

## Select Board Candidates

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

(\* indicates incumbent)

### Select Board Candidates

Two to be elected for 3 years

#### Michael Bettencourt\*

mbettencourt@winchester.us

#### Community Activities

Select Board (9 years)

Town Meeting Member (10 years)

Housing Partnership Board

Affordable Housing Trust

Finance Committee (former member)

League of Women Voters Member

Winchester Democratic Town Committee

Winchester Soccer Club Board

Massachusetts Municipal Association (former Board member, District Representative)

Climate Action Advisory Committee (Board Representative)

Council on Aging (Board Representative)

Mike and Katie have lived in Winchester with their two children Grace and Violet since 2010 and are very active in the community. Katie is an elementary art teacher in Lexington and Mike is an attorney and small business owner. Violet is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Winchester High School and Grace is in her first year at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. They have a dog, Hannah, two cats and chickens.

#### Candidate Statement

##### **What skills and experience would you bring to the Select Board?**

Reflecting on nearly a decade of service on the Select Board, I believe there are several skills necessary to being successful.

#### Community Connection

Firstly, I think you need **empathy**. Our community is extremely diverse. To represent residents with different backgrounds and perspectives you need to be able to listen and genuinely care about the impact on the life of each member of the community. Listening to residents is important and necessary, but it isn't enough. While abstract in nature, I believe developing a genuine connection to issues and the people who are impacted by government decisions is the skill I value the most. Whether it is a decision to raise taxes for a school building, develop affordable housing or tackle a large public works project, everyone experiences each decision differently. Taking the time to listen *before* deciding or taking a vote is not easy or expedient—and neither is local government. Sitting down and connecting with residents with a willingness to be open to their experience is what I do best and informs my decisions on the board.

### **Communication and Collaboration**

Collaboration and communication are vital skills to good governance. Winchester is a community steeped in a long history of service. I don't know of another community that has more committees, working groups and volunteers working together everyday. This means more people and more process, but it also makes our decisions more inclusive, complete and strategic. The more I work with other members of our community--the more we challenge each other--the better outcomes we can deliver for residents. And we need to continue our efforts to further develop and implement communication strategies. Often times our effectiveness and expediency gets ahead of communicating and connecting with residents. I think we need to hire a specialist in communications so that we can continue to move forward--*together*.

### **Committed Leadership with Results**

Making a **commitment** to government is vital to my work on the Select Board. I never have missed a single Select Board meeting over the past nine years of my service. In that time, I have led efforts to revitalize our MBTA station, fund flood mitigation projects, develop affordable housing, rebuild the transfer station, invest in athletic fields and develop our Climate Action Plan.

Being on the Select Board means spending countless hours a week in subcommittee meetings, strategic planning sessions and individual meetings with residents. Showing up is important and it sends a message to residents that I take their concerns seriously and I am willing to put the time in to get the job done.

### **What are the three or four issues facing Winchester that you think are most important?**

**Affordability:** It is not a secret that it is expensive to live in Winchester. However, over the past several years taxes and expenses has increased dramatically. I have been actively engaged in our efforts to develop and maintain affordable housing since 2015, I believe we also need to be strategic and make a commitment to controlling costs. When I speak to residents, more than ever I hear of the financial burden of living here and their anxiety about being forced out of a community they love. We must do our best to avoid becoming an economically-gated community. Managing budget growth responsibly means being ready and willing to make tough decisions on wants versus needs. I continue to stand ready to do exactly that.

**Education:** Winchester has a long history of commitment to education. Our financial investment in our school facilities over the past decade is unparalleled in Massachusetts. I worked to fund the new Lynch as our first net zero facility and will continue with our plan to build a new Muraco Elementary School.

However, what we really talk about when we talk about education is our teachers. The school budget will always be the largest part of the Town's operating budget, which is mostly personnel. Our commitment to our kids means resisting the urge to underfund the schools. Our budget reflects our values and responsibly investing in recruiting **and** retaining the best personnel shall remain a priority. Whether it be curriculum changes, special education expenses or social and emotional strategies—our continued investment in our educators is non-negotiable.

**Climate Change Resilience:** When I speak to young people in our community, their number one fear is the impact of climate change. As we tackle our toughest problems, we must have an eye to the future. It isn't necessary to believe in climate change, conceptually, to see the impact of shifts in our environment and the cost. Cooling and heating our buildings is more expensive, investing in flood mitigation infrastructure is more urgent and managing our water and sewer

costs has become more difficult. Preserving our built and natural environment requires strategic planning and investment that should be a top priority.

**Is there an important issue facing Winchester that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?**

I believe we need an entirely new strategy to tackle our Capital Improvement Program (CIP). I support the adoption of The Community Preservation Act (CPA), a strategic tool to raise revenue from the State to offset neglected investment in certain projects including buildings and recreation space. But the CPA is only one piece of the puzzle. Increased construction costs and supply chain delays have put pressure on the Building Stabilization Fund (BSF) and Capital Stabilization Fund (CSF) and forces us to delay necessary capital projects. I believe a commitment to health and safety priorities and significant investment in maintenance of our existing facilities, will help us plan for large capital projects. Our present system and existing resources cannot not address our capital improvement needs. The Select Board has been strategic about managing our existing resources, but we will need to inject more revenue in our program to repair aging roofs, replace HVAC systems and maintain water and sewer infrastructure.

