

CANDIDATES FOR SECOND SELECTMAN FOUR YEAR TERM

LWV Question: How do you perceive your role as Second Selectman?



ROBERT F. LASPROGATO, Republican
 Answer: John Izzo and I have discussed the role of Second Selectman in his administration. We feel that I will be a sounding board, an advisor, and a trouble-shooter. I also see using my abilities and background as a problem solver on situations that may arise. I support the platform, and would act as an advocate for programs as spelled out in that platform. I expect to be actively involved in the activities of the town.
 Background: I have lived in Westport for 15 years; I am a former Republican Town chairman and member of the Flood and Erosion Board. Prior to moving to Westport, I served as a member of the Bridgeport Police and Fire Commissions. I also spent 14 years in bank management with an advanced Banking Certificate from the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am a native of Norwalk, Connecticut.



SHELLY A. KASSEN, Democrat
 Answer: The role of Second Selectman is first, and technically, to serve on the Board of Selectmen in its executive authority regarding all contractual and legal matters affecting the Town. Beyond that, the responsibilities of the Second Selectman are what the individual makes of them. My intent is twofold: to use my experience on the Board of Finance to strengthen efficiencies and internal controls within town government so that we can keep our taxes fair, and second, to focus on initiatives that will make Westport a safer, more diverse yet more cohesive and caring community. I look forward to working with Gordon to accomplish our administration's priorities and to maintaining a responsible and open decision-making process. My background: 16 year resident, eight years on the Board of Finance and currently its chair, Harvard MBA and CPA, leadership roles in several non-profit organizations both local and national, married with three daughters.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF FINANCE FOUR YEAR TERM • VOTE FOR ANY THREE

LWV Question: What should the Board of Finance do to assure that the needs of all town departments are met? What questions would you ask during the budget process to determine what these needs are?



RICHARD B. BENSON, Republican
 Answer: It is the responsibility of the First Selectman and the Board of Education to propose operating and capital budgets which reflect their respective departmental needs. The BOF's responsibility to critically evaluate those proposed budgets, prioritize the requests, and only approve expenditures which are fiscally prudent and in the best interest of the community and of our children, while maintaining meaningful tax relief for seniors. With 80% of our budget dominated by "people costs", every position needs to be justified every year. My proactive financial scrutiny will increase efficiency in personnel, purchasing, and technology.
 Background: 26 year resident and owner of local home building firm; BOF incumbent (4 years.), P&Z (5 years), Conservation (4 years); Scout Master Troop 39, Saugatuck Congregational Church Trustee, Westport Rotary, Rotary District 7980, Compo Playground (1988 and 2005); United Way Board (10 years); USNR Vietnam Combat Veteran; Married to Totney 34 years; BA., BS., Wharton MBA



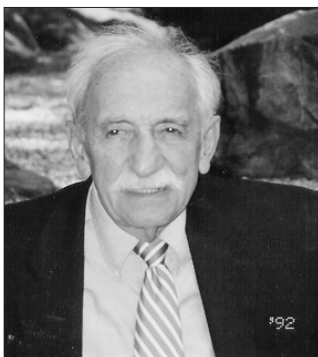
AVI KANER, Republican
 Answer: As a Westport resident with three children in our schools, I am motivated to ensure that we provide the highest level of quality services. I conduct financial evaluations every day as an owner of a supermarket chain. As a Principal at Booz Allen, I led strategic financial and budgetary reviews for multinational companies resulting in substantial cost improvement and revenue enhancement. I would question how specific department budget requests relate to the current and future needs of Westport residents including families, empty nesters, and seniors. Once comfortable with the logic of the request, I would evaluate the certainty of achievement within the given timeframe. I would benchmark our departments' plans with those of similar communities, to learn from their mistakes and successes – for the benefit of our residents. Finally, I would question the level of coordination among departments to maximize efficiencies in financing, contracts, equipment, and real estate.



JEFFREY ALAN MAYER, Democrat
 Answer: The BOF has two opportunities to assure that Town needs are funded: First, when the Schools and Town develop budgets each Winter, the BOF can and should urge the First Selectman and Superintendent to strengthen here, trim there. Last year, e.g., I pushed for additional staff in the Assessor's office as well as another social worker to address mushrooming Senior Center requirements. Second, when Town managers make funding requests we must quiz them: Will this meet the need? Are your constituents satisfied? Was there a public bid? Similar questions have exposed weaknesses in Technology as well as the need for a commercial assessment specialist to confirm homeowners are not bearing more than their fair share of taxes. N.B.: We can't do it all and must prioritize.
 Background: Member, Board of Finance, 1997-2005; RTM, 1995-97; President, CEO, MxEnergy Inc.; Yale BA; NYU JD; Sunrise Rotary; Instructor, Continuing Ed; Two children, one at SHS



HELEN A. GARTEN, Democrat
 Answer: Our challenge is to ensure that the quality of services offered the public by all town departments matches the excellence of our schools. Senior services and technology are areas where demand for services is growing. It is up to the Board of Finance to set priorities. I will ask department heads, "Where do you see your department's needs over the next three years? If additional investments are required, can you identify economies to offset budget growth?" I will work with the town and education administrations in planning the timing of future investments to avoid unanticipated tax increases. And, as I have done on the RTM, I will listen to Westport residents to learn what works and how services can be improved.
 Background: 20 year resident. RTM Finance Committee. RTM Representative, Revaluation Working Group. A.B., Princeton. J.D., Harvard Law School. Law Professor, Rutgers, specializing in finance, corporations, banking.



RALPH HYMANS, Petitioning Candidate
 Answer: We should leave the needs of each department to the professionals. The BOF should question whether these needs are excessive for running an efficient department and not exceeding those beyond other alternatives. Dollars are not unlimited and we must look to the taxpayer who pays. The Board should question the necessity of these needs and the consequences of not supporting the spending. The Board has to conscientiously analyze the spending of these needs. The Board controls the purse strings but must be sure the departmental needs are met and the taxpayers are receiving the necessary services they expect without waste. While the recommendations of departmental professionals should be respected, the BOF must assess the risks and benefits of alternative solutions. Ultimately, the impacts on taxes and the overall town budget are critical. Zero based budget reviews are useful to assure that taxpayers are receiving the necessary services they expect cost-effectively.

Additional copies of this guide are available at the

- Westport Public Library
- Town Clerk's Office
- Registrar of Voters Office

Once again, the LWV of Westport owes many thanks to Patricia Strauss, Town Clerk, for her help with this guide.

FIRST TIME VOTERS – VOTE WITH CONFIDENCE

- Enter booth and pull lever to close the curtains and activate the machine.
- Make your selections for candidates by pushing the lever down over the name of your choice for that office.
- You can change your lever vote as many times as you like before pulling the handle to open the curtains. (This is not true of "write-in" voting; see instructions below.)
- "Write-in Candidates can be entered in the space above the levers. Use the pencil that hangs from a string in the left corner of the voting booth. Lift the clear sliding cover