



**The League of Women Voters of Wilmette**

# **VOTERS GUIDE**

**A guide to candidates in the  
April 4, 2017  
Municipal Election**

Statements from candidates running for:

Village of Wilmette Board of Trustees  
Wilmette Park District Board of Commissioners  
Wilmette Public School District 39 Board of Education  
Avoca School District 37 Board of Education  
New Trier Township Board of Trustees  
New Trier Township High School District 203 Board of Education  
Wilmette Public Library District Board of Trustees

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*A project of the Voter Services Committee of the League of Women Voters of Wilmette*

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*Note, candidates are permitted a maximum of 1000 words to answer five questions posed by the League. They may allocate that word limit in their discretion, focusing on some questions more than others or entirely skipping a question. Candidates running unopposed were invited to participate, but in some cases did not do so.*

# VILLAGE OF WILMETTE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Note:** The Village President, Bob Bielinski, is running for re-election unopposed. The race for Board of Trustee is contested with four candidates running for three available spots.

## 1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the Wilmette Board if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?

**Bob Bielinski:** Four years ago, I ran for Village President with the goal of keeping our community a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire. At that time, I identified finances, economic development and the adequacy of services and infrastructure as the three most pressing issues facing Wilmette.

These issues remain top priorities, and the Village should build upon the momentum which has been created by the accomplishments of the past four years including:

Revitalized Downtown. Since 2013, downtown Wilmette has experienced a renaissance. There have never been more dining, shopping and entertainment options in our downtown, and activity levels have never been higher.

Redevelopment of 611 Green Bay Road. A five-story luxury apartment and retail development is now under construction at the long-vacant Ford site. The project is exactly the type of development envisioned by the Village Center Master Plan.

West Park Sanitary Sewer Storage Project. The \$18 million project was constructed under West Park to limit the frequency and severity of basement backups during major storm events for homes located west of Romona Road.

Restoration of Elmwood Dunes Preserve. Through public-private partnerships and significant community involvement, a beautiful nature preserve along the lakefront was created.

New Wholesale Water Customers. Selling water to neighboring communities helps keep water rates low for Wilmette residents. The Village renewed its contract with its largest customer, Glenview, and added Kenilworth, Golf, and starting in 2020, the North Maine Utilities as customers.

Sunshine Award for Transparency. The Village's commitment to transparency was recognized by a Sunshine Award from the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI). Wilmette is one of only eight municipalities in the entire State of Illinois to achieve a perfect 100% score from IPI.

Technology Enhancements. Service to residents has been improved through technology initiatives including a new Customer Relations Management system with a mobile app, a redesigned website, and a GIS Portal. You can now follow the Village on Facebook and Twitter.

### Finances.

Over the past four years, the Village has successfully maintained service quality while managing expenses, thereby limiting the need for tax increases. Full-time Village employee staffing is at the lowest level in decades. Spending on critical infrastructure projects has increased, and a long-term plan to improve the condition of the Village's streets in a fiscally responsible manner is being implemented.

Local governments in Illinois do not have complete control over their finances because of the State's regulatory environment and unfunded mandates, but the Village should continue to manage its finances prudently and focus on areas it can control while being mindful of the level of service expected by its residents.

### Economic Development.

Over the past four years, we have encouraged economic development throughout the Village, especially downtown. Downtown Wilmette is now the envy of neighboring North Shore communities. An accommodating, yet thoughtful, approach to economic development is critical to these efforts.

### Service and Infrastructure.

The Village currently does an excellent job of fulfilling its primary mission of delivering essential municipal services in a cost effective and efficient manner. Nonetheless, the Village must continually evaluate its performance, identify issues and prioritize solutions which create the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents.

One current focus of the Village Board is storm water management. The Village has invested over \$80 million in sewers since 1990, but recent storms have highlighted shortcomings in our infrastructure. The Village Board is currently reviewing options for a major storm sewer improvement project, and it should continue its open and transparent communication process with all residents.

***Kathy Dodd:*** I am very excited to be running for the Wilmette Village Board and hope to have the opportunity to serve. I've lived in Wilmette for 23 years and I love the people, the neighborhoods, the schools, the parks and beaches, and the overall vibrancy of our community. If I'm elected my number one priority will be to keep Wilmette a great place to live, raise a family, and own a business.

Overall, I'd like to continue the work of the current board to be fiscally responsible in managing the overall budget. I believe the village has done a tremendous job managing our tax burden while still ensuring all core services are sufficiently provided. I will continue to demonstrate financial constraint in all village operations. In addition, leveraging my business experience, I will look to apply a continuous improvement mindset to all operations looking for cheaper and better ways to deliver our services.

I also would like to continue to bring new businesses into our community, especially in areas with vacancies like 4th/Linden and Plaza Del Lago. These new businesses help to reduce the tax burden on our residents, which many feel is already too high.

Additionally, I believe a priority for the village is the aging infrastructure of some streets, sewers and equipment. I will work to address these issues in a thoughtful and cost effective manner.

And finally, I'd like to encourage engagement from our broad community on critical issues. In the upcoming years, the Board has some large capital investments that must be considered and I want to ensure we share information and carefully listen to the feedback of all residents on these projects.

**Joel Kurzman:** If elected, I will collaborate with President Bielinski and returning Board members on current priorities whenever possible. While I bring new value and energy to the Board, I respect the institution and the contributions of its existing members and staff. And I would also look forward to collaborating with my fellow newly elected members.

The vision of my Stewardship campaign is to ensure that we provide, for the young family that moves to Wilmette tomorrow, the same livable community - or better - than we have enjoyed. My Stewardship campaign has four main priorities:

- 1) Stewardship of Our Most Precious Resource - pedestrian and vehicular safety;
- 2) Stewardship of the Public Trust - transparency and accountability of Village government;
- 3) Stewardship of Tax Dollars - intergovernmental cooperation;
- 4) Stewardship of Our Community - storm water management.