**Vincent Lawrence “Vince” Dixon**

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**Community Activities**

Winchester Historical Society – Periodic Full Length Historian Presentations  
Regular Tour Guide – Historic Trolley Tour – Annual Town Day  
Planning Committee – Wilson Science & Technology Forum – Jenks Center  
Finance Committee, and Investment Committee – Parish of the Epiphany

**Previous Service – Member, Finance Committee, Town of Winchester, Mass. July 2015 to July, 2019** – Various responsibilities relating to then Town budget of over \$100 million annually; analyzing, hearing, making recommendations, taking votes, relating to municipal expenditures, and budget.

*During service on Finance Committee.* Member of Subcommittees on Education (swing vote to establish full, complete Kindergarten Program), OPEB, Pension, Personnel, and Audit (significant contributions, included advocating initiative to add two positions to the Fire Department, saving Town \$250,000).

**Candidate Statement**

**What skills and experience would you bring to the Select Board?**

*My personal educational path*, is relatively unique, and to many, inspirational. – Home Schooled by my parents, from essentially Pre-School, but distinctly from Kindergarten through High School; having earned my Associate in Arts (A.A.), and my Bachelor of Arts (A.B. *with honors*) from Harvard University Extension School; and my Master of Education (Ed.M.) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

I have embraced the value of General Education, across a wide variety of subject disciplines, and fields of study. This included growing up in a family that was largely composed of poor working class individuals, who went on to become teachers, special education teachers, tutors, and librarians. This cultural breadth, had the spirit of a modern styled, Renaissance flavored seeking of knowledge, and culture.

My life experience has continued to broaden several important focus areas: Economics, Budgeting, Strategic Planning, Systems Analysis, Government Operations, Public Policy, and Legal Mechanisms (Understanding Legislation, Regulations, and Government Processes). After, over fifty years of involvement, in public life, I have gained tremendous experience, and accomplished a lot; including being part of a team that helped to save the Anti Poverty agency, in Cambridge (saving about 60 jobs, and important social services); designing a reform package, for the Cambridge Public Schools; obtaining passage of a municipal voter information law; operating an historic guided walking tour business, around Cambridge, Harvard, and beyond, for twenty years; and a great deal more.

**What are the three or four issues facing Winchester that you think are most important?** I define “Three R’s of Government: Respect, Reform, and Rule of Law,” as central to functioning government, by people of good faith, serving the broad public interest; and guiding public services.

**Respect:** Respect for every individual, flows from our Massachusetts History. Constitutional Government, significantly developed in Massachusetts, from The Mayflower Compact, The Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company, The Body of Liberties, The Constitution of Massachusetts; and The Massachusetts Compromise, to The U.S. Constitution (largely leading to what we know of as the Bill of Rights). This evolving progress, means that we require definitions of legal status, legal pathways, and rights; mostly seeking to expand these characteristics, and encourage productive lives, in further advancing, and improving ways.

**Reform:** The Town of Winchester, has mechanisms, for periodic review of its governing structure. This should be implemented regularly; and other ideas explored. These should include, considering a modest stipend for all Town-wide elected officials, to recognize valuable service, and needs for accountable, quality officials; – high-quality, regular and comprehensive training, for all Town officials, and staff; and other measures to recognize the growing complexity of public government, complex technology interfaces, services, and needs.

**Rule of Law:** The Oath or Affirmation of Office, expected of all elected, and appointed officials, includes the expectation of *‘faithfully executing the laws’* and this should be taken seriously, followed, enforced, and encouraged, across all Town staff, legal bodies, and those performing Town related work. The Rule of Law, has as a crucial goal, rising above personal opinions, and ideological factions.

**Public Civic Education and Communications:** Strengthening mechanisms, of various types, across the Town, is needed, including a systematic welcoming of new residents, and high quality civic programming.

**Is there an important issue facing Winchester that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?**

The need to balance the intersection of two connected, and yet distinct issues, is crucial to answering, comprehensively broad, and wide issues of the Town:

- Full Public School implementation, of complete, accessible, Pre-School Programming, for all applicants.
- Reasonable Commercial Development, including in the Town Center, and Adequate Planning Resources, to generate needed revenue.

**A New Revenues Commission**, membership drawn from Town Meeting, and Town Administrators, should be created, to develop “A Comprehensive Winchester Future Plan” document, focused on what levels of funding, revenues, and reasonable development planning,

should be defined, and described. – This is distinct from the *Master Plan*, which should be consulted along the way.

## William McGonigle

### Community Activities

Town Meeting Member

Board of Appeals (Zoning Board) Member

Parent (Creative Corner, Lincoln Elementary, Rec Sports, Cub Scouts, Dance Class, FAN, and more...)

