

Precinct 3 Town Meeting Candidates

Eight to be elected, fourteen on the ballot

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Allison Kangas De Bellalta

akdebellalta@gmail.com

Community Activities

WFEE Grants Committee Member

Children's Own School Board Member

Winchester ABC Program Coordinator

NFSJ Parent Circle Member

Former WHS History teacher

Founder of Winchester Chapter Special Olympics Xtra Mile Club

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

1. Maintaining high standards of education
2. Providing space for diversity and civil discourse in our town
3. Diversifying sources of tax revenue
4. Moving on from the mascot debate
5. Revitalizing our town center by providing new spaces for all people to access

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I believe that diversifying the base of our tax revenue and revitalizing our town center go hand in hand. As I see shops and businesses close in our center, I see an opportunity to grow a commercial tax base while fostering greater community growth.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester has a passionate and educated population that gets involved in town issues. This is a real asset of our town. The thing that we lack however is organized and well-connected to town departments and government. It's almost as if one hand doesn't know what the other is doing. We really need to centralize information on a 21st century website, cut out unnecessary and bureaucratic meetings and provide a proven framework for our departments and elected boards to communicate efficiently.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

I support building the stand-alone Central Office because our school administration has been moved around 4 times in the last few years. Our school and HR records are being stored in a dusty basement and cannot be accessed without a big production. This is no way to run a successful school district. Our district staff deserves a healthy work space so they can "move in" and finally organize their facility to be run efficiently.

Samantha Allison*

SamAllisonWinTMM@gmail.com

Community Activities

Town Meeting Member for six years (2016 – present)
Former Finance Committee member (2015-2019) – including Vice Chair and Chair roles
Winchester Master Plan Steering Committee (2018-2019)
Superintendent’s Budget Advisory Committee (2016-2019)
Winchester ABC Program Host Family (2016-2020)
Co-President, Ambrose Elementary School PTO (2011-2013)
Ambrose Elementary School Fundraising Committee (2012-2019)

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

There are several issues facing Winchester. First and foremost is funding. Our predominantly residential tax base and Proposition 2 ½ limit the increase in Town revenues year over year. We do not have the space to significantly change commercial tax revenues as a percentage of our available funding. Yet our costs continue to increase by more than 2.5% each year driven by collective bargaining agreements, healthcare costs, desired services, etc. We must constantly prioritize our needs and be realistic about the level of funding available – or be prepared to present operating overrides to Winchester residents more frequently than we have in the past.

Funding levels impact our ability to address many other priorities for Winchester:

- School enrollment and facility needs
- Affordable housing availability
- Climate change
- Traffic calming efforts
- Sustaining a vibrant town center
- Proactive repair and maintenance needs

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

It’s hard to pick just one! I am very passionate about managing our funding needs and wants given my past experience on the Finance Committee. We have no shortage of good ideas and opportunities to make a variety of investments in Town. We need to seek out all potential sources of funding while balancing our expenditures to fit the priorities of Winchester residents. It is a difficult balance, and we must constantly strive to ensure that we have a strong community with a stable financial position.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester has many engaged residents that enjoy participating in town activities, politics, committees, etc. This provides a tremendous number of resources and volunteers that enable the town to run. They bring a lot of knowledge and expertise to discussions and can help drive progress.

At the same time, the engagement of residents’ results in some turnover and/or the introduction of new participants that may lack some of the historical perspective and knowledge of prior discussions. I believe that we could do a better job of documenting and communicating past

efforts to make it easier to onboard new participants in conversations and avoid re-hashing a lot of efforts.

As Town Meeting Members (or others that hold elected or appointed positions in town), we also need to commit to doing the “homework” that is required to be prepared and knowledgeable about the topics and issues that are facing the Town. This takes commitment and an investment of time. We should also strive to reach out to our precincts to more proactively communicate the issues being discussed at Town Meeting to educate and solicit feedback from our constituents.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

I support the stand-alone admin building at the Carriage House. In my role on Finance Committee, I engaged with the School Committee as they prepared the Winchester Schools Master Plan. A number of options were considered along with financial implications. The Carriage House presents a viable option to both meet the administrative needs for the school department while restoring a historical building that has been neglected for quite some time. I am happy to discuss more specifics around this topic if desired (e.g., financials, safety, traffic, etc.).

