

Precinct 3 Town Meeting Candidates

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

One to be elected for 1 year, two on ballot (Footer and Girotti)

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Kathleen Bodie *

kathy.bodie@gmail.com

Community Activities

Current:

Town Meeting Member (1995 to present)

Town Common Committee

WFEE Grants Committee

Town Meeting Member Association – Advisory Committee Member

Former:

School Committee (1994-2009); Capital Planning Committee representative for 2 yrs.

A Better Chance (ABC) President (1987-92); Board Member: Admissions Committee; Host

Family

Elected parent representative McCall Middle School Council

Lincoln Elementary School PTO and Room Parent; trained parents to be computer aides in K-3 classrooms

It has been my honor to serve my community in various roles for over four decades. I am seeking another term on Town Meeting because I care deeply about our community. I feel that being a member of Town Meeting is an important way to continue serving our community.

I recently retired after 50 years of work as an educator, which included many years as a high school math teacher, college math teacher, university supervisor of student teachers, administrator (Assistant Superintendent and Director of Mathematics K-12) and 13 years as the Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools.

Candidate Statement

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

- Housing options and affordability
- Excellent school system for all students
- Financial plan for infrastructure and capital needs of the town
- Revitalized Town Center

What are your positions on these important issues?

Housing Options and Affordability

We need to support projects that increase the housing options for a range of incomes and ages, which will provide an opportunity for increased diversity with new residents. While doing so, preserve many of the environmental characteristics of the town we value, such as green spaces and trees. Town Meeting will discuss this spring the Planning Board's plan, thoughtfully developed over the past year with the Town Planner, for North Main Street re-zoning to comply with the MBTA 3A Communities Act, as well as the creation of additional housing in the Town Center.

Excellent School System for All Students

Providing an excellent education to all students requires sufficient funding. School budgets without service and personnel reductions increase each year to fund contractual agreements, special education and other cost increases due to inflation. School improvements whether for personnel, programs or updated technology require funding above a service level budget. The challenge is to balance fiscal prudence and the costs above a base budget needed to provide an excellent education for our students and to attract and retain excellent teachers. Winchester Public Schools is among the top school districts in the state and country, which is a standing we want to continue and support, as well as ensure that the educational needs of all students are met. As a town meeting member and resident, I will support the School Committee in its efforts to secure MSBA funding for a new Muraco Elementary School. I appreciate that construction of the new Lynch Elementary School has moved forward and demolition is nearly complete.

Financial Plan for Infrastructure and Capital Needs of the Town

The report given by the Capital Planning Committee to Town Meeting last year outlined which projects deemed most essential would be recommended for funding for fiscal year 2024, as well as the list of projects that would have to wait. It was a long list. We need a financial plan so that we can continue to invest in a timely way in infrastructure, school and town facilities and climate adaptation. A delay in investments can result in more expensive projects in the future. Developing a fiscal plan for capital investments is a challenge for a town that relies primarily on property taxes to fund budgets and capital investments, but a financial plan is necessary to address capital needs as well as the health, safety, and vibrancy of our town.

Revitalized Town Center

We need to find ways to encourage more residents to patronize stores and restaurants in the town center on a regular basis to support existing businesses so they remain viable and to attract more businesses to Winchester. A vibrant town has a thriving business district. There are several vacant store fronts that have yet to be occupied. Hopefully, with the completion of the MBTA station this year, there will be more foot traffic to invigorate existing businesses and attract new businesses.

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

Yes. I support adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) for Winchester because of the number of unfunded infrastructure and capital needs of the town. If Town Meeting and Winchester voters approve adopting the CPA, state funding would become available to help address capital needs that fall into three categories – preserving open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. Winchester would be joining approximately 200 other MA communities that have adopted the CPA.

