

Precinct 3 Town Meeting Candidates

Eight to be elected for 3 years, ten on the ballot

One to be elected for 2 years, three on the ballot (M. Sheehan, L. Kuzman-Herrman, and S. Gannon)

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Theodore Michalski

tedmic@hotmail.com

Community Activities

I am the Traffic Director for the Muraco School. I manage The Book and Board Comic and Gaming store where we have our young people play card games and board games. This helps our young people socialize with others and teaches them strategies and makes friendships.

My Name is Theodore Michalski Jr and I am running for a position for Town Meeting in Precinct 3. I have lived in Winchester since 1989 with my wife, who is a lifelong resident. We raised our daughter in town and she went through the Winchester School system.

I was a Police Officer in the City of Revere from 1991-2013, at which time I had to retire for medical reasons. During my tenure on the Police Force, I attained the rank of Sergeant and held many positions in the department to include: A detective in the Criminal Investigations Division, Shift Commander and Head of the Detail Department. I currently work as The Traffic Director for the Muraco School and I also Manage The Book and Board Comics and Gaming store located at 626 Main Street.

I consider myself an outside of the box thinker. During the pandemic when businesses were closed, we had to come up with different ways to make money to keep the store afloat. We did mail order and deliveries to people outside of town. That kept us afloat until we were able to open our doors again. I think I can be an asset to this town by not looking at every issue with one solution but look at different options and try to pick the best one that helps the town but more so the residents.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

The issues that are important to me are Infrastructure and Taxes.

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

Our infrastructure in town is horrendous. The sidewalks are uneven and some of the streets are in need of repair. You try to walk down certain parts of Main Street and you have to be careful not to trip over a brick sticking up. Some streets are in need of repair due to potholes and construction projects that are going on in town.

Taxes keep going up with overrides for the schools and is making it an issue for some people to maintain a residence in town. We already have had a few overrides in the past couple of years for new schools and we have another one on the horizon for the Muraco School. These schools needed to be redone years ago but unfortunately previous administrations have kicked the can

down the road until there is no other option than to do an override. The people elect our officials to make decisions for this town that make our quality of life better not to keep going up on taxes. It is up to our elected officials to work together to come up with viable options to make a better quality of life.

Right now, Winchester is a divided Town. You have two sides with different agendas and neither side is willing to compromise or come up with a mutual idea. I have noticed on social media where town meeting members have insulted their constituents because they didn't agree with the Town Meeting members. This has to stop and people have to realize that it takes all different people and different ideas to make a Town work and prosper. When this done, then this Town can move forward.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025 (https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/9219/Communications-Study-Committee_Final-Report_Recommendations). **Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?**

As far as the Town Meeting Communications Study Committee's recommendations, I think we do need to move forward in the technology of Social Media. I think if a position is created, it should be offered to Employees already working for the town. This would be a different position that they already have and would save the Town money on a new salary.

Elisa Jazan *

Lance Grenzeback *
lgrenzeback@comcast.net

Community Activities

- Town Meeting Member - representing Precinct 3 since 2009
- Town Meeting Communications Study Committee (2022) - served as chair
- Winchester Select Board - elected to two terms (6 years) and served three years as chair
- Winchester Planning Board - elected to three terms (9 years) and served four years as chair
- Capital Planning Committee
- Town Manager Selection Advisory Committee
- Climate Action Advisory Committee

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

- Improving communication among town government, town meeting and residents. Good communication is the bedrock foundation for a town meeting form of government that depends on the trust of its citizens.
- Developing a longer-range strategy for funding the town's schools and services. We have been muddling through by cutting back services and increasing property taxes, but this is not a viable long-term solution.
- Continuing the revitalization of the town center. The center is a key asset of the town and the preferred location for additional housing.
- Preserving the quality and character of our neighborhoods. Our neighborhood zoning dates from the 1930s and 1950s; it must be updated to better manage 21st century housing development.

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

- Improving communication among town government, town meeting and residents.

The public expects the town to be proactive in delivering relevant information and do so in a clear, concise and timely manner. Delivering on this expectation requires a shift in the culture and practices of town hall and town meeting. We must commit leadership, policy and resources to make this happen. The necessary changes are practical, within reach and set out in the report of the Town Meeting Communications Study Committee.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

- The town is well managed and well served by the town staff and school personnel.
- The town enjoys the benefits of many committed and skilled volunteers who serve on its elected and appointed boards.
- Although expensive, the town has been proactive in making capital investments in its flood control program, schools and water and sewer systems to protect the health and welfare of residents.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

- Yes, I support both recommendations.

The 2022 Fall Town Meeting approved Article 11 by unanimous voice vote. Article 11 called for the select board and town manager to prepare an initial town communications plan and recommended that the plan be reported to the 2023 Fall Town Meeting. It is our responsibility to see that this happens. Without better communication, town meeting will be less responsive to residents, less effective at setting town policy, and eventually less relevant as a form of local democratic governance.