What I hope to accomplish in each priority area:

- 1) Improved pedestrian and vehicular safety across the Village, especially for seniors and children. This would include helping to update our Safe School routes, the last update being ten years ago. Families who live just blocks from school do not feel their children can walk or bike safely to school. All Wilmette children should be able to walk or bike safely to school. Too often we hear about children and seniors being hit by cars.
- 2) At a time when the public's mistrust of institutions is at an all-time high, the Village must work harder to be transparent. The Illinois Open Meetings Act should be the "floor" for transparency, not the "ceiling." For example, all Committee and Commission meetings should be streamed and/or televised.
- 3) Although it exists on paper, the Village should meaningfully re-engage the Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee. I want to be part of this process. I also want Wilmette residents to expect and receive this type of cooperation from all their elected officials in all governmental bodies.
- 4) Introduce a new paradigm: we have a fundamental misalignment between development and infrastructure. We should continue with the current Board's process of value-based engineering to bring down cost of the proposal to bring all of Wilmette to 10-year storm protection. On a parallel track, we must immediately employ a range of solutions to address the misalignment (see below).

**Stephen Leonard:** After spending more than 30 years as a commercial real estate executive, my goal is to help guide the Board regarding real estate challenges and opportunities. I think it is important for the Board to include a real estate specialist to provide perspective to others. My experience will uniquely allow me to guide decisions relating to our commercial corridors in a direction to present Wilmette in the most positive light to our current and prospective commercial citizens.

I believe the most pressing and important decision the Board will face in the upcoming year will be the stormwater mitigation project currently being analyzed. We are facing a huge financial decision which deserves thoughtful consideration and careful deliberation. My professional experience focusses largely on evaluating construction projects to ensure the right funds are being allocated to address the proper goal. I will bring this experience to this very important upcoming decision.

Additionally, the Affordable Housing project previously proposed will undoubtedly return for consideration shortly. I believe this proposal should be given a fair hearing but should fit into an overall plan for affordable housing in Wilmette, not just this one project. Given the current inventory of affordable units in Wilmette, how many new units are we hoping for, where should they be located, and how should they be configured to accomplish our goals in this sector? I do not have these answers myself, but feel strongly, we as a community should be proactive with an overall strategy. This is another example of where my real estate project analysis experience will be directly applicable to the evaluation of this highly impactful project.

Our Village roadways are one of the largest line items in our capital budget and may be up for consideration in upcoming years. In the past, we have gotten comfortable with a certain level of improvements in our roads which may be difficult or impossible to maintain given our current budgetary constraints. How will we prioritize capital improvement funds in the future? Will we accept more patching vs. replacement as we move forward or should we increase revenues to remain competitive with other communities? This is certainly an issue I hope to vigorously debate if I am elected in April.

The Wilmette Village Center has seen a great deal of improvement in the recent past. This has made our downtown so much more attractive both to residents and others from outside Wilmette. Now we need to capitalize on this increased activity and start attracting other types of retailers to come to Wilmette and take advantage of our increased retail activity. My real estate experience will allow me to help guide this process giving us the best chance of continued success in this effort.

**Reinhard Schneider:** To prudently balance the Village's financial resources with the obligation to adequately maintain our infrastructure and insure public safety.

Top priorities are:

- Prepare contingency plans related to possible changes to the State's contribution to the General Fund.
- Flooding, especially west of Ridge, has been an ongoing and costly problem to many homeowners. The current proposal to mitigate this, as well as how to fund it will need to be carefully evaluated.
- Continue to fund road maintenance and reconstruction such that 75% of our road system is classified as "good".

2. **How will current state budget issues affect your approach to decision-making at the Village level? Is the Village currently doing enough to prepare for possible state funding losses?**

**Bob Bielinski:** In these tight budgetary times, it is even more important that the limited resources of the Village stay focused on its primary mission of delivering municipal services. Many different budget proposals have been discussed in Springfield which could materially impact Village finances, including a reduction of municipalities' share of the State income tax and other revenues, as well as a property tax freeze. But at this point in time, there is no way to know what action Springfield will ultimately take, and from informal conversations with residents, it appears that there is little support for a precautionary tax increase.

**Kathy Dodd:** The state budget crisis is an important issue for the Village Board and one the Village staff and board has been closely monitoring. At this time, it's still unclear what the overall impact of the budget issue in Springfield might be, making it very difficult to plan. Until we know for certain what might occur, I believe most residents are not in favor of increasing property taxes or adding new taxes as a "safeguard" for what might occur. The Village board has already been evaluating possible budget alternatives should a revenue loss from the state occur, so I believe we will be prepared to respond if necessary. Careful and proactive planning is critical, but we can wait to implement until we know the true impact.

Many neighboring villages will also struggle managing their finances should the state cut our revenue share. I support working with our neighboring villages to find ways to share some common services as an avenue to save money. If elected, I will be open minded, creative and diligent in exploring all possible solutions.

**Joel Kurzman:** The state budget impasse is informative to our community because it demonstrates the peril of excessive partisanship and a failure to negotiate. There is too much power in too few hands, and people suffer as a result...as well as local governments. With about 16% of the Village's budget funds redistributed from state government, and with those funds constantly threatened to disappear into the state budget gap, Village staff and Trustees are hard-pressed to make informed fiscal planning decisions. Unfortunately, the state budget may not resolve soon, so the four redistributed funds will continue on shaky ground, especially the Local Government Distributive Fund. To the extent possible, Wilmette should collaborate with other municipalities and groups such as the Civic Federation to defend local tax dollars - so that we can be Stewards of local tax dollars levied on our residents...including me!

**Stephen Leonard:** Although I believe the Village has done an excellent job in managing their budget, I do think we need to prepare for many more years of a failed State of Illinois legislature and plan for the worst. We may need to make some tough decisions in the near future if our lawmakers in Springfield cannot come to terms. We will be faced with replacement revenue requirements if we cannot count on Springfield. I am not a fan of reducing Village services or taking on irresponsible debt, but something will have to give.

**Reinhard Schneider:** The continuing State budget impasse has already had some affect on Village revenue including changes to the distribution of E-911 wireless taxes and the personal property replacement tax.

A much more significant impact would arise from a reduction in the municipal share of the income tax and a possible two year tax freeze. The Village estimates that this could reduce revenue by as much as \$2.6 million or almost 7% of our operating budget. Not sure we could cover this with further service cutbacks.

**3. How do you think that Wilmette can best utilize its Boards and Commissions (e.g., the Environmental and Energy Commission, Community Relations Commission, and so on) to advance the interests of the Village, including those you identified in response to the first question?**

**Bob Bielinski:** The Village should make use of the significant talents of its residents by encouraging participation on boards and commissions.

Three key boards meet monthly, and their functions are a critical part of land use governance activities. Other commissions meet less frequently, but a recent example of a commission making a significant contribution is the Environmental and Energy Commission's report on a village-wide coal tar ban which is currently being considered by the Village Board.

