

Board of Health and Planning Board Candidates

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Board of Health

One to be elected for 3 years

Shannon Scott-Vernaglia

shannonvernaglia@gmail.com

Community Activities

- Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4
- 20 years parenting children in Winchester and associated volunteering (Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School, Girl Scouts, WPS, Winchester Unitarian Society Youth Group)
- MGH Center for Gun Violence Prevention, founding member
- General Pediatrician caring for children from birth to age 23

Candidate Statement

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

As a general pediatrician, my career is devoted to the well-being of children and families and to the prevention and treatment of illness. I believe this skill set aligns well with the responsibility of the BOH to “formulate and enforce rules and regulations affecting the environment and public health” and to support the mission of the Health Department “to promote a healthy community by protecting the public’s health and well-being through prevention and control of communicable disease and environmental health hazards.” My day-to-day work is synergistic with work such as vaccination clinics, tracking of infectious diseases, and ensuring food safety in places our residents shop and eat. As a pediatrician, I see firsthand the benefit of such programs and have always felt incredibly proud of the work Winchester does, through the Health Department (supported by the BOH) to prevent and mitigate illness in our community. I am eager to share my expertise with our community in this way.

What Winchester issues relating to the Board of Health do you think are most important?

I think preventing illness through vaccination, disease identification (e.g. tuberculosis testing) and tracking, and prevention of exposures (e.g. hazardous waste disposal) is critical to maintaining the health of our community. I am particularly eager to support the work of the Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community as I believe their work to reach residents directly to educate and collaborate around issues such as vaping, harm reduction in the face of opioid use, and mental health and illness has had an incredibly positive impact on our community. I have a passion for supporting those suffering from mental illness (depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, etc) and look forward to learning more about how the BOH can support and foster expansion of efforts already underway in this area.

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

I believe the work in preventing illness through vaccination is one of the most important things a community can do to promote the health of its citizens. We know that most folks want to avoid illness and yet our busy lives can make that challenging. Continuing the excellent work of the

Health Department under the leadership of Jennifer Murphy, MPH, to vaccinate our neighbors of all ages against flu and covid, our elderly against Shingles, and our students against HPV (preventing cancer!!) is essential. I like to say that providing vaccinations as a pediatrician is the single most important thing I do, and I believe that is true of our BOH and Health Department as well.

Planning Board

Two to be elected for 3 years

Brian Vernaglia

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Community Activities

Town Government Volunteering

- Town Meeting (2011-present)
- Finance Committee (2013-18, 2021-present)
- Capital Planning Committee (2014-19)
- Energy Management Committee (ca. 2014-18)
- School Committee (2018-21)
- Field Management Committee (ca. 2018-20)
- Retiree Health Insurance Advisory Committee (2021-present)

School Volunteering

- Lincoln School Council (ca. 2012-14)
- McCall School Council (ca. 2014-16)
- Winchester High School (ca. 2016-18)
- McCall Parents Association President/Vice President (ca. 2014-16)

Community Volunteering

- Girl Scouts Town Wide Cookie Coordinator (ca. 2012-18)

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Planning Board?

I am a life-long Winchester resident and have been an active and engaged citizen in both town government and our schools for the past decade and a half. I have worked with most of our town officials. I have an extensive knowledge of the town budgeting process. As an engineer by training, I always look for practical solutions along with necessary contingency plans for any problem encountered.

What three or four issues relating to the work of the Planning Board do you think are most important?

(Not in priority order as all are important.)

1. Passing the MBTA 3A overlay
2. Revitalizing North Main Street
3. Enhancing the vitality of our historic downtown
4. Encouraging affordable housing
5. Supporting passage of the Community Preservation Act

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

To me, the successful passage of the MBTA 3A overlay for Winchester before the close of 2024 is the most crucial issue facing the Planning Board. The law requires Winchester to zone for additional housing units by right. The Planning Board has very skillfully stewarded this process and plans to bring a bylaw to Spring Town Meeting. If elected, I would want to help maximize the possibility of passage; it is my hope that the bylaw is crafted to satisfy the mandate while maximizing Town Meeting support.

John B. Cortizas