Caren Connelly *

caren.connelly@gmail.com

Community Activities

My husband and I have lived in Winchester since 1994. Our only daughter attended the Winchester Cooperative Nursery School then went through the Winchester Public Schools, K-12. While my daughter was in school I was active with planning enrichment activities and events such as Authorfest. I served on the Board of Trustees for the Winchester Foundation for

Educational Excellence for several years, resigning to become WFEE's Executive Director, a position I held for 14 years. In that role I raised millions of dollars to support Winchester public schools for teacher and administrator driven projects such as the expansion of educational technology. I am a long-time member of the League of Women Voters, past Board Member of the Winchester Rotary Club and recipient of the Rotary Club's Paul Harris Award. I also served on the Board of Directors of Winchester's Connect and Commit Service Learning Foundation. In 2015 I was honored to receive the League of Women Voters Civic Leadership Award. The MA Association of School Committees recognized my work with the Winchester Public Schools in 2017 with a Community Leadership Award. I'm running for my third term as a Town Meeting member.

Candidate Statement

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

- Revision of zoning regulations to comply with the MBTA Communities Act
- Maintain and improve Winchester's excellent school system
- Civic commitment and partnership

What are your positions on these important issues?

Zoning: Winchester is one of 177 communities in MA affected by the MBTA Communities Act passed in 2021. The Act requires the adoption of zoning to allow for multifamily housing by right in eligible locations. The goal is to increase affordable housing near transit such as the commuter rail. Winchester's Planning Board and the Town Planner have been working on such a plan for more than a year. Town Meeting will vote on the plan this spring. The warrant article that finalizing the plan will be done by mid-March. While some details of the zoning changes are still in flux, I strongly support changes that will increase the affordable housing stock in Winchester. It will make our community more vibrant and diverse. Such action has long been a community goal. It is now a state mandate. Not complying with this mandate will open Winchester up to legal action by the state and restrict our ability to access state funding for projects such as the construction of a new Muraco School. Milton recently rejected zoning changes adopted by its Town Meeting to comply with the MBTA Communities Act; within weeks the state of Massachusetts withheld funding for previously approved Milton projects and sued the town. I don't think repeating Milton's actions will benefit Winchester's citizens.

Education: People have been moving to Winchester for decades to access our community's school system. Winchester is frequently recognized as having one of the best school systems in the state. Yet maintaining and growing the school budget is an annual challenge. Winchester's per pupil expenditure of approximately \$17,000 remains at the low end of the spectrum with communities like Lexington spending more than \$21,000 per pupil. As a community we need to remain cognizant that hiring and retaining the best educators is expensive, meeting the needs of all learners requires funding and we shouldn't view an expanded school budget as a failure of planning. It is also time to step up plans to replace Muraco Elementary School. Working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority takes time but can lead to tens of millions of dollars in state funding for a new elementary school. As a Town Meeting member I will support the School Committee's ongoing efforts to realize MSBA funding for a new Muraco.

Civic Commitment: Small towns like Winchester remain great places to live when community members support each other, respect those with differing opinions and recognize the hard work of their elected or appointed government officials. Over the last few years I have seen an increasing lack of civility during public meetings and disrespect of work done by professionals such as school administrators or town leaders. The trend reflects the tone of national debates

and undercuts our community's ability to become an even better place to live and work. Thinking before we speak and listening before we decide should be the underpinnings of public debate.

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

Yes. Adopting the CPA would allow Winchester to create a Community Preservation Fund. That fund could help the community preserve open space, meet affordable housing goals and protect historic buildings. Winchester would not only benefit from local revenues raised for the fund but the town would be eligible for annual funding from the state. Our town is primarily dependent on property taxes for school funding and community initiatives, a reality that our municipal budget is under constant strain. The addition of CPA funds to the budget mix is one way to help reduce that strain.