Also, when issues arise that require more specific expertise than available, I support appointing ad hoc committees, with limited scope and term, to perform the needed advisory role.

**Kathy Dodd:** I think it's critical that the village board utilize its boards and commissions to their fullest potential. The Village Board has only 7 members. The 13 boards and commissions have over 100 Wilmette members giving us greater insight into the important issues and concerns of all residents.

I believe in transparency of all board matters. And I believe in seeking input from and carefully listening to residents is a critical element to our ongoing board processes. I also feel it's important we use the boards and commissions to actively perform some of the research necessary to fully understand the particulars of an issue and work with residents and village staff to evaluate all perspectives so these can be presented to the board in a meaningful way.

**Joel Kurzman:** (Skipped)

**Stephen Leonard:** In my opinion, Wilmette has some of the finest professionals available anywhere working in the engineering, planning, finance, fire and police departments. We are very fortunate to attract such talent. I believe the Boards and Commissions should work as closely as possible with these professionals to help evaluate the storm water situation, affordable housing, and road improvement decisions facing us in the near terms. The boards and commissions should be given the greatest level of independence possible to allow these talented professionals to work together to find solutions and make recommendations to the Village Board.

**Reinhard Schneider:** Boards and Commissions are essential for the Board of Trustees to conduct its business responsively and efficiently. They listen and debate the requests and concerns of our citizens and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

4. **There are many infrastructure issues currently facing the Village, such as addressing major flooding. How do you think solutions to these issues should be funded?**

**Bob Bielinski:** In Wilmette, government operations are funded through a combination of property taxes and user fees. If the Village moves forward with a significant sewer improvement project, it should seek grant money from the state and federal governments. There are several alternatives for allocating the costs of repaying bonds that will be issued to fund the project, including property taxes, the existing sewer fee or a new storm water utility fee, and each approach has its pros and cons. Before a decision is made on a funding mechanism, an open and transparent discussion of these alternatives will occur.

**Kathy Dodd:** There are several components of any infrastructure issue, including issue analysis, generating alternative solutions, determining timing, and how the solution is funded. This question addressed the cost, but all are critical in good decision making.

In the past several years, the board has worked aggressively to limit capital expenditures which has resulted in reducing the tax levy in 7 of the last 8 years. As we look at significant future investments in front of the board, such as major flooding, I feel projects of this nature should be handled similarly to other significant infrastructure improvements in the past - funded across all taxpayers in the village. I believe any infrastructure investment benefits all residents (some more directly than others) but these projects ultimately increase the overall perception of Wilmette and what it offers those who live here, which then increases ALL property values.

I also feel the Village should continue to hold public meetings to seek input from all residents on funding solutions for any significant capital expenditures. Increasing the property tax levy is not the only solution and creative alternatives such as establishing a new stormwater utility fee should also be examined.

**Joel Kurzman:** I propose four policy concepts to address flooding. Again, I present these ideas on a parallel track to, not in place of, the proposal under consideration by the current Board.

- No new significant development west of Ridge Road until we have clarity about modernizing the separated sewer system. The separated sewer system cannot handle its existing load yet alone additional burden. Storm water, raw sewage, and other pollutants such as coal tar pool on our streets and flood our homes. Residents regularly walk and drive through a serious public health hazard. Residents in 2-year flood neighborhoods are advised not to use showers, dishwashers, or washing machines during even modest rain events, despite dutifully paying sewer fees.
- Sewer fees based on sewer use, not water use. Our billing and incentives are misaligned. A resident who uses water to care for landscaping pays more for sewers than a resident who paves over their property and, therefore, contributes more storm water runoff. About a dozen municipalities in the Chicago area have implemented storm water utilities, which determine sewer fees based on impermeable surface and burden on the sewer system. I believe that Wilmette should align incentives through the creation of a storm water utility. It would also reduce the per household cost of any new infrastructure project by assessing fees to all users and contributors to the system.

- If a homeowner experiences sanitary sewer backup or overland flooding, all permitting fees should be waived for restoration. The Village should not garner revenue from flooding. Also, policy should incentivize proper permitting.
- The Village should rebate residents one or more sewer bills when the sewer system fails to serve them. This is just a minor gesture relative to the homeowner's cost of flooding, but the Village will be properly incentivized to pursue solutions with greater urgency.

**Stephen Leonard:** I am a strong advocate for fiscal responsibility. Although it is unreasonable to expect to fund a \$77 million project with currently available assets, maintenance issues such as road repairs and other current expenses should not be passed on to our children. If we can't or are unwilling to satisfy these requirements with available funds or revenue enhancement, we should postpone the work.

Once again, here is where my real estate experience can come into play if I am lucky enough to be elected in April. Asset allocation decisions are always difficult, and there are unhappy participants on either side of every decision. In real estate and in government, making the tough decisions for the right long term reason is the hallmark of any successful executive or public servant.

**Reinhard Schneider:** Road reconstruction, major facility repairs, and equipment replacement are typically funded from a combination of bond proceeds and/or property tax increases. The West Park sanitary sewer storage project was funded by an increase to the sewer fee. Regarding the proposed west of Ridge relief storm sewer, the most equitable approach would be a fee to all property owners based on the property's impervious surface area.

**5. Describe an experience in which you dealt with competing interests or held a point of view not shared by the majority of the public or the other members of your governing body. What was your role and how did that experience prepare you to hold a position on the Village Board?**

**Bob Bielinski:** All elected officials will sometimes find that their point of view is not shared by others, and my tenure on the Village Board includes a number of those instances. While members of the Wilmette Village Board may not always agree, in recent years, they have conducted themselves with decorum and respect for their colleagues, their neighbors and the Village Staff.

I do not believe that the lack of civility we are experiencing in national politics belongs in Wilmette.

As Village President, I will continue to lead with the courtesy and civility which are hallmarks of Wilmette government. I will always look to build consensus for balanced, practical, common sense solutions which serve the best interests of the entire community.

**Kathy Dodd:** As a business leader for a global consulting firm, I was often involved in many challenging discussions with our clients and leadership team around client deliverable dates and implementation costs. Typically, our clients wanted a shorter implementation schedule with lower costs and our internal management team wanted high quality work with reasonable profit margins. My role was to lead the discussions and negotiate the final solution.

From this experience, I have learned that gathering different perspectives of an issue and encouraging open dialogue so everyone can more broadly understand the issue beyond their own perspective is critical. I also feel actively listening and being open minded is key to handling any issue with many opinions. And while collaboration can be challenging and time consuming, a better outcome is achieved.