Vincent Lawrence Dixon

vincedixon99@yahoo.com

Community Activities

Decades of professional, and public service include: Member of Town of Winchester Finance Committee (2015-2019) – Swing vote For Full Kindergarten; as Historian, have delivered full presentations to the Winchester Historical Society, Rotary Club, Guide on Town Day Trolley.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Dynamic Engagement In The Rule Of Law; A Quality Town Of The Twenty-First Century – Implementing The Master Plan; including Affordable Housing. Improving the best possible schools: Including Full Enrollment for Pre-School Programs; Professional Staff Training.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Dynamic Engagement In The Rule Of Law. – In following the structures of law, Constitutional, Statutory, and Regulatory; and ensuring continuing staff training, there is a stronger possibility of objective standards, for performing public services, and answering the needs of our people.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Many things, are done well; there must be a quality inventory, of excellent, ordinary, and deficient services. Schools, are largely done very well, but not always completely; one example, would be to provide a complete set of enrollment places, for all pre-school applicants, eliminating lottery.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

Yes. It is long overdue. – A mechanism for welcoming private, individual, and business donations, should also be established; given the historic nature of the property, and its public value.

Susan Nardone

s_nardone@verizon.net

Community Activities

I've volunteered in the community while my children were in school as a room parent, math/English/reading helper, library helper, the before school Reebok fitness program and was a morning greater for 5 years at the Lincoln Elementary all while working. I'm a past board member and co-chair of Winchester friends of VNA. For the past 10 years, I'm a member of West Point Moms Bake group. We send monthly care packages to deployed soldiers of any branch and during the holidays I organize, collect goods, pack and ship care packages to 30 or more soldiers who are deployed through another West Point parents' group. My packages have been received by some of our hometown heroes.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Keeping our taxes low, increasing affordable housing, upholding our high academic standards in our schools, addressing the parking situation in our downtown area, increasing commercial business.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I am passionate about keeping our standards in our schools. Every parent wants what is best for their child and it starts with good education. This is the top reason people want to move to our beautiful Town. We need to be able to sustain this excellence.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

The Winchester DPW keeps the town beautiful. When compared to surrounding towns/cities, our roads conditions (when not under utility construction) are the best. In winter, our roads are cleared quickly and efficiently. In spring/summer our parks and green spaces are kept up nicely.

Winchester needs to encourage more commercial development and encourage smart development in the downtown area. These will help provide sustainability and increase the tax base.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

Yes, I support the Carriage House restoration. This is the perfect timing to save historical structure while allowing the Parkhurst to be used as swing space for the Lynch school children who would otherwise be in the middle of a construction zone. Being in the construction zone will increase the cost of construction by having to work around the school schedule. A standalone administration building leaves the Parkhurst open to future income stream as a rentable facility after all the schools are completed.

John W. Kilborn*
JKilborn3@gmail.com

Community Activities

Wright Locke Farm Board Member (Current)
Led effort to install Winchester's Fish Ladder (Past and ongoing)
Climate Action Committee (Past)
Town Counsel Selection Committee (Past)

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Schools: Planning for Lynch and Muraco reconstruction and enrollment growth versus the current high taxation and need for an operational override
Promoting Affordable Housing and responding to proposed 40B projects
Promoting Downtown Development
Climate Action to prevent and prepare for Climate Change

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I feel most passionate about climate change. I am for an "all of the above" approach to combating climate change. That is, we need to evaluate all promising technologies and measures to combat the problem as warranted. I am proud of the steps Winchester has taken so far, but the Town should continue to implement measures to mitigate and prepare for climate change.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Although sometimes there is vitriol in the Winchester Mass Residents Facebook Page, Winchester does well in avoiding the rancor that has divided other Towns, at least at Town Meeting. We need to keep this goal in mind. The new Town Meeting subcommittee that is addressing how to improve communication is a good idea. I think the Town is well managed and has done a good job in face of the pandemic.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

Chris Nixon gave a convincing presentation that restoring the Carriage House is a good idea for the schools and would save an historic building. However, the per square foot cost seemed very high. Also, I wonder if there's a place in an existing building that could fit a reduced administrative space, especially if some staff could work remotely. I would like answers to these questions before I voted to restore the Carriage House.