### Candidate Statement

#### **What skills and experience would you bring to the Select Board?**

As an attorney, I spend every day working through contracts, negotiations, litigation, and process to help my clients solve problems and avoid costs. This includes issues specific to municipalities, who I often represent. I've been successful in my practice because I understand the importance of listening to all sides, finding common ground, and relying upon experts. This experience is directly applicable to the Select Board, who must reach out for and respect the opinions of all stakeholders; support the staff, boards, and committees that make our town work; and--at times--make difficult decisions based upon the best information available.

As a father with kids at Lincoln Elementary, I appreciate the opportunities offered by Winchester, which were created by the hard work and foresight of those who came before me. I am dedicated to preserving and improving those opportunities so that Winchester remains a community that respects its past while preparing for its future.

#### **What are the three or four issues facing Winchester that you think are most important?**

- **Smart Spending:** We have both talented staff and volunteers on our Capital Planning and Finance Committees, all of whom can be provided increased support and coordination to craft short term and long term plans for spending and saving so we can address our priority projects and avoid emergencies before then become overly costly. This concerns our schools, municipal buildings, infrastructure, and all the other assets and resources that make Winchester an amazing place to live.
- **Bylaws for the People:** It shouldn't take a lawyer to understand our bylaws. As we review certain bylaws and craft new ones to address issues like MBTA 3A zoning, we must make sure they reflect Winchester's values, encourage business development, allow our residents to exercise their rights, and guarantee that our government efficiently functions.
- **Supporting Our Schools:** Many of us were attracted to Winchester because of its great schools. That legacy needs to continue. And though the School Committee has authority over many issues, the Select Board can still advocate and educate to make sure our kids and their teachers have the support they deserve.

#### **Is there an important issue facing Winchester that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?**

We need improved communication and collaboration. With Town Meeting, the boards and committees, the staff, and--most importantly--the residents and businesses of Winchester.

Modern media makes it increasingly important to simply get out in the community, sit down with stakeholders, listen to their concerns, and collaborate to find solutions. The Select Board has to help provide the signal through the noise because nothing promotes good government more than an informed population.

Improved communication brings increased collaboration. Bringing all viewpoints into the process allows us to efficiently address concerns and avoid unnecessary roadblocks. It also proves to our voters that we're doing everything we can to find the best solution.

The Financial Summit held last January and the Planning Board's recent articles on the MBTA 3A zoning are great examples of how we can increase both communication and collaboration. Those efforts should be modeled and expanded upon. The benefits of improved communication and collaboration can then help Winchester tackle any challenge that comes its way.

## **Dorothy Simboli**

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### **Community Activities**

- Town Meeting Member 2016 – Present
- Board of Appeals 2016 – Present
- Communication Study Committee 2022
- Former WPS and SPED parent 2005 – 2012

### **Candidate Statement**

#### **What skills and experience would you bring to the Select Board?**

As a resident of 24 years, I am grateful to call Winchester my home. I am a Massachusetts licensed attorney specializing in real estate and land use and a proud mother of three adult children who have been raised here. Having a neurodiverse student in WPS, I became a strong advocate, gaining unique and valuable insights into the IEP process and a true appreciation for the devoted and caring teachers and staff of Winchester Public Schools. I have also served eight years on the Board of Appeals. In that capacity, I heard and decided Special Permit, Variance and Site Plan Review Petitions for both residential and commercial properties, as well as Comprehensive Permit Petitions for Affordable housing developments under Chapter 40B. I have also served eight years as an active and involved Town Meeting Member for Precinct 6. Leveraging this experience, as a Select Board member, my goal would be to engage earlier in the problem-solving stages of Town governance in order to optimize our Town's assets for the benefit of future generations.

#### **What are the three or four issues facing Winchester that you think are most important?**

Balanced and responsible growth of diverse housing stock while also ensuring historic preservation, optimizing infrastructure, and encouraging commercial development will be essential as Winchester seeks compliance with the MBTA Communities Act and development of North Main Street.

Winchester's commitment to excel in education must translate into adopting updated and best practice curriculum, standards and performance measures to ensure that the needs of all students are met while also supporting our outstanding teachers and staff. Critical issues include literacy curriculum, professional development and standardized testing.

Financial stability is paramount as we face a backlog of deferred capital projects and major new building projects such as Muraco School. Implementation of sound fiscal policies, transparent budgeting and prudent resource allocation will be essential for our financial stability.

**Is there an important issue facing Winchester that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?**

Winchester excels in many areas including its municipal services such as the Department of Public Works, Police, Fire and Ambulance, and Town Hall departments. Our dedicated town employees consistently go above and beyond in their daily interactions with residents. Winchester schools maintain high academic standards and strive for continuous improvement. Winchester also benefits from the service of numerous VOLUNTEERS.

As Winchester continues to grow, it is vital to preserve our close-knit community and strong educational system. To achieve these ends, I would focus on improving communication and collaboration among Town Boards and Committees. I would support the establishment of clear channels for sharing information and ideas. By fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration and communication, Town representatives would better understand each other and best represent the views of every resident, ensuring a unified vision for Winchester.