Vincent Lawrence "Vince" Dixon

vincedixon99@yahoo.com

Community Activities

Winchester Historical Society – Periodic Full Length Historian Presentations
Regular Tour Guide – Historic Trolley Tour – Annual Town Day
Planning Committee – Wilson Science & Technology Forum – Jenks Center
Finance Committee, and Investment Committee – Parish of the Epiphany

Previous Service – Member, Finance Committee, Town of Winchester, Mass. July 2015 to July, 2019 – Various responsibilities relating to then Town budget of over \$100 million annually; analyzing, hearing, making recommendations, taking votes, relating to municipal expenditures, and budget.

During service on Finance Committee. Member of Subcommittees on Education (swing vote to establish full, complete Kindergarten Program), OPEB, Pension, Personnel, and Audit (significant contributions, included advocating initiative to add two positions to the Fire Department, saving Town \$250,000).

Candidate Statement

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

I define "Three R's of Government: Respect, Reform, and Rule of Law," as central to functioning government, by people of good faith, serving the broad public interest; and guiding public services.

Respect, Reform, and Rule of Law, are important issues these days, as our political culture, is disturbed, damaged, and in some chaos. Below, I note how I think we should engage, in these areas of Government, and Public Policy.

As an Historian, I have been able to develop important perspectives on issues of importance, to the lives of individuals in our society, our nation, our Commonwealth, and our Town; seeing a wider view than just a particular issue, but the dynamic intersection of public needs, public services, and public costs.

Public Civic Education and Communications: Strengthening mechanisms, of various types, across the Town, is needed, including a systematic welcoming of new residents, and high

quality civic programming, expanded; this can be a high-quality glue, strengthening the humane bonds of respect across the Town.

What are your positions on these important issues?

Respect: Respect for every individual, flows from our Massachusetts History. Constitutional Government, significantly developed in Massachusetts. – This evolving progress, means that we require definitions of legal status, legal pathways, and rights; mostly seeking to expand these characteristics, and encourage productive lives, in further advancing, and improving ways.

Reform: The Town of Winchester, has mechanisms, for periodic review of its governing structure. This should be implemented regularly; and other ideas explored. These should include, considering a modest stipend for all Town-wide elected officials, to recognize valuable service, and needs for accountable, quality officials; – high-quality, regular and comprehensive training, for all Town officials, and staff; and other measures to recognize the growing complexity of public government, complex technology interfaces, services, and needs.

Rule of Law: The Oath or Affirmation of Office, expected of all elected, and appointed officials, includes the expectation of *'faithfully executing the laws'* and this should be taken seriously, followed, enforced, and encouraged, across all Town staff, legal bodies, and those performing Town related work. The Rule of Law, has as a crucial goal, rising above personal opinions, and ideological factions.

Public Civic Education and Communications: Strengthening mechanisms, of various types, across the Town, is needed, including a systematic welcoming of new residents, and high quality civic programming.

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

Yes. – I support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA), an action that is long overdue, as part of a comprehensive series of steps to improve, and strengthen the infrastructure; and conservation footprint of Town. Implementation of the CPA, can be, another constructive tool for improving the culture, and temperament of the Town. The Saltmarsh Town Common, came about originally; because six men, bought six house lots, and put them together, in a public spirited mentality, to give the Town, a Town Common, opposite the new Town's church. – A Village Improvement Society, eventually supported a bandstand, which had a weak record of use; but we could always define, stronger programming, and create a new one. – Also, the creation, and construction of a new Lyceum Hall, based on the original design, pivoted so that the front faces Mt. Vernon Street, might be an interesting restoration, and innovative landmark.

Historically, *The Greening of Winchester*, was largely accomplished by the hard work of five men, of wealth, and the design work of the firm, founded by Frederick Law Olmsted; particularly Herbert J. Kellaway, of that firm, which has made the Town the beautiful landscape that we see today...This can be further improved, and the CPA, really is a logical extension of the continued beautification of Winchester.

Shannon Footer

Sarah Jones Girotti

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Community Activities

- School Committee Chair/member (2008-2012)
- Town Meeting member (2008-2012)
- Capital Planning Committee (2009-2012)
- McCall PTO Co-President (2016-2018)
- Lincoln School PTO Co-President (2012-2014)
- First Congregational Church Outreach Committee (2021-present)
- Winchester Soccer Club board (2008-2014, 2016-2019)

Candidate Statement

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

- Smart development/housing
- Capital planning
- Education
- Community involvement

What are your positions on these important issues?