I have also learned from my professional experience that not every decision will go as I hoped. As a trustee, I will openly voice my opposition, even when this might disagree with the majority. However, once a decision is reached, I understand I am a member of a team and will respect the process and support the final decision made by the overall board.

**Joel Kurzman:** My career in crafting public policy is a key qualification for the Trustee position, which is essentially a policymaking role. I currently work for a trade association whose members are large companies in fierce competition with each other. Part of my role entails developing consensus among these competing interests. It also requires listening, diplomacy, negotiation, and successful execution. When I represent an industry or social service before a legislature or regulatory body, I am competing in a “marketplace of ideas.” Similar practices of collaboration and negotiation ensue. I have been fortunate to represent nonpartisan organizations and interests, so my mindset has always been to identify friends and allies wherever they exist. Open mind, no closed doors. Having observed and engaged the Village Board for years as a resident, I believe my professional background is well suited to Board service. I want to engage residents from all neighborhoods of Wilmette because great ideas for being better Stewards of our community can come from anywhere - and I am passionate about serving All of Wilmette!

**Stephen Leonard:** Professionally, I work with retailers who seek to expand in a professional, strategic and thoughtful fashion. Recently my main client was facing a situation where they needed to make an investment in some additional research that I felt was absolutely mandatory as we proceeded. This was resisted by senior management due to cost and risk, while the junior members strongly desired the investment.

My personal style is to seek consensus through education and persuasion. In the end, if I felt strongly about the investment, I should be able to convince other to see my point of view. After careful and thoughtful discussion over a long period of time, both sides saw the merit and the research project was fully funded and commenced. Consensus through discussion beats confrontation every time.

**Reinhard Schneider:** There have been occasions during my service on the Zoning Board of Appeals where my vote was in the minority. We have agreed to disagree in constructive discussions respecting the opinion of others.

## WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Note:** In the race for a 2-year term, John Olvany is running unopposed. In the race for four-year terms, there are four candidates running for three available spots.

**1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the Park District Board if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?**

**Bryan Abbott:** My answer is unchanged from four years ago:

The Lakefront: The board has a responsibility to solicit public input and provide vision to produce and implement a comprehensive lakefront plan that secures our lakefront parks (and our investment in those parks) for future generations.

Maintaining the Wilmette Park District's Excellence: The breadth, depth and quality of the Park District's programs are incredible--AND-- these programs are almost entirely funded by the users themselves. Maintaining these recreational programs at the highest levels, while also actively evaluating them--i.e., reducing or dropping programs that are no longer supported, as well as adding new programs that show particular promise-- should consistently be one of our most important priorities.

Exercise Fiscal Responsibility: This is the board's top focus. It's not flashy or exciting, but it is vitally important. Over the past four years, the Park District's debt has been reduced from \$23.4 million to \$14.9 million. Pension plan funding increased from 72.9% to over 85%, and we reduced the property taxes we collect by 6.3%. That is to say—residents' Park District property **taxes went down**. The Park District has had a long history of healthy fiscal management, and our job is to continue that work. I feel that my role on the Board is to constantly evaluate the cost/benefit ratios of all that we do.

**I. Gordon Anderson:** I want to continue to serve and give back to the community in a way that benefits Wilmette residents and is personally fulfilling.

Priorities start at the Lakefront with completion of the Beach House replacement and parking lot project within current scope, on budget, and on time. This project should be paid for with existing tax dollars and without adding new referendum debt or replacing current referendum debt that is set to expire.

We must allow the Park District's share of our taxes to decline in future years as debt service needs for previous years' capital projects are satisfied. Based on the Finance Committee's work with staff, I am convinced that we can meet future capital and operating needs without referendum debt, though projects dates will have to be managed. With the upcoming retirement of the Park District Finance Superintendent, and proposals for temporary and permanent tax freezes coming from Springfield, long-term planning and pro-active fiscal leadership from the Board would be my most important priority.

**Christopher Lewis:** My top priorities as a Wilmette Park District Commissioner are preserving the lakefront, reducing taxes and improve communication through more modern social media.

We moved to Wilmette in 2012 based on two criteria, the high quality schools and the park district's excellent use of the lakefront. The Wilmette Park District does a great job of maintaining the various parks and facilities, but Gillson and the Beach House are in need of modernization. The Master Lakefront referendum was an overly ambitious and expensive upgrade to these facilities. More communication through the Wilmette Park District and the Wilmette community would have allowed for better interaction with the community and could have resulted in a plan that was acceptable to more residents.

Since the referendum vote, the Wilmette Park District has decided to continue down the path of rebuilding the Gillson Beach House and parking lot. However, plans are leaning towards a 4.5 to 6 million dollar cost. My hopes for my term are to come up with a Gillson Beach House plan that explores some creative and alternative ideas that meet more with our residents' desires of preserving the open space plan of Gillson and impacts our taxes the least. In addition, ensuring the project remain on time and within budget are a high priority.

The current Gillson Beach House plan is a prime example of the disconnect the Wilmette Park District has with our property values and taxes. A recent report showed Wilmette property values have gone down by over 20% from 2007 through 2015 yet the Wilmette Park District's taxes have gone up 13.5% in the same time period. While much of our community has suffered through economic down turn, the various taxing bodies that use our property taxes seem to have no restraint to their spending with budgets that seem to be unaware of the realities of today's economy.

These points show a common thread suggesting that the Wilmette Park District would be much better served by better two-way communication. The questions and concern that were conveyed at the various board meetings regarding the referendum would have been greatly reduced if only the Wilmette Park District communicated better. More communication regarding these high exposure projects would prevent much of the community backlash that has occurred. The use of modern social media technologies would be extremely helpful in enhancing the Wilmette Park District experience.

**Amy Wolfe:** As a member of the Park Board, there are several things I hope to accomplish while in office. First, I would like to increase communication with the people of Wilmette. I think it is imperative to convey to the taxpayers what the Board is discussing and what decisions we are making. Second, I would like to see the beach house at Gillson Beach rebuilt. The building is in terrible disrepair and needs to be torn down and rebuilt with a new, functional structure that is beneficial for those that use our park. Finally, I would like to see landscaping plans for all of the parks in Wilmette. Each park has it's own unique plantings and needs, so we need to create an overall plan for each park's current and future plantings.