Heather Mango *

Joan Grenzeback *

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Community Activities

Counselor/Psychologist, Winchester Public Schools (32 years)
Town Meeting Member (20+ years)
Volunteer Driver for the Jenks Center (10 years)
Council on Aging Board (8 years)
Melissa Mason Scholarship Committee (6+ years)
Winchester Scholarship Foundation, Scholarship Committee (3 years)
Election Poll Worker (current)
Wright-Locke Far Board Member (current)
League of Women Voters, Fundraising Committee (current)

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Most important to me are issues that affect the students of Winchester and its senior citizens.

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

I support building new schools and maintaining them, hiring highly qualified professional staff, and providing the appropriate resources to support them. I believe that smaller class size allows for more individualized instruction, and that mental health professionals working in the schools are more important now than ever.

I also believe that the town needs to provide services and support for its senior citizens by approving new accessory dwelling units that meet the town's guidelines; by encouraging construction of one-floor design, affordable condos and apartments near transportation; and by continuing to provide incentives for tax relief. I believe that the approximately 5,000 seniors currently residing in town should be provided with town services and incentives, as needed, so that they have the option to age in place.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester has a thorough and efficient budgeting process, has supported a well-qualified employee pool, and has attracted numerous highly qualified volunteers to staff the many committees that report to the town. All of our police officers are qualified as emergency medical technicians. The library and the schools are a credit to the community.

Communication between the town leaders and town residents needs to be improved so that town residents are fully informed of the pros and cons of issues before they are asked to vote on them. Development in the town center needs to be a priority, and sidewalks there need to be upgraded for safe walking, particularly for our seniors.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

I believe that the most important responsibility of town government is to communicate effectively with the citizens of the town, and this is not happening at the present time. A written communication plan would look at communication as a whole and focus on the most effective

and efficient ways that various town entities (selectmen, town manager, town meeting members, town boards) can share information with each other and ultimately with Winchester residents. Internet upgrades and video capabilities need to be explored and as well as various ways to survey and educate the public. A complete and thorough communication plan would clearly delineate the tasks that need to be done and would identify those responsible for implementing the tasks. This scope of this plan would determine whether a part-time or a full-time communications manager would be warranted. I support both recommendations.

Susan Kopman Lewis *

Community Activities

Board Member, Wright-Locke Farm Conservancy Board (2021-present)
Board Member, Network for Social Justice (2009-present)
(I have served terms as President and Vice President of NFSJ Board)
Volunteer, Winchester ABC Admissions Committee (2022-23)
Volunteer, Winchester Farmers Market
Volunteer, Winchester's Got Lunch
Volunteer, The Food Drive
League of Women Voters Steering Committee Member (2009-2012)
Family Action Network Board President (2004-06)

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

- Ensuring that our high-quality public services (including education and public works) continue and are supported by financially sound planning.
- Affordable housing
- Promoting an inclusive community that allows diverse voices to be heard and respected

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

Hard to choose! I feel that all are important.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

We are fortunate to have a wonderful culture of volunteerism, with countless talented people devoting their time to service on a variety of town committees and in various non-profit and faith organizations. I hope that this can not only continue but also expand to include even more residents. I also applaud the efforts of the Town Common group to better coordinate communication and collaborations among various organizations in the community.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

The efforts of the Communications Study Committee have been an excellent start in mapping out the challenges of ensuring that town residents are adequately informed of local issues and government affairs. I am in favor of continuing this work with the development of a fuller written communications plan. In regards to the question of adding a new full-time position for a

Communications Manager, I would like to hear more from the Town Manager and Select Board about whether this is the most pressing need in terms of staffing, given the many demands on the town budget.

Vincent Dixon

vincedixon99@yahoo.com

Community Activities

Winchester Historical Society: Periodic Presenter on Local History Topics; Town Day Trolley Tour Guide.

Mystic Valley Area Branch – NAACP: Member; Co-Chair, Environmental Justice Committee; Member, Education Committee (Active on issues of Educational Diversity, Environmental Justice, Advocating for Quality Educational Leadership, and other issues).

The Parish of the Epiphany: Finance Committee Member, Investment Committee Member.

Wilson Science & Technology Forum: Planning Committee Member, Historian Presenter.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Town of Winchester: Finance Committee Member (2015-2019): Member of Subcommittees on Education, OPEB, Pension, Personnel, and Audit (significant contributions, included advocating initiative adding two positions to the Fire Department, saving Town \$250,000).