Nickoleta Sakorafos

Jared Jackson

Alexander R. DeMatteo, III*

Ruthie Ruffing Gagne*

Ruthie.Gagne4428@gmail.com

Community Activities

As a Winchester resident for more than a decade, I have been very involved in our Town, including:

- Finance Committee member, since 2017.
- Friends of the Winchester Public Library (FWPL), since 2017.
- Town Meeting member, since 2018.
- Ambrose Safety Committee - PTO, since 2021.
- Climate Action Advisory Committee (2016-2018).
- Educational Facilities Planning and Building Committee (EFPBC), FinCom representative (2017- 2019).
- Winchester Local Historic District Study Committee (2018-2021).
- Vinson – Owen, McCall and Winchester High School PTOs (2016-2019).

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Though there are many important issues facing Winchester, Town finances and Pedestrian safety are my highest priority.

As a member of our Town’s Finance Committee, I am aware of all town department budgets (FinCom reviews each of them every year and votes to approve spending). This means I get a town-wide picture of our finances, not just information for one proposition or one issue. It is from this that I know just how much Winchester is being squeezed, due to a combination of Prop. 2.5, only 4% commercial taxes and ever-climbing costs (COLA, construction, insurance, etc.). We have worked very hard to keep a reign on Spending, knowing we will have to borrow money for two upcoming school construction projects, while not knowing what expenses COVID will bring. Another area of concern around town is pedestrian safety. Almost daily, I see very scary moments between cars and pedestrians, with children and adults almost getting hit. We have already had 1 death in town recently (and I am glad there has been some safety measures implemented), though there are still too many scary incidents to count. We can do more.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Unfortunately, nothing runs without money and Winchester is no exception. So, though we may wish to add more school programs or build new buildings or add more employees, the financial impact of these decisions must be considered. As mentioned above, with ever-increasing costs of running our Town, but limited ways to increase revenue, the gap widens between what we need and what we have more and more every year. And as unpopular as the idea is, we need to examine ways to increase Town funding, including another potential override.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester would not be Winchester without its absolutely amazing resident involvement. And this applies all across the board, from schools to town government. It is amazing to see

everybody caring so much about our Town that they are willing to give up family / relaxing time to sit, listen and make decisions on so many issues across our town.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

No. For 2 reasons.

As a member of FinCom, I know just how much of a financial ask the Carriage House is to our Town, and what it could mean for us, not only now but also in the near future when we will need to borrow money for 2 elementary schools. And we can expect that materials and construction costs are most likely going to increase the final number. Additionally, with all the moving parts (Parkhurst, Central Office, Lynch students, etc.) for the Carriage House to be used, not only do I feel the timing is very difficult to accurately predict, I also believe there are too many unknowns around post-pandemic working environments (Virtual? Lease space?) for me to vote in favor of the Carriage House. FYI – FinCom voted unanimously unfavorable action.

And as an Ambrose's Safety Committee member, I work with Safe Routes to School (a MA Dept of Transportation committee (SRTS)), and the Ambrose Principal to work to improve areas of concern around our school. Ironically, the number one area of concern mentioned was the crosswalk between Ambrose and the Sanborne House, as students of all ages use it all day. So, by restoring the Carriage House and having it be in use every day, this would actually increase traffic to an already risky area at one of our Schools.

William F. McGonigle

Community Activities:

Lincoln School Parents Association

Winchester FAN

Active Parent of Children at Lincoln Elementary School and Creative Corner School

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

In the immediate: navigating what is hopefully the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting to what may be an on-going, but manageable, endemic. In doing so, multiple interests must be considered and respected. As the father of a child currently ineligible for vaccination, I want to make sure this is done safely. As a resident respectful of the impacts certain restrictions can cause, I want to be sure unnecessary burdens are avoided.

More generally: questions of responsible development, sustainability, and financial security are more important now than ever before. The Town is going to face difficult questions about real estate issues, low- and moderate-income housing, business development, carbon impact, social issues, and the costs associated with resolving all those questions. Town Meeting and other aspects of our local government will be forced to balance immediate needs against long-term goals to ensure that Winchester not only retains everything that made it great but also protects and prepares our Town for the needs of the future.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

In the end, many of these long-term issues come back to development, making that the most important issue by default. I believe that few things demonstrate a community's value more than its approach to land use. Making sure that our Town is meeting requirements for

affordable housing, that new development cultivates community spaces and minimizes carbon footprints, and that we're continuing to offer safe and alternative means of traversing Town is the best way to unite and develop our community and to set good examples for our children.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

My first child entered the Winchester Public School system this year, and I continue to be blown away by the talent of the teachers, staff, and others and the overall level of support provided. It is hard to imagine a better public school system. I certainly want to be sure that quality of the Winchester schools continues for all future students.