2. **As a commissioner, does the option of setting fair-use charges for all users of park facilities and programs make sense? Why or why not?**

**Bryan Abbott:** Yes--it makes complete sense. The Park District has a long-standing and successful policy of charging non-residents more than residents. Since residents also pay taxes into the Park District, this "Fair Use" policy ensures that non-residents do their part in maintaining our excellent facilities and programs. This policy benefits all parties. For instance, at the swimming beach, non-residents contribute half of the annual revenue collected there, doing their part to fund our lakefront operations. In addition, we provide reduced rates to seniors and active military. We also provide an Assistance Program, based on need, to those residents who need financial help. I support all of these programs.

**I. Gordon Anderson:** Fair use charges for programs and facilities make complete sense given that residents are paying taxes in addition to fees to pay for the costs of running the operations, and non-residents obviously are not paying taxes. Today, the Park District makes extensive use of fair use charges throughout the system so that non-residents using the facilities and participating in programs are paying their fair share.

The exception to fair use charges is in our parks, where residents and non-residents alike have access all Wilmette Parks, including Gillson Park, for normal daily use at no cost. While taxpayers are paying to maintain these parks and their various improvements, I do not believe it is practical, desirable, or good public policy to restrict non-resident access to parks here in Wilmette by charging fees.

However, I am a proponent of better enforcing current regulations on littering, smoking, water access, alcohol, fireworks and parking to limit anti-social behaviors that are especially annoying when a park (e.g. Gillson) is in heavy use.

It is important to remember that much of Gillson Park was created through dredging by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) which represents all of Cook County. The land then became property of the state of Illinois, which then deeded the land to Wilmette. Also, MWRD is currently leasing various plots of land in Gillson Park to the Park District at bargain rates. Note that the state Park Code insists Wilmette hold all of our land in trust for all of the people of the state.

**Christopher Lewis:** Fair-use charges are a reasonable method for allocating a proportional amount of the shared operating costs associated with running the Wilmette Park District to non-resident prices. For example, the Wilmette Park District has costs for vehicles that are shared between services. These shared costs are not reflected in individual program costs, yet every residents' tax dollars are responsible for them. The shared costs covered by Wilmette residents' taxes are reflected in the higher fair-use rate that non-residents pay. I believe that this process is fair to both residents that pay taxes and to non-residents who don't pay taxes to the Wilmette Park District.

**Amy Wolfe:** I agree with the current Park District practice that fair-use charges are a good option for non-residents of Wilmette. As taxpayers in Wilmette, part of our tax bill goes to the park district, which is used to support the park district's facilities, parks and programs. It seems only right that those that do not pay into that system should pay more to use our facilities and enjoy our programs.

**3. What specific ideas do you have for establishing and enhancing two-way communication between the Park and the public?**

**Bryan Abbott:** Two-way communication is a constant need, and always will be. The Park District already communicates with residents in a number of ways: through regular newspaper articles; mailed guides; our website; social media; regular publicly held board and committee meetings; and direct communication via email, letters, in-person, and by phone. In addition, the Park District has recently added additional means of communication: a monthly *Board Briefs* newsletter (brand-new); a monthly programming newsletter; and the recent Lakefront Community Survey. Still, we will always look to optimize the process to meet current needs. In that spirit, the Park District has also pledged to improve direct outreach to neighbors and residents where contemplated projects (playgrounds or other facility changes) will impact their parks. Finally, in this era of rapidly evolving communication, we are open to your suggestions as well.

**I. Gordon Anderson:** Two-way communication on specific local projects can be enhanced by consistently reaching out to individual residents within a defined geographic radius ahead of time, rather than expecting them to follow what is being reported in the local newspapers or learning from their neighbors. Especially for larger projects that affect the entire community, planning far enough ahead of time to allow both the local residents directly affected by the project and those residents living elsewhere in the Village enough time to fully participate is key.

The Park District has had excellent end results when these communication guidelines have been followed, and has had sub-optimal results when individual residents were not contacted as looming project deadlines limited communication and added unnecessary confusion and angst.

**Christopher Lewis:** Better two-way communication is very important to the Wilmette Park District. I believe there should be a much higher use of social media by the Wilmette Park District, and the Wilmette Park District should hire a Social Media Director whose day to day job is to publish and monitor social media communication. The Wilmette Park District publishes an extensive quarterly guide and while it's a valuable tool, I believe there could be significant cost savings by using an app based or online guide given how technologically savvy most Wilmette residents are. I don't believe in completely eliminating the publication, just reducing its size and making better use of the funds that are used to produce it.

**Amy Wolfe:** As a current commissioner, I have been working with park district staff to try to increase our communication with the public through increased social media posts, as well as direct email correspondence with park district users. Last fall, we began sending a monthly email to all park district users in an effort to keep them informed of park district happenings. In addition, we recently started sending an email after our board meetings to the community outlining what was discussed at our meeting and any forthcoming discussions. The email also included all of the park board commissioners' email addresses so residents can contact us directly. Finally, we are in the process of redesigning the Park District's website to better communicate all things Park District related. As a commissioner, I always welcome input from everyone. I feel it is my job as a commissioner to listen and take that information to make changes and future decisions.

**4. What is your position on term limits for Park Board members, and do you believe that they should be implemented for current or future terms?**

**Bryan Abbott:** I think this is a balancing act between maintaining experience, continuity, and institutional memory on the Board--and encouraging new perspectives and enthusiasm. It takes some time to learn the ropes. Another consideration is that local elections don't typically draw a lot of candidates, so it's also important not to chase away new public servants too quickly. It is a volunteer job, so it can hardly be argued that commissioners are receiving much in the way of benefits. So, in consideration of the above, I believe that three terms strikes the right balance, and I would be willing to abide by that, should the board implement it.

**I. Gordon Anderson:** While there are benefits of having long-tenured Board members with institutional knowledge, I believe term limits should be implemented to ensure a steady stream of commissioners with new ideas over time, and to prevent possible leadership myopia and resistance to change. I would advocate a maximum of three terms, and making the change as soon as practical.

Another benefit would be ability of the community to anticipate turnover, which would encourage new candidates with needed skills complementary to those of other Board members to run for the Board.

**Christopher Lewis:** I firmly believe in term limits for political offices, and believe the Wilmette Park District would be best served by a two or three term limit for elected officials. The influx of new ideas and opinions would be extremely helpful in the Wilmette Park District Board, and I believe new blood brings better communication and exposes more residents to the process.

