

Precinct 1 Town Meeting Candidates

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

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Shamus Brady *

shamus.brady@gmail.com

Community Activities

Winchester ABC Board Member 2014-present

Finance Committee Member 2020-2021

School Committee Member 2021-2024

Sandlot Soccer Coach 2022-present

Family Action Network Board Member 2023-present

Candidate Statement

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

I think the most important issues are maintaining and improving our schools and other public services while continuing to increase revenues to support them.

What are your positions on these important issues?

My position is that we should continue to invest in our public services for the long term. We need to recruit and support businesses to increase our commercial tax base while continuously pursuing grants and other funding mechanisms such as the Community Preservation Act.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act. It allows us to access additional revenue to support many of the wonderful services in our town. If we do not adopt it then we are failing to take advantage of a long term funding source. Many towns from around the state, including many of our neighbors, have adopted the Community Preservation Act and have used it to fund excellent projects that serve the community.

Robert Deering *

Kathleen (Kate) Duncan

kgduncan@pm.me

Community Activities

Town Meeting Member – Precinct 1

Winchester FAN Board – Community Connections

Neighborhood Villages – Development Committee

Muraco Kindergarten Room Parent

Candidate Statement

My husband and I moved to Winchester in 2015. We have a 5 year old daughter who is in Kindergarten at Muraco and a 4 year old son at Creative Corner daycare, both born in Winchester. We love getting to know this amazing community and raising our children here. We are members of St. Mary's church; our children attend school in Winchester and we are members of FAN.

Joining Town Meeting in the fall was my first experience with town government. I have really enjoyed getting more involved in the community and increasing my awareness of issues facing the town. My family has benefited greatly from being part of this community and I want to give back - to participate actively in keeping and enhancing the welcoming community it is today. I also feel strongly that we are better when we work together and respectfully listen to a broad variety of viewpoints. Lastly, as my children are entering the school system I'd like to be more involved in decisions that impact their future in this town.

Being new to town politics I am coming in without any preconceived notions or agenda. I want what is best for our town. My husband and I are registered independents and have voted for candidates from all parties. I promise to listen to all sides of an issue, do appropriate research and ask questions before making an informed decision about how to vote. I will represent all of my neighbors and will seek to understand their wishes and viewpoints.

I would appreciate your vote and look forward to meeting you all!

Mark Feblowitz

MarkFeblowitz@comcast.net

Community Activities

Served on Town Meeting and School Committee, volunteered in schools, coached soccer. Recent panelist at WHS on *MLK and the Struggle for Voting Rights, A Case Study*.

Candidate Statement

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

1. Acceptance of the zoning proposal intended to comply with MBTA 3A
2. Recent School Budget pressures
3. The Community Preservation Act (CPA)
4. Improving the tenor of Town Meeting

What are your positions on these important issues?

1. **MBTA 3A:** We have in front of us a good zoning proposal. The zoning to satisfy 3A requirements is already in place. We should approve the proposal and comply with state law. The penalties of not doing so would have a negative financial impact on our town. If we think the law is flawed or oversized for our community, we as citizens should work with our state senators and representatives to amend the law.
2. **School Committee Budget:** Recent high profile attention regarding reading curricula statewide (and Winchester in particular) adds another budget pressure: how to fund 1) the required attention to reading curricula (to suit a variety of learners) and 2) incorporation into the schools of best practices in educating readers. Town meeting will have to weigh in on this decision.
3. **CPA** – see next page.

4. **Town Meeting Tenor:** I understand that things have been tense for TM over recent years. We have a choice as to how we can carry out TM business. Whatever the depth of the divide, I believe we can arrive at solutions via productive deliberation and mutually respectful debate. The decisions would be better informed (and more representative) and the process would be much more fun.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I do support having Town Meeting put the CPA question to the electorate. CPA puts money on the table (\$3.4 b statewide) that the town could put to good use, on projects that we need/want to pursue; projects like preserving the Town's historic buildings (e.g., the Library) and open spaces, and financially supporting our ongoing efforts toward affordable housing. Almost 300 communities have agreed to participate. CPA funds are also available to defray administrative costs. It is not like an override, where taxpayers cover all costs for such projects. CPA matches costs, at varying percentages. The challenges? 1) educating TM and the electorate to the merits and 2) finding productive ways for the Capital Planning Committee and the Community Preservation Committee to jointly advise the Town Manager on the best use of these funds. This is simple: town meeting should put CPA on the fall ballot and the voters can decide whether to make use of these extra funds.