As to what can be improved: We have a number of spaces that I believe can be put to better use, and in a way that should allow the Town to grow and attract more business while still retaining its charm. So many people have transitioned to working from home over the past two years, it provides an opportunity to really expand local offerings. The Town should capitalize on this inertia and work to help downtown Winchester reach its fullest potential.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

It will depend on the details of the final proposal as presented to Town Meeting. As presented in the 2021 Fall Town Meeting Warrant (Article 28), the administrative space at Parkhurst was not meant to be permanent, and the Town is going to need that space back to accommodate student needs. I also understand that the Carriage House is independently in need of restoration. If the Town can solve both problems by developing the Carriage House as administrative space for Winchester Public Schools, that seems to be a prudent solution worth exploring.

Theodore Michalski, Jr.

Community Activities

I have lived in Winchester since 1989. When I retired from the Revere Police Department, I was hired to be a Crossing Guard at various locations in town. I am currently The Traffic Director at the Muraco School. During my tenure as a crossing guard, I was also writing Parking Tickets for the town for a brief period and due to budget constraints, I was released. I also operate The Book and Board Comics and Gaming store in town. Our goal is to get our young people into board games and card games which promotes in person interaction with others.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Low Taxes, maintaining high education standards and providing enough parking so our downtown businesses can thrive.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I am passionate about more than one of these issues. As an operator of a small business in town, I feel that we need to have ample parking so our businesses can flourish. Parking is a premium and if it gets reduced, you will have businesses close have empty storefronts. That will hurt the community as well as property owners. The other issue is taxes. We have had several overrides in the past several years. This I feel is due because the town is running above its

means. You can only go to the well so many times before it runs dry. Eventually people are going to move out and money from taxes will be less. Again, not good for the community.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

The DPW is amazing at what they do. From the people at the Transfer Station to the people emptying out the trash barrels, these men and women do a great job at keeping this town working smooth. This also applies to the people working in the Town Hall. Whenever you go in there, the people behind the desk are helpful and knowledgeable

What the Town can improve on is being more fiscally sound. Don't depend on the residents to bail out the town with overrides. We should be looking at getting more businesses in town as well as some industry to help with our tax base.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

This is not a yes or no answer. If the town has the funds for the restoration and doesn't put the financial burden on the taxpayers, then yes. But if they want to do it through overrides, then no. We have schools to be rebuilt and that is more of a priority right now.

John D. Clemson*

Janet G. Boswell*

jboswell943@gmail.com

Community Activities

Commissioner, Winchester Historical Commission
Co-chair, Parish of the Epiphany Mission & Outreach Committee
Co-president, Camp Starfish Board of Directors
Former chair of Winchester Special Education Parent Advisory Council
Former member of Winchester Redistricting Advisory Committee

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

The town is at a pivotal inflection point in its long history. We have lots of opportunities to preserve what is really special about Winchester – while making it more responsive to the climate crisis, more welcoming, and economically healthier.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

A lot of these issues are intertwined when it comes to how we should approach redeveloping our town center. I appreciate the long, hard, painstaking work that volunteers on numerous town boards and committees have done and are doing to delicately balance a lot of competing priorities including creating sustainable and environmentally responsible development that complements our rich historical assets, building our inventory of affordable housing, and increasing our commercial tax base. We need to keep doing that if we want a great future for this town.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester has wonderful volunteers, including those who serve on Town Meeting, and our civic engagement is great but I think there is room for improvement in how respectfully we handle our differences of opinion about the best course the town should take.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

Yes! It is a great adaptive reuse of an important historical asset. Having worked on the District's Redistricting Advisory Committee, I certainly think we need dedicated administrative office space. The redistricting committee met at Lynch because the administrative staff were housed there at the time. Classroom space was at such a premium that children were getting special education services in the hallways and their specialists had desks crammed into custodial spaces in the back of the cafeteria.

We need dedicated administrative space so that we can prioritize using the school buildings we have to meet instructional needs. Moving the administrative team every time the town experiences an enrollment bubble is disruptive and expensive.

Benjamin Schuler