

## Select Board Candidates and Other Candidates for Town-wide Offices

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

(\* indicates incumbent)

### Select Board Candidates

One to be elected for 3 years

#### Vincent Lawrence Dixon

[vincedixon99@yahoo.com](mailto: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 of Environmental Justice Committee; Member of Education Committee (Active on issues of Educational Diversity, Environmental Justice, Advocating for Quality Educational Leadership, and other issues).

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

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

#### Candidate Statement

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

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

**Toastmasters:** Winchester Club, significantly involved in participating, and training, a range of local, and diverse immigrant individuals, in improving public presentation skills.

**Earlier accomplishments:** included successfully engaged, in the passage of two distinct Cambridge, Mass Ave., rezonings, that helped protect neighborhoods, and restrict over-density of construction, between Harvard, and Central Squares. Also obtained passage of a Municipal Voter Ballot Information requirement.

**Extensive knowledge of Schools:** curriculums, administration, and leadership issues. Active Engagement, and knowledge of legislative processes, at local, and state levels.

**Citizen Ballot Initiative:** supporting a Massachusetts Constitutional Right to Health Care; wrote, placed on ballot, and obtained passage of Public Policy Advisory Ballot Question instruction, across all 15 Precincts of the 31<sup>st</sup> Middlesex State Representative District.

##### **What Winchester issues do you think are most important?**

**Responsible Development and Financial Responsibility:** Winchester must be committed to modest, clear development objectives; that will help to pay for our distinct educational construction costs, and potential enrollment increases. Carefully designed, 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 some regional shuttle transportation services, accessible to all, should be explored.

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

**The Rule of Law:** including 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, as 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.

**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.

## **Michelle Prior**

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### **Community Activities**

Town Meeting Member (Precinct 4): 2011 - present

Member, Board of Directors Wright-Locke Farm Conservancy: 2018 - present

Audit Advisory Committee (appointed by the Select Board): May 2022 - present

Past:

Chair, Town of Winchester Finance Committee: 2013 - 2014

Member, Town of Winchester Finance Committee: 2010 - 2015, assigned to the Education Budget Subcommittee every year.

Member, Town Counsel Search Committee, (appointed by the Select Board): 2016 - early 2017

You can learn more about me at [ElectMichellePrior.com](http://ElectMichellePrior.com)

### **Candidate Statement**

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

I bring skills and experience of three basic types: professional expertise working in, and with, government agencies and non-profit providers; active listening, moderating and facilitation skills; and many working relationships with Winchester staff, boards, volunteers & fellow residents.

I bring educational experience (B.A. in History and MBA), and professional experience gained over 30+ years consulting to state and local governments, specifically health and human services agencies. And for the past 13 years, I have volunteered in various capacities and served with many Winchester town employees, boards, and Town Meeting members.

My professional work involves assisting health and human services agencies to develop and implement strategic plans, develop systems -- information systems and systems of care, manage operations, and negotiate contracts with vendors. In some engagements I also serve as a project manager responsible for creating project budgets, tracking and allocating expenses, implementing governance structures, and keeping projects on schedule. I am a facilitator and act as a liaison between program staff and Information Technology staff. I also enhance business processes, manage organizational change, and respond to legislative mandates at the state and federal levels. I've had an insider's view into 40 state, territory, or county agencies/governments, and my work requires constant interaction and collaboration with

colleagues of various backgrounds at multiple levels of organizations. Virtually everything I have done in my career is applicable and relevant to how we run our town and our school system.

On the local level, I have participated in town budget development and approval through my six years of volunteer work on the Finance Committee and as an elected member of the Town Meeting since 2011. I was a member of the search committee for a new Town Counsel when Wade Welch retired, and was recently appointed by the Select Board to the Audit Advisory Committee, which assists town leadership with their oversight of the Town's annual financial audit. At the request of the Town's Sustainability Director and the Energy Management Coordinator, I facilitated a panel discussion during Climate Solutions week (September 2022), and have served on the Board of Directors for Wright-Locke Farm since 2018.

**What Winchester issues do you think are most important?**

Everyone who chooses to run for office or seeks appointment to a town board or committee is motivated by a desire to do what is best for Winchester. I want to see Winchester continue to be a community where our excellent schools educate our children and prepare them for life beyond high school. I want to live in a town with residents of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and income types who can access a variety of housing types. Winchester needs to find a way to accommodate individuals and families moving into town as well as provide options for current residents at all stages of life.

