these projects are complete, we need to outline how all the schools would be replaced again over the next 50-75 years. The wait and see approach has left us with two schools in serious need of replacement and that lack of vision has not served our town well.

What does Winchester do well?

Winchester is a great community that often comes together in moments of need and helps. We have amazing volunteers who do countless hours of work to make our town the wonderful place that it is.

How has the Winchester Public Schools met the challenges of COVID 19 this year to support students, families, and staff which can be continued into the fall?

I know that many families have been disappointed with this year. Next year we need to ensure that we have the staffing to support all of our students and families. I am hoping to create a mentor program to support middle and high school students. I think the flexibility that we have all adopted as educators will be very important to retain into the Fall. It has been wonderful to

see the creativity of students and teachers when it comes to learning this year and I hope we retain that creative spirit as we move forward.

What are the long-term challenges facing the Winchester Public Schools?

We need to hire a long-term superintendent. We need to do a better job retaining principals. We need to replace two buildings and be prepared for increases in our student population. Most importantly we need to think long term and not in 2-3 years increments. Exploring the expansion of public preschool is also something the town needs to pursue.

What is your opinion on the Winchester Spring Ballot Question, on the proposed override for the Muraco Culvert and Muraco School Life Extension?

This work needs to be finished. This concludes a series of projects that will help our entire town around issues related to flooding. Additionally, it is clear to anyone who has been inside Muraco that it needs immediate work to remain a decent learning environment for students. However, this investment must not slow the process to build a new Muraco. We can and should do both.

Douglas A. Marmon*

Quinn V. Simpson*

Timothy Matthews (Mr. Matthews is a write-in candidate)
timothy.matthews@gmail.com

Candidate Statement

As a relatively new resident of Winchester, I'm excited to be running for Town Meeting in Precinct 1. While I've lived in the Boston area for nearly 20 years, my husband (a pediatric specialist at Boston Children's Hospital) and I moved here in late 2018 to take advantage of the open spaces and warm community as we raise our two children (now 4.5 years and 4 months old). We're confident that Winchester is an incredible place for us to grow and raise our family. This summer, as our family joined with the Select Board and fellow residents in raising the Pride and Black Lives Matter flags over the Town Common (and persevered in the face of vandalism), I was inspired to become more involved. I look forward to furthering our important work together.

I bring diverse prior work experience, having started in nonprofit fundraising and corporate marketing, then transitioning into a career in public education and academia. This past May, amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, I completed my Doctorate in Education at Harvard, and

am currently a postdoctoral fellow focused on early education while also working to build nonprofit curriculum for the K-12 space.

If there is anything that this past year has taught us, it is that local community and neighbor support is essential. Even while socially distant (with masks), our town's residents remained resilient – supporting local businesses, honoring our health care and front-line heroes, checking in on the most vulnerable among us, and working together to adapt our schools for the changing requirements of remote, hybrid, and in-person learning. As we hopefully turn the corner into a brighter, healthier future, it is these lessons of kindness and community that need to be carried forward in our town governance.

Town Meeting members will be asked to consider numerous important issues over the coming year. I fully support the ballot question to provide urgent funding to mitigate flood impacts in the neighborhoods of Precinct 1 and emergency upgrades to the decaying Muraco School infrastructure. I can't think of a more immediate issue facing the residents of this neighborhood. Our schools — children, parents, teachers, and administrators — all need our support, particularly as we continue confronting the unique psychosocial, physical health, and logistical challenges of the pandemic. Additionally, our town needs to examine opportunities to increase affordable housing and improve community services, including the development of a community pool. Finally, I believe that systems and processes at Town Hall (e.g., permits, filings, etc.) need to be streamlined and brought online in a way that reduces headaches and meets the needs of a busy, tech-savvy population — a need that's felt even more urgent during the COVID pandemic. As part of this effort, I agree that all votes should be transparent and therefore be made public record.

I look forward to hearing from town residents about their concerns and would be honored to serve as an advocate and partner for Precinct 1 on Town Meeting.