

## CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF FINANCE FOUR YEAR TERM - VOTE FOR ANY FOUR

The Board of Finance has 7 elected members serving staggered 4 year terms, with no more than 4 members from the same political party. Currently remaining members on the Board are 2 Democrats and 1 Republican. The Board is responsible for the fiscal overview of the Town. The Board hires the independent auditors who report to the Board, reviews the annual budget (prepared by both the First Selectman and the Board of Education) and holds public hearings on the proposed budgets. The Board designates funding methods, but usually does not initiate or propose spending. The Board determines the amount to be raised by taxation and sets the mill rate. The Board approves transfers of funds in the Town budget, but not the Education budget, and may approve additional Town appropriations. The Board publishes the annual Town Report. The Board has all the other powers and duties conferred or imposed by law on Boards of Finance.

**LWV Question: How would you improve the budget process, make it more transparent and involve the public at an earlier stage?**



**CHARLES HABERSTROH**  
Republican

During four years on the BOF I have worked diligently to improve transparency in the budget process -- but more is needed. The fiscal year budget process should start earlier. That way, estimated budget requests can be publicly vetted by the BOF as early as possible, permitting it to give meaningful budget guidance to the Town and School District before final budget submissions.

In addition the BOF should perform a budget review of common functions between the town and schools, including but not limited to Payroll, Human Resource Management, Health Reserves, Building Maintenance and IT, in order to realize maximum efficiencies and savings to taxpayers. I would also foster better communication between Boards, creating better transparency to the public.

Background: BOF 4 years: Schools, Audit, Gov't Efficiency Subcommittees; RTM 2 years: Finance Committee; Rotary Immediate Past President, Staples Boys Basketball Association President 10 years; CastleKeep Investment Advisors CEO; Harvard College.



**ALAN PHILLIPS**  
Republican

Our existing budget process has a great deal of transparency. Meetings are broadcast live and are covered by two local newspapers.

To encourage further transparency and public participation, we should limit executive (closed) sessions to sensitive personnel/contract issues. We need to also make available the earliest drafts of the town and school budgets on the internet with

hard copies available at Town Hall.

As a CPA and entrepreneur, I believe an important area requiring greater transparency is communication around operational, managerial, and system efficiencies across the school district and the town. The current "silo" structure limits these public discussions. The resulting savings can be used to reduce our tax burden while maintaining or improving services across our population - young families, empty nesters, and seniors.

Background: CPA, Co-owner SportsCenter of Connecticut, former owner nationwide finance company, Westport resident since 1988, wife Barbara and four children. Past President Conservative Synagogue.



**STEWART REIFLER**  
Republican

If elected, I will use my knowledge, skills and experience to "build" a better and more transparent Board of Finance through the creation of four "balanced" committees that operate year-round: Town Appropriations; School Appropriations; Governance and Procedures; and Revenues and Efficiencies. One member of each party will serve on each committee. The public will be

strongly encouraged to participate in the process: first at the committee meetings, where the bulk of the Board's work will occur, and then again at the Board meetings, where final discussion and action will be taken. The Board and committees will each have a Charter, an Annual Agenda, and nonpartisan Governing Procedures; any change will require a supermajority vote.

Background: Attorney at Vedder Price; formerly with PricewaterhouseCoopers and Weil Gotshal; Westport Public Library Trustee; expert in executive compensation and corporate governance; BA, Bard College; JD magna cum laude, New York Law School (Law Review).



**ALLYSON STOLLENWERK**  
Democrat

We can immediately involve members of the public more fully in the budget process if we better inform them of existing opportunities for participation.

Early in the budget cycle, the Board of Finance hosts public planning meetings with Town departments and the Board of Education. Board subcommittees, like the one I chair on enhancing revenues, meet publicly to review areas of the budget in detail.

To increase attendance at these sessions and make them true channels for transparency, we should promote them at schools, the senior center, and other community groups; utilize technology to allow live participation via the internet; and document outcomes on the town website.

Background: Member, Board of Finance. Member, Board of Assessment Appeals (2003-05). Stanford University BA. Yale Law School JD. Senior executive, Save the Children. Former corporate securities lawyer. Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General of the U.S. (1998-99). Married with a two-year-old son.



**EDWARD IANNONE**  
Republican

Having attended nearly every BoF meeting and planning session that was held to produce our current budget, I offer two suggestions. First, the individual departments should hold public meetings well before presenting their budget requests to the board. This gives the public an opportunity to provide feedback earlier in the process so that department heads can consider, prioritize and include it in their plans.