Toastmasters: Winchester Club; involved participation, including training, a range of local, and diverse immigrant individuals, in improving public presentation skills.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Responsible Development and Financial Responsibility: Winchester must be committed to modest, clear, tasteful, and reasonable development objectives; to help pay for our distinct educational construction costs, and potential enrollment increases. Carefully designed, environmentally responsible, increased density, can improve the town, and our financial position. An endowment-like *Fund For Winchester*, should be developed, welcoming private contributions, as investments in our future.

The Master Plan: must be fully implemented; and regional shuttle transportation services, accessible to all, should be explored; and could be environment improving.

School Policies: must move towards full, regular enrollment of Pre-School classes for all applicants; ending lottery processes.

The Rule of Law: following the spirit of law, and transparency of government operations, must be a vital foundation of all levels of government in The United States; Federal, Commonwealth of Mass, and Town of Winchester. Strengthened communication, focused on by the Communications Committee of Town Meeting, must be encouraged; particularly with the weakening of traditional newspaper media, and the scattering of social media platform information.

General Policies: Public Safety, including both Police, and Fire Department services, must be further strengthened, including suitable traffic enforcement, and pedestrian safety issues.

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

Responsible Development and Financial Responsibility, must be specific operational standards, that the Town of Winchester is committed to carrying out, in its decisions, in its culture, and in its self, public education conversations. Thus, my emphasis on *The Rule of Law*, and strengthened communication mechanisms, across the town, and even to broader resources.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester Public Schools, are very good, but have often lacked the earliest rungs on the educational ladder. I was effectively the swing vote, on the Finance Committee, supporting a full, and complete, Kindergarten program.

Likewise, I support a full, and complete, Pre-School program, for all families, wishing to have one. This means full regular enrollment of Pre-School classes for all applicants; ending the lottery process.

Various Other Town Functions, are often handled well; but not in sufficient depth. A full systemic personnel review, should be conducted; giving particular attention to adding depth, in Planning; and an Economic Development Director, to help recruit more, and appropriate business community members.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

Yes, generally, I appreciate the detailed, and hard work of the Communications Study Committee, and their recommendations should be carried out with care.

John Looney *

Lauren Costello *

costellofh@comcast.net

Community Activities

Town Meeting Member – Precinct 3 – 18 years,
Winchester Business Owner - Costello Funeral Home, 60+ years in business, Owner 21 years,
Winchester Chamber of Commerce/Board of Directors - 5 years
En Ka Society of Winchester – 16 years
Winton Club of Winchester – 16 years.
Winchester League of Women Voters (former Steering Committee Member) – 18 years
Wildwood Cemetery Advisory Committee – 6 years
St. Mary's Church – Lector – 20+ years & (former) Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator – 20 years.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Affordable Housing, Economic Development and Education.

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

Education. The success of the Winchester schools is part of what drives people to want to live in Winchester. Ultimately we are victims of our success when class sizes grow beyond the capacity of the schools. Although it is costly to repair and rebuild the schools, we need to continually improve and maintain our schools so people will always see Winchester as a desirable place to live and worth the property taxes that fund a large portion of Winchester's budget.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester, particularly the Winchester Chamber of Commerce, does a great job with the beautification projects in Winchester Center and marketing Winchester as a destination to visit on visitwinchester.com, which supports the businesses and activities in town. This helps to keep our storefronts rented and our town vibrant, charming and inviting.

Parking in Winchester Center is always a challenge, and needs to be improved.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

After reading the attached information, I would support both recommendations. Clearly we do not want to add a costly staff position, but I agree that in the long run it would cost the town more money by not having information immediately available and competently circulated, which might result in costly decisions. We can also do without the tremendous waste of paper and postage expenditures. I would like to hear additional opinions of Town Meeting members and the recommendations of the Select Board and the Finance Committee.

Michelle Bergstrom *

Meghan Sheehan

Sheehan.meghan.e@gmail.com

Community Activities

- I joined Winchester Town Meeting as a Member in the fall of 2022 (elected via caucus).
- I'm having a ball in my second season of coaching 4–6-year-old basketball through the Winchester Recreation Department.
- I've been a Winchester Cooperative Nursery School parent since 2020, where I was co-chair of Facilities Committee for two years. I'm also an active Lincoln School parent.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

- Fiscal responsibility – The Capital Planning Committee has compared Winchester’s ability to fund upcoming capital needs to the Titanic. This was shocking to me, and also very motivating.
- Maintaining aging infrastructure – As a licensed civil engineer in four states I understand the challenges that aging infrastructure presents to cities and towns across the country. We are not alone in this, but we can’t ignore it.
- Schools/Education – My oldest child started school at Lincoln this year. I hope all three of my kids will receive an excellent education in Winchester Public Schools.