We need continued smart development and housing that fosters growth while preserving our unique character. Focusing on the 3A overlay and 40B projects as well as other housing plans will ensure we meet the needs of our current residents who may want to downsize as well as people looking to join our vibrant community.

Capital planning that prioritizes investments in infrastructure and essential services is critical to our long-range health as a town. We need to continue to prioritize these projects while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

One of Winchester's gems is our educational system. We support our educators by providing competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and resources to create a world-class learning environment. We focus on individual student needs by continuing to develop programs and initiatives that address the diverse needs of all learners. We prepare students for the future by equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in a changing world, and this should remain a top priority for us.

Finally, Winchester's true strength lies in a community where everyone feels engaged and empowered. It is a testament to our citizens that many of our elections are contested and many of our volunteer boards are full. I am looking to serve on Town Meeting again because I am grateful for all Winchester has given to me and I care deeply about our community. I have the knowledge, time and passion to represent our precinct and town proudly, and respectfully ask for your vote for Town Meeting (one year appointment).

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

I do support Winchester adopting the CPA, joining over 200 other MA communities in preserving open space and historic buildings and developing affordable housing.

Adopting the CPA would give Winchester access to matching funds from the state, monies critical to alleviating the budget pressure we now feel for important projects. CPA funds can be

dedicated to some of our long-delayed capital projects or assist in our affordable housing goals. These matching funds will be instrumental in helping Winchester catch up on necessary spending and pursue other budget priorities.

Lauren Herrmann

I have created the following video as an introduction for my Town Meeting candidacy. My contact information is at the end, and I encourage voters to reach out if they have specific questions.

Desktop version: <https://youtu.be/hOpPnoMBuDE>

Mobile version: <https://youtu.be/U4VA4X2b0aY>

Lauren Herrmann
781.496.9852

Tom Howley *

tom@howleybread.com

Community Activities

- Current: Town Meeting Member (1997-present); Member Council on Aging Advisory Board (2016-present).
- Former: Select Board (2004-2013), Planning Board (2000-2004); Co-Chair Campaign for New WHS (2013-2014); President Wright Locke Farm Land Trust (2015-2017); co-author Building section of Winchester Climate Action Plan (2020).

Candidate Statement

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

- Updating Multi-Year Town Financial Plan
- Updating Town By-Laws
- Development of Varied Housing Options
- Quality of Public Discourse: affirm that our public discourse will model authentic listening and engaged, respectful, collaborative critical thinking.

What are your positions on these important issues?

- Financial Plan: focus on the continual updating of a multi-year operating and capital financial plan and the strengthening of Town budget fluency among Town Meeting Members and residents. As a component of stretching the periods between overrides without diminution of services, I am interested in discussing appropriate minimum and maximum reserve fund balances.
- Town By-Laws: a comprehensive review and updating (as necessary) of the Town By-Law is overdue and should be undertaken this year with the participation of Town officials, committee members and appointed Town Meeting precinct representatives.
- Housing Options: continue the Planning Board's efforts to thoughtfully modify zoning to allow for the development of housing types and pricing underrepresented in Winchester as we strive to make living in Winchester possible for town employees, older residents

who are downsizing and younger people just starting out, while preserving the qualities of our built environment that we value most. In this respect I am looking forward to the discussion of the North Main Street re-zoning, the plan to comply with the MBTA 3A Communities Act and the creation of additional housing in the Town Center. I also hope that with time Accessory Dwelling Units will prove beneficial to homeowners without detriment to neighbors allowing us to make them more broadly available.

- The Quality of Our Public Discourse and the Strength of Our Local Democracy: as elected and appointed officials, we should affirm our commitment to modeling respectful, non-partisan public discourse, authentic listening and engaged, collaborative critical thinking. In doing this I believe we arrive at the best decisions for Winchester and keep our local democracy vibrant.