**Amy Wolfe:** I am in favor of term limits for the Park Board. While I think it takes a significant amount of time to learn all that is involved with being a commissioner, after a while I think people can fall into the thinking that since this is always how we have done things, that we should continue to do things the same. I think it is important to have new people join the board so fresh ideas and viewpoints can be brought to the board. If there were term limits, I think it would increase the chance of new ideas and perspectives.

**5. What are the top priorities for improvements to Park District facilities and how would you ensure timely execution of these improvements? What current or new activities and/or facilities would you like to see expanded or reduced?**

**Bryan Abbott:** At Gillson Park, I think we should follow the input we received from our residents in the Community Survey and move forward with a plan that addresses their top priorities, namely preserving openness, as well as addressing the aging roads, sewers, beach house, and parking lot. Public input on all of these initiatives, including a new referendum to ratify the final plan is, in my opinion, vitally important. Personally, I'd like to see improved pedestrian paths at Gillson, especially with regard to walking from Sheridan Road/Michigan Ave. to the beach, and I'd like to create a user-friendly pedestrian loop around the park. I'd also like to see greater emphasis on winter sports within Gillson. Now that MWRD is poised to bring their Deep Tunnel storm-water treatment facilities online, which will complete their long-term project of cleaning up the North Shore Canal, I'd like to explore a possible nature trail along the canal that would link up with the McCormick Blvd. trail. I support the Park District as it continues to incorporate cost-effective

green technology into its facilities. I also think we need to remain responsive to existing and new recreational trends.

My 37 years as a civil engineer/project manager have provided me with a unique skill set, providing the board and the Park District with the most cost-effective and time-sensitive management of all proposed Park District projects. I hope to continue to provide these skills to our community.

**I. Gordon Anderson:** The Beach House replacement and parking lot project are the top facility priority. The project is in process and should be complete in about three years. Once the design is reviewed and approved, the construction manager currently being hired along with the Lakefront Committee's and Board's overview should keep the project on track.

For the past several years, the Park District has had an unfunded mandate to address open Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues identified at its facilities. While progress is being made, it is not being made at the desired pace. Additional funds have been allocated to this project in 2017 with the intent to accelerate the reduction of the backlog of projects and limit our legal exposure for non-compliance.

Regarding programming, with the local school districts changing their annual calendars and extending summer break for at least this coming year, the Park District needs to expand its offerings to fill the community's need for programs during weeks that are now not covered.

**Christopher Lewis:** I would say that the top priorities of improvement for Wilmette Park District are the Lakefront infrastructure, the Gillson's Beach House and additional paddle courts.

Repairing and upgrading the roads and sewer systems at the lakefront are important for the long term use of Gillson. These infrastructure upgrades will not only ensure another hundred years of public use of the park, they will help improve the overall water drainage situation in Wilmette. The Gillson Beach House and parking lot are in need of upgrades. I believe that we can do a wonderful job of replacing the current facilities with modern facilities that fit in with the nature of Gillson. But fitting into the nature of Gillson means creating a facility that is modest in size and preserves the open space feeling of the beach. The proposed 4.5 to 6 million dollar plan is much more than what meets the community consensus of preserving the open spaces of Gillson. I would advocate for nothing larger than the current Beach House, and if upgraded picnic areas are required, utilize uncovered or summer only temporary awnings. It just seems to me that the current plan is extremely expensive for a building that is completely unused for 6 months out of the year.

Finally, the additional paddle courts will meet the increasing usage demands of that area and improve the overall social and competitive nature of paddle in Wilmette and the surrounding leagues. Addition paddle courts will only encourage this active and profitable part of Wilmette Park District.

**Amy Wolfe:** My top priority would be a new beach house at Gillson Beach. There is a current schedule in place for this project start in 2018 and to be completed by the start of the 2019 beach season, and I would work to make sure that happens. In addition, the parking lot at Gillson beach needs to be redone. The parking lot is prone to flooding and needs to be rebuilt to maintain the programming that is scheduled there. This should also be completed by the start of summer

2019. Next, the roads and sewers in Gillson Park need to be rebuilt. While this is not an immediate project, it is in the future plans and remains a priority to complete. Finally, as far as new activities, I would love to see some more outdoor fitness classes that utilize the lakefront. This could possibly include a yoga or boot camp class down at the lake. We have such an amazing park system, and I hope to continue to be a part of maintaining and preserving our Wilmette treasures.

## WILMETTE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 39 BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Note**, in the race for District 39, there are five candidates running for four available positions.

**1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the District 39 Board of Education if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?**

**Jonathan Cesaretti:** If elected, my top priorities would be as follows:

- **Minimizing Tax Increases** - Close coordination on matters that affect the overall property tax burden (District 39 makes up 37% of the tax rate) with other units of local government, such as, the library, the park district and the City;
- **Transparency** - Increase transparency of the school district's financial and academic performance by implementing a simple set of accessible and frequently updated performance measures;
- **Institutional Leadership & Succession** – I would seek to understand the succession plans currently in place for leadership of the district and, as appropriate, strengthen them.

**Lisa Schneider Fabes:** We live in a vibrant community with excellent schools. As a School Board member my goal is for D39 to remain a model, high performing school district. To do this, we need to create learning environments that challenge students and motivate them to be their best. We also need to hire and support the development of exceptional teachers and school leaders, leverage technology and other tools to personalize learning, and ensure school climate respects and celebrates diversity in all its forms.

Like many other school districts around the state and country, D39 faces several critical challenges, including uncertainty about funding and increasing demands on our teachers and administrators due to new standards, curricula, technology, and assessments. It is critical that we closely monitor the changing landscape and thoughtfully address challenges that arise. The academic success and social/emotional development of D39 students is my priority. If elected to the School Board, I will promote educational quality for all students and work with fellow Board members and administrators to ensure that budget priorities are tied to educational outcomes and that D39 is transparent in how we measure and report our progress.

**Mark Steen:** District 39 has been one of the community's most valuable assets for decades. My first priority is to ensure that D39 lives within the financial means of our community, while improving the district's fiscal health and its students' educations. I do not have a pre-ordained set of initiatives that I want to "push through."

During this school board term, the BoE will make important decisions about major infrastructure upgrades, how we serve our changing student populations, the district's leadership, and modernizing our education delivery. Each decision will have a long-lived

impact on our costs and the quality of our schools, and in each case, progress will require making trade-offs.