I want to see our older residents able to stay in their homes, to remain our neighbors, and to support new residents moving into town. To do that, we need to maintain a mix of housing units in town, and at the same time we must be attentive to the rate of growth of residential property taxes. Additionally, I want to see Winchester retain our commercial properties and downtown businesses. During my term, I will work with the Town Planner and Planning Board to help ensure that we have a realistic plan for expanding our commercial tax base in a way that complements the many small businesses that are owned and/or operated by town residents.

Lastly, it is important that the fiscal decisions we make for our municipal and school enterprises are realistic, practical, and informed.

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

Maintaining the quality of our schools and the level of town services through a carefully managed financial process is my highest priority. I see how well my 2022 WHS grad was prepared for college and I have been closely involved with the educational plan for my younger child who currently attends the Learning Center at WHS. We can continue to grow and expand services when we have sustainable revenues to do so and are mindful about the timing of new program implementation or program expansion as necessary.

I will listen and respectfully consider all options. I expect my participation as a member of the Select Board will contribute to a culture of shared responsibility to address our town's needs and achieve outcomes for our residents. I also hope to contribute to a Select Board environment that encourages thoughtful debate of the issues.

## **Town Moderator Candidate**

**One to be elected for 1 year**

### **Heather R. Von Mering\***

I have had the honor of serving as Town Meeting Moderator the past two years and presiding over our twice-annual and special Town Meetings. Town Meeting brings together the many volunteers in government in one space to work, discuss, and debate the critical issues and challenges facing the Town. There is wisdom and knowledge embedded in the 192 Town Meeting members, but also in all areas of our Town government, be it the Finance Committee, the schools, or the many town departments like Town Manager, Building, Engineering, Town Clerk, Public Works, Police, and Fire, to name a few. I strongly support our Town Meeting process and our local democracy, which enables the direct and active engagement of our citizens to drive Winchester forward and creates opportunities for all voices to be heard.

I have been a volunteer and leader in Winchester town government for over a decade. Prior to being elected as the Moderator I was the Chair of Winchester's Planning Board, a member of Capital Planning, and participated on behalf of the Planning Board on many committees. I also served on the Historical Commission as the Chair and Vice Chair. I am also currently a Town Meeting member (representing Precinct 8). I also volunteer for the Massachusetts Moderators Association, serving on their Board of Directors.

In our community, I have been a volunteer for the Winchester Historical Society and a math and science tutor for Winchester Public Schools. I also coached for Winchester's Youth Girls' Hockey Program and I'm a strong advocate for children with language-based learning disabilities. I live in the north end of Winchester with my husband Fritz, our five children (who are fifth generation Winchester residents), and our dog (Winnie).

Professionally, I am a graduate of the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and have been working in the building and design industry since 2000. Currently, I'm the Vice President of Von Salmi & Associates, which provides homeowners, builders, legal teams, and insurance companies with construction forensic services. My expertise is in architecture, design, historical and zoning regulations, and the financial components of the residential building industry; and I have served as a qualified construction expert in Massachusetts courts. I have always found tremendous joy managing the construction of residential projects in the New England region for my clients.

## **Board of Assessors Candidate**

One to be elected for 3 years

**Richard Michienzi\***

## **Board of Assessors Candidate**

One to be elected for 2 years

**George Nowell, Jr.**

[Geonowl@aol.com](mailto:Geonowl@aol.com)

### **Please list your Community Activities:**

My name is George Nowell, Jr. I am running for the Board of Assessors open two-year seat. I have lived in Winchester most of my life, or over fifty years. I am a product of the Winchester School system, and I am a proud graduate of WHS Class of 1987. My wife, my two children, and I have lived on Nelson Street for over twenty-two years. My family owns and operates a small business that has been located in Winchester for over 100 years. I have previously worked for the Winchester School Department as an assistant football and lacrosse coach. Throughout the years, I have proudly served as a Winchester Town Meeting Member representing Precinct 2 for so many years that I have lost count. I have also volunteered on Winchester's Committee on Names, and more recently on the Transfer Station Work Group. Socially, I have also volunteered for many youth sports programs in town, including Winchester Pop Warner, Winchester Youth Lacrosse (Board Member & Coach), and Winchester Youth Football.