Second, transparency and cooperation between departments need to be encouraged. They should be motivated to explore synergies to be achieved by combining redundant functions. For example, I think the payroll and accounting systems of the schools and the town should be combined, resulting in a significant savings of taxpayer dollars with no degradation in the quality of education or town services.

Background: Cantor Fitzgerald Partner, Chartered Financial Analyst, Naval Academy, 20 years financial experience on Wall Street and government, Lacrosse Coach, PTA, Married, 3 young children.



**KEN WIRFEL**  
Democrat

The Board of Finance must take an early role in the preparation and review of the town budget. Given the growth and complexity of the budget, and to better balance the needs of all of our residents, the BOF must engage in an open and continuing exchange of information with the First Selectman's Office, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education from the earliest stages of preparation through final presentations to the BOF.

The town has taken positive steps this past decade to open the process to the public but more can be done. One easy step? Start meetings earlier.

We should also explore the use of interactive technology to expand citizen participation in public and televised meetings.

Background: 15 year resident. Attorney in private practice. Former Ass't. U.S. Attorney, NYC. Vice-Chairman and Founding Parent, Cooke Center for Learning and Development, NYC. Former President, Minute Man Hill Tax District.

## CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTE FOR ANY THREE

The Board of Education has 7 elected members serving staggered 4 year terms, with no more than 4 members from the same political party. Currently remaining members on the Board are 2 Democrats and 2 Republicans. The Board is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the public school system in the Town and has all the other powers and duties conferred or imposed by law on Boards of Education. Notice of regular meetings and agenda are published at least three days before each meeting in a newspaper having a substantial circulation in the Town.

**LWV Question: How would you improve the budget process, make it more transparent and involve the public at an earlier stage?**



**SANDY DEFELICE, Republican**

I am running for the Board of Education (BOE) for the specific purpose of improving communications among the administration, other boards, committees and the public, especially during the budget process.

I recommend that public input be collected early in the school year through online or phone surveys, and through planned town/ BOE work sessions. BOE meetings must be restructured to accommodate this new process. Webcasts should be implemented for the public unable to attend. The PTA should be continually leveraged to help inform and position issues within the school community. Strong short and long term forecasting (including a 5-year capital plan), coupled with effective cross communications will result in a more transparent budget process.

I am currently the Director of Retail Sales for multi-billion dollar information technology company; wife and mother of a kindergartner in Westport.



**FAITH TAYLOR, Democrat**

I've attended BOE meetings for over ten years, and have been struck by both the tremendous budgetary challenges and the need for public participation in this process. We've gained accessibility and transparency through televising meetings, as well as offering budget documents online and budget workshops. Less educational jargon in the budget document, and more "user-friendly" annotations, will help. We need more budget workshops, well publicized, accessible and convenient to the public. Early interaction with the RTM and BOF is critical. Board members should venture into the community during the budget process, to gain input and to provide information. Virtual interaction with the public, by live e-mail questioning during the meetings, is the next step.

Westport Public Library Trustee; President, Friends of Westport Public Library; PTA Co-President, Bedford Middle and Staples High School; Co-President, PTA Council, Member, Westport Youth Commission. Three children (2 Staples graduates, one sophomore) Non-profit administrator.



**MICHAEL MCGOVERN, Republican**

The budget process begins each year with the adoption of the Board's Goals. These provide the Administration with Objectives for the upcoming year, and the budget is developed to meet those Objectives. On September 26th, 2007, when the Board adopted its Goals for 2007-2009, I recommended that the Goals be published in our local newspapers, in order to provide greater transparency and public involvement in the budget process. This recommendation was enthusiastically received by my fellow Board members and the Superintendent. I believe that the broad dissemination of the Goals will enable all Westporters to be more informed about the priorities of the BOE and the timing and potential impact of these Goals on the budget.

Background: Board of Education Member; Trustee, Regis High School, NYC; Westport resident 11 years; Four children in Westport schools; MBA (Columbia); Twenty years investment banking experience with JPMorgan and HSBC.



**MARK MATHIAS, Democrat**

All budget meetings are held in public and most are televised. We have work sessions with the Board of Finance and an all-day session devoted to budgeting. Where I believe the public can be involved at an earlier stage is through community involvement of the PTA, RTM, and other stakeholders to work with their organizations to provide input to the Board of Education. This will ensure that questions and concerns are considered early in the deliberation process, thereby ensuring that everyone has had an opportunity to discuss and understands what items are included in each year's budget.

Mark Mathias is an information technology executive with 30 years of experience. He has served four years on the BoE, two as BoE Vice-Chairperson.