Toni Frain

Community Activities

Parent of an elementary school aged child. Community activities involve volunteering with the school and afterschool program.

Candidate Statement

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

1. Education
2. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act
3. Affordable housing

What are your positions on these important issues?

1. People move to Winchester, in large part, for its school system. A strong school system promotes high property values which benefit its citizens and tax base. When it comes to education, there are several challenges facing our school system including the need to update school buildings and infrastructure as well as maintaining scholastic excellence and high standards. We all benefit from a strong school system, so I'm interested in continuing to fortify our school system.
2. In April, Town Meeting will vote on a proposal intended to comply with the MBTA Communities Act. New zoning must be adopted by the end of this year, so time is of the essence to avoid legal action and funding restrictions.
3. MGL Chapter 40B is designed to facilitate construction of affordable housing. The goal is for a town to reach 10% of housing stock in the subsidized housing inventory. If the town remains below 10%, it has less control over permit applications, resulting in developers appealing denials and potentially leading to developments that are not in scale with existing neighborhoods or complementary to their surroundings. To maintain

its charm and character, it is imperative that Winchester improve its stock of affordable housing units.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act. I value preserving open spaces, community development and affordable housing initiatives. These initiatives have a positive impact on community well-being by enhancing recreational areas, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable community, and fostering community engagement.

Douglas Marmon *

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Community Activities

former Select Board member

Candidate Statement

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

The Town's capital budget needs a new approach. Capital projects are funded by the Stabilization Funds, by free cash, and by bonding. There is not a clear agreement on which funding mechanism should be used for each project. This occasionally allows lower priority projects to "jump the line".

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

The CPA provides yet another source of funding for capital projects, along with its own committee to pick projects. I cannot support CPA until I understand how it will work in concert with our current funding mechanisms.

Chris Nixon *

nixon01890@gmail.com

Community Activities

School Committee: 2010-present

Town Meeting Member: 2008-present

Capital Planning Committee: 2014-2018, 2019-present

Educational Facilities Building and Planning Committee: 2010-2014, 2021-present

Audit Advisory Committee: 2012-present

Led Superintendent search process: 2014-2015 (as School Committee Chair)

Co-authored Lynch & Muraco replacement Statements of Interest to MSBA: 2017, 2018, 2019

McCall Expansion Project Phase I & II Working Group: 2017-2018

Winchester Public Schools Facilities Master Plan Working Group: 2016-2017

Conceptual and Schematic Design for Muraco reconfiguration and expansion: 2009-2010

Developed district ADA transition plan rubrics and priorities for funding: 2012-13

Created websites for major Town & school initiatives (still live) including:

[Lynch Replacement Project](http://www.lynch2025.com) - www.lynch2025.com

[2019 Operating Override](http://tinyurl.com/decision01890) - tinyurl.com/decision01890

[McCall Expansion Project](http://tinyurl.com/mccallexpansionproject) - tinyurl.com/mccallexpansionproject

What are the issues facing Winchester that you think are most important?

The biggest issue we face is how to successfully budget for both our operating and capital needs in the next two to three years. On the operating side, it is really about the people who work for Winchester: How can we retain and attract the best and most resourceful municipal and school employees? What will our budget need to be for this— and to support needed new initiatives? On the capital front, how are we to address the structural deficit in funding for renovations, major repairs and new construction? The Lynch override was huge in taking an over \$30M renewal and maintenance liability off of our capital deck, but there are still many more facilities needs with funding requirement that far outstrip our stabilization funds.

Five years ago this spring Winchester voters supported a \$10M override, with \$8M for operating and \$2M for capital (just Google “Decision01890”— the website is still up). This was intended to support us for only two to three years. Due to COVID and our dramatic changes in spending, coupled with significant one-time Federal funds such as ESSR (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), we have been fortunate to see the 2019 override last much longer than expected, however— time is up. We face some truly critical decisions in the coming months regarding our fiscal path forward. Maintaining Winchester’s services and facilities requires continued investment beyond the Proposition 2 ½ limit introduced in 1980. How much more we are willing to support— and for what— is a conversation that will substantially shape Winchester’s next decade.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act?