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

As a longtime small business owner in Winchester, I truly understand the importance of treating people with kindness, respect, and answering questions/concerns in a timely manner. In my profession, I am privy to sensitive information on a daily basis. Trust and confidentiality are essential and are the cornerstones to our success. I feel all of these attributes will help in my role as Assessor.

### **What Winchester issues do you think are most important?**

While the Assessors seat isn't political, I personally feel that the Town of Winchester must continue to be mindful of its financial budget and spending practices. We are so fortunate to have caring volunteers and wonderful professional staff to help our town navigate its fiscal challenges. However, I am concerned with the continuous need for tax overrides. My family have lived in Winchester for generations, and I love this town. I hope that my children, and their children will ultimately be able to afford living here too.

## **Board of Health Candidate**

**One to be elected for 3 years**

### **Gregory Sawicki\***

[drsawickiboh@gmail.com](mailto:drsawickiboh@gmail.com)

#### **Community Activities**

- Winchester Board of Health, elected 2022
- Winchester resident since 2018 and proud father of 2 young children (ages 6 and 2)
- National Medical Advisory Council, Make-a-Wish Foundation
- Patient Access Steering Committee, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Clinical Research Advisory Board, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

#### **Candidate statement**

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

Relationship-building, collaboration, and communication are key qualities in both a physician and a public servant. I am running for re-election to the Winchester Board of Health to continue serving our community and advocating for appropriate resources for the town Health Department to promote health and well-being for all of the town's residents.

I have worked in medicine and public health for the last 22 years. I am a pediatric pulmonologist, Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Center at Boston Children's Hospital, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. I also have a Master of Public Health in Clinical Effectiveness from the Harvard School of Public Health. Developing and nurturing caring and empathic relationships with children, parents, and families are the cornerstones of my career. As a doctor who cares for medically complex children, I need to provide informed and thoughtful advice, often at difficult or uncertain times. I have learned that shared decision-making, open communication, and honesty are the best ways to achieve strong patient-doctor relationships.

In my first year serving on the Board of Health, I have brought these skills to the role by advocating for improved collaboration and communication with other town Boards and staff as we have navigated another year in which public health took center stage. I'm excited to continue bringing my professional expertise as I serve my family's community in Winchester as a member of the Board of Health.

##### **What Winchester issues do you think are most important?**

As a town, Winchester is filled with residents who have stepped up to face the challenges of the past 3 years in their personal and professional lives. Over the past year, we have entered a new phase of the COVID pandemic, and other public health challenges have re-surfaced (influenza, RSV, and norovirus, to name a few) and I have continued to advocate for communication with residents and continued easy access to for up-to-date vaccinations and testing needs.

The pandemic has also contributed to a mental health crisis in our population. As a pediatrician and parent, I have seen first-hand the impact current societal pressures have had on children and teens. The Board of Health has been working with the Health Department and other town leaders to advocate for expanded mental health services. Over the past year, efforts by the Coalition for a Safer Community have continued to prioritize mental health concerns and resources. In the coming year, the BOH and HD will explore further ways to improve community

mental health, including judicious allocation of funding the town has received from the recent state-wide opioid settlement.

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

When I first ran for the BOH last year, I felt strongly that the BOH had to ensure that our community promoted a *collective* responsibility to protect the health of *all* residents. This has included staying on top of ongoing public health issues including local and regional COVID and flu rates. It also has meant advocating for important resources for the Health Department, including the plan for increasing funding to support a full-time town inspector.

The Board of Health needs to enact proactive, sensible, and responsive policies to continue protecting the health of our community. As capital projects including new school buildings come to fruition, evaluating the health impact of these projects will be important. Close collaboration with the Select Board, School Department, and School Committee, among others, will be essential to continue to meet the goal toward which we should all strive: being a town aiming towards a bright and healthy future for all who choose to live here by investing in the present.

**Planning Board Candidate**

Two to be elected for 3 years

**Nicholas Rossettos\***

**School Committee Candidate**

One to be elected for 3 years

**Michelle Bergstrom\***

**Library Board of Trustees Candidate**

Two to be elected for 3 years

**Angela Murdough\***

**Victoria Garcia-Albea**

**Housing Authority Candidate**

One to be elected for 5 years

**[No candidates submitted papers]**