Consequently, to drive improvements in D39's education and finances, I will work to ensure we have strong processes to make and execute these decisions. I will avoid premature advocacy for specific positions.

We must have clear communications from the administration to inform the Board and the public of the possibilities and conflicts. We must gather relevant and accurate facts, understand where we make significant assumptions, and identify the implications of each. We have to listen carefully to all parties - residents, parents, teachers, staff, administration, and students - to understand their concerns. When we have all of those elements we can make decisions and support our district's professionals in effective action.

If we are open-minded, clear-eyed, and resolute in our decision-making, we will improve the already outstanding school system we have.

**Ellen Sternweiler:** In this quickly changing and uncertain educational climate—where evolving school models, such as high performance charter, online and for-profit schools have begun to challenge the foundations of our public school system—we need to continue to prove that equity and excellence can co-exist. Communication, collaboration and innovative thinking are essential to ensure our District's continued success.

My broad base of professional and personal experience makes me uniquely qualified to serve on the District 39 Board of Education. I bring to the table my passion, open-mind and experience navigating the complexities of policy, negotiation and balancing budgets as well as my ability to listen to and incorporate different points of view. Most notably, I excel in analyzing the big picture to craft and implement effective plans that allow for 'organic change.' As a School Board Member, I would recognize my role as a steward of an exceptional school district, and would assess our district's priorities by thoughtful consideration of both our budget and continued educational excellence. I'm committed to maintaining the high standards of education that our community expects and our students deserve, while consistently questioning, re-evaluating and devising new and innovative ways to meet changing demands and expectations.

**Gail Szulc:** District 39 schools have set a high bar of educational excellence and are the most compelling reason that families move to Wilmette. The obligation of the District 39 Board is to provide fiscal stability and continuity to support the continuation and furtherance of this excellence. I am running for the board because of my dedication and experience in education, commitment to student achievement, and expertise in staff, parent and community relations which will allow me to contribute to the board in these areas.

My professional experience includes 20 years as teacher grades K-8 and 15 years as principal of an exceptionally successful public school. I hold a master's degree in instructional leadership and a BA in English Literature. I am a former Leadership Coach for new principals in Washington, D.C. and was featured in Business Week for my efforts in accelerating student achievement. My experience and insights will serve District 39 well in these areas.

My priorities would be to ensure our schools adequately adapt to prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers, advocate data driven analysis of student performance, and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of our schools without any increase in property taxes.

**2. How do you learn about challenges and opportunities in the school district and in K-8 education generally? What do you read to inform yourself about matters relating to public school governance and funding?**

**Jonathan Cesaretti:** In preparing to run for the school board, I have met with Ray Lechner, the District 39 Superintendent, and a number of current and past school board members, as well as leaders of the PTA and others who are active in Wilmette education circles. I have read the District's financial statements published on the D39 website since 2009 and selected school board meeting notes/agenda. I have begun to educate myself on academic and professional literature in the education policy realm.

I also have three children in the district. I receive regular correspondence from District 39 and am in regular conversations with parents about the school district and their children's educational experience.

**Lisa Schneider Fabes:** I learn about the challenges and opportunities in D39 through a variety of sources, including attending Board meetings or reviewing meeting highlights. As a mother of children in the District, I also learn from weekly electronic updates from my children's teachers, school principals and Parent Teacher Organizations. In addition, my perspective is informed by reports from PASS39, the District 39 Foundation, and the Superintendent.

I always have, and will continue to, engage with fellow community members as an active & involved parent – on the sports field, at the rec center, through music programs, etc. It is during these interactions that I better understand the perspectives surrounding an issue or an idea that has merit.

I am an avid reader, including newspapers, journals and digital content. I learn about the latest school governance and funding issues through these sources and by following activities in Springfield. I also attend policy briefings at the City Club of Chicago or Forefront and read education reports when they are released, such as the recently released recommendations from the Illinois School Funding Reform Commission.

**Mark Steen:** I use a broad range of sources to keep informed about our challenges and opportunities. I am a parent and I frequently talk to other parents to understand their concerns and preferences. I also keep in touch with residents who have no children in our school system to ensure I hear a more taxpayer-centric view. District 39 provides information on its challenges and opportunities publicly at board meetings and I get a local, educator-centric perspective from my wife, who is a New Trier High School teacher. I read material from the Illinois Association of School Boards, keep up with popular press stories, and occasionally read education policy material from national sources. However, I usually find local sources more relevant and actionable, because D39 is far from a "typical" district.

**Ellen Sternweiler:** As the mother of three children currently enrolled in District 39, I have daily, experiential knowledge of the challenges and opportunities within our district.

Additionally, as a parent of children with special education needs and a leader within the special needs community, I've taken initiative to stay actively apprised of changes in legislation on Federal, State and local levels. Consequently, I possess an extensive knowledge of the system and how to work within it to advocate effectively for our students.

Prior to enrolling our children in District 39, I successfully navigated a wide range of educational models including CPS, independent schools, Montessori, therapeutic and religious day schools. This first-hand experience has equipped me with an informed perspective and insight into the advantages and pitfalls of those systems, and how they compare to District 39's educational model.

I've also kept myself informed locally by attending school and community meetings, listening to professionals and administrators and by researching facts and opinions published in annual reports, professional publications and other reliable news sources. Most importantly, I've found listening and engaging with fellow parents and community members to be the most useful and impactful source of information. While anecdotal in nature, these voices have provided the most sincere opinions and information regarding the D39 community and educational experiences. Continued consideration of this firsthand input within the larger framework of policy and research is therefore one of the best ways for me to stay informed and serve our constituents.

**Gail Szulc:** My reading list to keep up with K-8 education in general includes pertinent articles from Best Practice Journal, Education Week, ASCD Educational Leadership, the Chicago Tribune, District 39 newsletter and discussions with friends and neighbors after Board meetings. It is critical for board members to be on the cutting edge of new trends in curriculum, instructional strategies and materials and the emerging role of technology across the curriculum in order to make informed decisions regarding the distribution of available funds. Public school governance issues appear in the Illinois Association of School Administrators, Illinois Policy journal and ASCD, and are discussed at board meetings and newspaper articles, and again knowledge of these issues are critical to funding decisions.

### **3. How will current state budget issues affect your approach to decision-making within District 39?**

**Jonathan Cesaretti:** While Wilmette's current financial position is solid, I expect that the state's financial issues are likely to adversely affect Wilmette in the long run. If elected, I would work with those on the board and in the community who would also seek to minimize the effects of our state's political gridlock on our schools.