Conceptually, I support the CPA, but am eager to see and hear more about the specific proposal from the Select Board. The Board’s CPA informational webpage at winchester.us has just four documents posted from the fall of 2023 and in its January and February meetings there seemed to be some dispute on sequence of events/votes for implementation. Since its inception, the CPA Working Group has not spoken with the School Committee or Capital Planning Committee. Since Winchester already has a Capital Planning Committee (which makes recommendations to the Town Manager and Town Meeting vote for funding from our capital and building stabilization funds), there are questions about how CPA funding would be managed, considered and weighed against other viable sources for capital project one-time expenses.

The statute governing the CPA (MGL Chapter 44b) requires at least 10% of funds be spent each fiscal year in the three categories of 1) Open Space, 2) Historic Resources and 3) Community Housing. How is the remaining 70% to be spent? Can this/should this be prescriptive in a bylaw or should this be subject to Town Meeting debate each year? Thinking about which is the cart and which is the horse, are we to develop a 5- and 10-year spending plan based on CPA funding or shouldn’t we first develop a 5- and 10-year needs statement, look

at what can be addressed via CPA, then get focused quickly on what other funding is necessary?

There are some who believe we should “rethink” how we fund capital projects. Periodic conversation can be helpful but I am concerned that we are going into Spring Town Meeting without a clear understanding of how CPA funding would/could/should affect our existing Capital Planning Process...and vice versa. We can do this but we need to be actually talking about it.

The process– and successful outcome– of the Lynch solar panel system investment required regular communication among a number of boards, committees and management and is a perfect example of what we can achieve when we are actually having important conversations with each other.

Matthew Rotondi

Maura D. Sullivan *

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Community Activities

Current - Town Meeting Member Precinct 1 (13+ years)

Current - Co-chair, Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community (13+ years)

Current - En Ka member (8 years)

Current - Treasurer, Winchester Friends of Music (4 years)

Former - Town Meeting Committee on Government Regulations (10+ years)

Former - WHS Grants Committee Co-chair (2016-20)

Former - Superintendent Search Committee Chair (2014)

Former - Muraco PTO Co-chair (2 years)

Former - Muraco & McCall newsletter editor (combined 5 years)

Former - Muraco Building Committee member (1 year)

Candidate Statement

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I think the most important issue for Winchester is setting and following good fiscal policy. Since we rely so heavily on taxpayers to fund our needs, we must be thoughtful and strategic about our budget and financial planning so that we do not overly burden residents. We must continue to invest in and support our schools and our public services, and we must take care of our town assets. An important issue for Winchester in 2024 is complying with the state's MBTA 3A law, which we must do by 12/31/24. The Planning Board and the Town Planner have been hard at work drafting new zoning bylaws to comply with the law and I hope that Town Meeting will pass them this spring. We must also update our Housing Production Plan this year. In addition to

new multi-family housing (which can look like single family!) I would like to find a way to encourage the preservation of our smaller, more affordable houses. Finally, I strongly support adoption of the Community Preservation Act (the CPA). The CPA is part of the Town Manager's Capital Plan, and it will be an important tool to help us address our capital needs and our affordable housing shortage. The CPA can also be used to help build and maintain playgrounds, playing fields, and other recreation spaces.

Susan Verdicchio *

Community Activities

Former member of the School Committee and Select Board

Current member of the board of trustees at Winchester Music School and board of directors of the Network for Social Justice, and member of the LWVW

Candidate Statement

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

Balancing budget priorities to maintain high-quality services (particularly education, as the district makes reading curriculum changes) while also effectively addressing the town's capital needs; managing development to provide more diverse types of housing, at various price-points across the town; moving forward with the town climate action plan, which to me includes pedestrian safety as we encourage residents to walk or bike around town rather than drive.

What are your positions on these important issues?

One important tool to raise revenue is the Community Preservation Act; it's past time to join the many other communities who have opted into that. I do want to hear more details about the CPA proposal, but generally I support it. While the CPA restricts how the town can use the funds, two of those purposes are already identified town needs — historic preservation (for example, Town Hall or Lincoln school) and affordable housing, and the state will supplement the amount raised locally. I support the town's housing production plan and the Master Plan, and the work of the Planning Board to respond to the MBTA Communities Multifamily Zoning law. Again, I do need to hear more details and the final MBTA proposal, but generally support that as a tool for managing gentrification and development by incentivizing multifamily housing near the town center along North Main Street. That also makes sense from a climate perspective. We do need to continue with traffic-calming and pedestrian safety improvements as this growth takes place.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

See above