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

Yes. Because of the tax burden of our school renovations and other capital projects, any additional taxation must be approached with reservation, careful analysis and discussion. That said, affordable housing, open space and historic preservation will require our investment with or without state assistance. State reimbursement under the CPA will help our local tax dollars work harder for us. As we look at the backlog of critical capital projects, I think the time has come to adopt the CPA.

Jason M. Lewis *

Community Activities

State Senator (since 2014)

Town Meeting member (since 2009)

Former State Representative

Former member of Winchester Finance Committee

Former member of Winchester Master Plan Steering Committee

Former Board member of Winchester Foundation for Educational Excellence

Candidate Statement

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

- Housing access and affordability
- Infrastructure improvements
- Downtown development and revitalization
- Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion

What are your positions on these important issues?

- Housing access and affordability: We need to support and encourage the development of housing stock that meets a range of needs across income and age levels. We need to ensure compliance with all state housing and zoning laws.
- Infrastructure improvements: We need to continue to invest in our infrastructure, including school facilities, complete streets, water and sewer, and climate adaptation and resilience.
- Downtown development and revitalization: We need to encourage a more diverse, bustling, and walkable downtown. The completion of the renovated MBTA commuter rail

station later this year (which I have been championing since 2010) will be a great asset to the downtown and the entire community.

- Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion: We need to do more across town government, schools, and other community institutions to make Winchester a more welcoming and inclusive community for people from all different backgrounds.

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

Yes. Winchester has significant infrastructure and capital needs that could be addressed if the town were to adopt the CPA. Doing so would unlock state funding that is otherwise unavailable to the town.

Susan McPhee *

sgmcphee@me.com

Community Activities

- Wright-Locke Farm, volunteer and board member
- Energy Conservation Coordinator for Winchester
- Parent of Lincoln School, McCall Middle School and Winchester High School graduates

Candidate Statement

Having moved to Winchester for the community, schools, neighborhoods and trees twenty years ago, I still place a high value on all these qualities. People move to Winchester for the same reasons today.

I participate in Town Meeting to protect and enhance these qualities. Other priorities for me are Wright-Locke Farm and sustainability. The addition of Wright-Locke Farm as a hub of activity in Winchester has been a terrific evolution and a credit to the town. Increasing focus on issues of sustainability, environment and climate change is also a priority for me.

Addressing town issues, both near term and long term, while balancing fiscal responsibility and minimizing the burden for taxpayers are the lenses through which I examine the issues put before town meeting.

Amy Poftak *

apoftak@gmail.com

Community Activities

Winchester Town Meeting

Winchester Town Meeting Members Association – Advisory Committee Member

United for Literacy – Winchester

Winchester Literacy Initiative for Change

Candidate Statement

It's been an honor to represent Precinct 3 in Town Meeting for the past three years, and I would welcome the opportunity to continue serving precinct residents.

I'm committed to Winchester and care about the success of the community. I grew up here, attended Winchester public schools, and was happy to move back to town with my family in 2017.

For most of my career I have worked in higher education and publishing. I am currently Director of Communications at Harvard Business Review and previously worked in communications roles at Georgetown University and Stanford Law School.

Two key issues coming before Town Meeting this spring are whether to put the Community Preservation Act on a townwide ballot and the MBTA 3A multifamily zoning requirement.

The CPA would increase the town's ability to invest in critical community projects. Capital projects in Precinct 3 that could potentially benefit from this matching funding include the Town Hall renovations, the library roof replacement, and the Lincoln chiller (HVAC) replacement. The funding could also be used to support affordable housing and our playgrounds and recreational areas. I support the CPA and I'm in favor of putting it on the ballot to let the voters decide.

The MBTA 3A zoning law also directly impacts Precinct 3. I agree with the goal of providing more diverse types of housing and I've been impressed by the thoughtful approach to this issue by the Town Planner and Planning Board.