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

Fiscal responsibility is the single most important issue that enables Winchester to tackle our other issues from a position of strength. As a mother of three children ages 5 and under, schools and education are a priority for me. However, many of Winchester’s issues are interrelated. Several of our school buildings, while beautiful and historic, are also prime examples of aging infrastructure with high maintenance costs. A strong financial position makes it easier to deal with the ongoing needs of the town, as well as unforeseen issues like the recent pipe burst at Lincoln School.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester provides high quality services to residents including Public Safety, Public Works, and our excellent schools. Winchester makes good use of the volunteer efforts of its well-educated population for the benefit of the town’s various committees and boards.

The financial outlook of the town compared to our anticipated capital needs is very poor. There is definitely room for improvement in this area. I encourage everyone to read the Capital Planning Committee report that was presented to Fall 2022 Town Meeting. To quote the report, the “gap between needs and funding will result in the aggressive degradation of town assets including DPW and Fire vehicles, schools, roads, and municipal buildings.”

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

I agree with both recommendations. The report details shortcomings in the town’s communications that must be remedied. Our town, rightly, meets many needs through the use of volunteer committees and by expanding the roles of existing town employees. The Communications Study Committee found this approach insufficient. The presentation to the Fall 2022 Town Meeting was definitive. The best course of action is to hire a professional communications manager. A communications overhaul will make important town information more accessible to all. The streamlining and standardization of a professionally developed communications plan will be beneficial to the operations of the Town and deliver value to residents. It will also formalize the way that Town Meeting members communicate with residents which is vital to the functioning of our form of government.

Lauren Kuzman-Hermann

laurenherrmannoly@gmail.com

Community Activities

Finance Committee Member, 2022 – 2025

Energy Management Committee, Finance Committee Representative, 2022 - 2025

Ambrose Elementary Volunteer, 2018 – 2020

Art Displays

Halloween Set-up

Holiday Party

ENKA Fair Volunteer, 2022

Youth / Teens Fitness Coach, 2021 – Present

Adult CrossFit Coach, 2021 – Present

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Sufficient revenue is important for ensuring that current Town assets are properly maintained long-term and that new projects (i.e. schools) are adequately funded ahead of time.

Keeping pace with the Housing Production Plan ensures that the Town maintains Safe Harbor under Chapter 40B (a Massachusetts State Statute), thereby avoiding potential hostile developments.

Maintaining a safe pedestrian environment is a key element for the enjoyment of Winchester's best attributes and the health of all residents.

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

Unfortunately, the Town is under-capitalized. Continual property tax increases and overrides are not a sustainable long-term solution to this problem, particularly elderly property owners or anyone on a fixed income.

It is critical that we find new ways the Town can generate additional revenues, despite our limited commercial base. Unfortunately, there is no single solution. We need a multi-faceted approach.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester enjoys high property values, picturesque historic homes and parks, an appealing town center, low crime rate, and a friendly culture. There is a fairly high level of civic engagement. The schools are touted as excellent.

The adoption of a comprehensive long-term capital planning process is essential. We need to be looking farther down the road financially, so that repairs, upgrades (including unexpected retrofits), new projects, and general maintenance on existing assets are never delayed or underfunded.

The Town Meeting Communications Study Committee has recommended that a written communications plan be prepared and a town communications manager be appointed by FY2025. Do you support both recommendations, even if they would involve adding a new full-time position (salary and benefits) to the town budget? If not, what alternative ideas do you suggest?

We should seek to optimize all aspects of technology and manpower we already have before creating a new position. Many aspects of the recommendations can also be outsourced on a project basis, if needed.

Sarah Gannon

sarahabbottganz@gmail.com

I am running for Town Meeting Member because I am committed to Winchester and care about the success of the community.

I grew up in a small town in Michigan but moved to Winchester after graduating from the University of Michigan. I began my teaching career at Lynch Elementary School as a 3rd grade teacher and spent the next 18 years as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and literacy coach at Lynch. In 2021, I left WPS to join Crafting Minds, an educational consulting practice dedicated to providing teachers and districts with evidenced-based professional development in literacy.

As an educator and mom of three school-age children, I am passionate about education. A priority of mine is making certain students in all five elementary schools in town have an equitable experience. 42% of our operating budget is dedicated to schools and as a Town Meeting Member, it would be my goal to make sure that the amount being allocated to the schools results in an equitable experience for students, and they have the resources needed to succeed.

In terms of other budget items, keeping town buildings in Precinct 3, including Lincoln and McCall, in top shape is also important, and I support capital requests to make necessary repairs to them.

A vibrant downtown is critical to Winchester, and I believe in supporting the businesses that make our precinct unique. I support smart growth while also balancing our precinct's needs in our downtown district, including the need to address parking, walkability, and safe streets.

If elected, I want to support our precinct alongside my fellow representatives in providing more communication to you. Please consider voting for me on March 18th to represent Precinct 3.