Another important community issue is early literacy. I'm one of many parents who have been advocating for changes to the district's approach to literacy since 2021. The issue has come to the fore recently and some funding earmarked for literacy was added to the proposed FY25 school budget. I support this addition and will support any future funding requests to strengthen the program.

In addition to my regular duties as a Town Meeting member, I'm proud to serve on the advisory committee of the newly formed Winchester Town Meeting Members Association.

Meghan Sheehan

sheehan.meghan.e@gmail.com

Community Activities

- Winchester Town Meeting Member in the fall of 2022 (elected via caucus)
- Board Member (Communications) at Winchester Cooperative Nursery School
- Room Parent at Lincoln School
- Utility Box Artist – Downtown Rotary and Skillings Field
- Coaching boy's basketball (3rd season) and girls basketball teams with the Recreation Department

What Winchester issues do you find most important?

- Fiscal responsibility
- Maintaining aging infrastructure
- Schools/Education

Which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position?

Fiscal responsibility will allow Winchester to tackle our other issues from a position of strength. As a mother of three children ages 6 and under, schools and education are a priority for me. However, many of Winchester's issues are interrelated. Several of our beautiful, historic school buildings are 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 that may arise.

What are your positions on these important issues?

Winchester provides high quality services 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 committees and boards.

The financial outlook of the town compared to our anticipated capital needs is very poor. There is 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."

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 (CPA). If we adopt the CPA, our Community Preservation Fund (CPF) would be spent on things we already need to spend money on, with additional funds provided by the state. The state appropriated funds come from Land Court and Registry of Deeds fees that are collected statewide. Right now those state fees are being distributed to the 351 other communities that have already adopted the CPA. Now, it's not always smart to do what neighboring towns are doing (ex. Lexington school's reading curriculum), but in this case, it's an untapped source of funding for our recreation facilities, historic preservation, and community housing.

Robin Vos *

Community Activities

Town Meeting Member, precinct 3, 2018-present

Town Meeting Precinct 3 Chair, 2021-present

Winchester Community Music School, Board of Trustees, 2018-present

Winchester ABC, (board member, host family co-coordinator, admissions), 2021-present

McCall Parents' Association support volunteer, 2019-present

Lincoln School Parents' Association (various roles, including 5th grade committee chair, and room parenting) 2013-2021

Questions to address in your candidate statement

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

Affordable housing/Diversification of housing

Maintaining a top tier education system

Financial plan for capital projects

What are your positions on these important issues?

Increasing our stock of affordable housing is not only a state requirement, but a goal laid out in our 2030 Master Plan. Increasing the availability of affordable housing (through friendly 40Bs)

and diversifying housing (such as the MBTA rezoning, and updated Central Business District rezoning) to include more than just single family homes will allow Winchester to include a wider variety of residents that will add vitality to our community as well as making it possible for seniors and empty-nesters to stay in the town that they love.

Education should always be a priority in Winchester. Currently, our literacy curriculum is in need of a comprehensive evaluation and updating. The work that the superintendent and school committee have begun to foster collaboration between multiple stakeholders should continue to be a primary objective as we move toward updating our literacy methods in the near future. With Lynch construction well underway, we should also continue our attempts to partner with the state for a new Muraco.

Our capital needs far outweigh available funding. The town is in need of a comprehensive long term financial plan for addressing these needs in a systematic way. This plan should also account for associated maintenance costs. We must balance the cost of waiting too long – when a structure or system reaches catastrophic failure – with the desire to not overburden our residents with tax increases.

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

Yes, I support adopting the Community Preservation Act. As stated above, we are facing a serious backlog of capital projects for which there is currently no identified funding source. In the past we have used debt exclusion/operational overrides to help cover this deficit. If we are going to impose any additional tax burden on the residents of Winchester, we should leverage as much partnership from the state as we can to make sure those dollars are used to their fullest capacity.