**Lisa Schneider Fabes:** Whatever happens with pension/tax reform, the funding formula, or other changes at the state level, in all likelihood the State of Illinois will contribute less to D39 in the future than it has in the past. The District already routinely runs budget scenarios to ensure it is prepared for possible reductions in funds. The District should continue this practice.

In addition, I will encourage the District to:

- Seek all potential sources of revenue, for example from grants and contracts
- Continue to develop budget scenarios and contingencies for possible reductions in revenue
- Assess the educational impact of the expenditures and make mid-course corrections as needed

Measuring the return on financial investments on educational outcomes is not easy, but it is important. I will work with the administration to ensure the District is continually evaluating the educational impact of investments. Doing so helps guide funding decisions and ensures that choices are tied to District priorities. I believe evaluating progress and prioritizing where investments are made - whether on human resources, capital improvements, technology, etc. - are core responsibilities and challenges of the Board.

**Mark Steen:** They heighten my caution. Without question, the uncertainty in state funding creates one of the most destructive, and most unnecessary, challenges for our district. Our budgets contain placeholders for material changes that may not come, reducing the accuracy of our projections. We have to plan contingencies for any scenario that appears likely, including payments from the state that come months late or not at all. Most tactically, significant time we use to consider how to address budget uncertainty could be used to improve our schools. This environment requires us, in my view, to keep more money in unproductive reserves and to reduce the time horizon over which we plan. The Board has admirably taken those measures and the district enjoys solid financial health. However, reduced state budget uncertainty will be a welcome change, if it comes.

**Ellen Sternweiler:** We must continue to provide an educational model that successfully achieves excellence and efficiency in the face of likely significant shifts in funding due to state legislation. In this regard, strategic and innovative thinking and collaboration is essential to ensure D39's continued success. Fortunately, the current Board has factored potential legislative changes into the budget so D39 is well-prepared for whatever legislative developments are implemented. We must continue to be vigilant in our accounting and re-analysis of these potential, significant changes—such as a property tax freeze, shift of the cost of pensions to our district, or the new funding formula currently being considered state-wide. And, we must be flexible and open-minded to shifting perspectives and finding alternate solutions when making decisions that affect our D39 educational system.

**Gail Szulc:** The current and ongoing state budget issues dramatically impact fiscal decisions at the local level. While most of our funding for schools comes from property taxes, state funding is also an important component of providing a world class education for our students. The uncertainty with the state budget makes it difficult to plan and budget for the school district.

As a member of the District 39 board, I will take a two-step approach to dealing the state budget issues. First, I will work diligently to encourage local state legislators to pass a balanced state budget that adequately funds our schools. Secondly, I will work with the school board, administration, teachers, and parents to have a contingency plan in case state funding is not allocated.

**4. As a Board member, how will you navigate parental and community concerns that may conflict with each other?**

**Jonathan Cesaretti:** With respect to both types of concerns (parents/community), I would listen carefully, ensuring that I understand all points of view and endeavor to be as transparent as possible in regards to my own position. I would advise on how to go about addressing the concern and assist in resolving the issue.

**Lisa Schneider Fabes:** Board members have a personal duty to engage with the community. I will be accessible by email, phone and in person upon request.

When community members are concerned about an issue under the Board's jurisdiction, my response would depend on the issue and the extent to which the community is divided. The Board meetings allow for public comment, however, some issues may require additional time and space for different perspectives to be shared. In those cases, special meetings may be required. In general, the Board should seek out information on and try to understand all aspects of the community's concerns. It should also help the community deepen its understanding of an issue by providing reliable information that may be helpful to all sides. I have often found, for particular vexing challenges, it is helpful to reflect on the mission. As a result of that reflection, different solutions often emerge.

**Mark Steen:** The district and the community strengthen each other. Many families move to Wilmette when their children reach school age to take advantage of D39's excellent education. Families moving in support our downtown businesses, parks and library, which residents without D39 students use and enjoy. Our schools increase our property values and our property values pay for our schools. As a consequence, my experience is that parental and community concerns often align well.

When conflicts do arise, my approach is clear: listen, understand, do my best to remove self-interest from my consideration, and act in good faith. My fellow Board members, several of whom have no children in the district, have provided me influential points of view, often changing the way I've thought about issues. Although no one has immunity to their own position, I remind myself that I serve as a representative of all of the members of the community. Frequently, we have been able to find alternatives that have satisfied everyone. However, if there's an irreconcilable conflict, I use my best judgment and vote. There is wisdom in a board making decisions, rather than an individual.

**Ellen Sternweiler:** Due to the nature of the issues that the Board addresses, conflict between community concerns and the views of some of our constituents is inevitable. I believe it's important to not only give a voice to these concerns, but to give thoughtful consideration to diverse opinions while being able to weigh the pros and cons through an informed understanding of both social and fiscal consequences. As a Board Member, I would strive to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect by continuing to provide appropriate opportunities for constructive community dialog and debate. I would make every effort to understand and consider individual perspectives while clearly articulating my position and the position of the Board—as viewed through the broader lens of the community. Because I believe that conflict largely arises from mismatched expectations, I view clear communication

as essential in diffusing conflicts before they arise. As such, I support increased attention and focus on clear and transparent communication of plans, goals and resolutions.

**Gail Szulc:** Conflict is normal and occurs over values, perceptions or ideas that trigger strong feelings. Collaboration is the most productive resolution strategy, which involves a willingness to change thinking when new options are suggested or new information is available. Whenever a change is considered thought must be given to possible objections from parents or community members, and a considerable amount of publicity, including meetings, flyers, local news articles, and presentations by experts are advisable to discuss possible negative ramifications. Transparency is essential, and effective communication is critical. Each group needs to feel empowered and considered. It is useful to hold public meetings, then, if possible, to form smaller committees for discussion. The key is consultation with all interested or affected parties before any decisions are made.

**5. What other challenges and/or issues do you think are affecting District 39 at this time, and how would you recommend that the Board of Education address them?**

**Jonathan Cesaretti:** We should not be complacent about the excellence of our schools. We should provide through our actions the necessary support to encourage our teachers and district leadership to lead the state and national dialog regarding the best approaches to educating our students for their future opportunities and the obstacles that they will face. We should challenge ourselves as a community to be a positive model of how to improve an already great school district. To that end, I am grateful that four individuals in addition to myself have stepped up in order to fill the four open seats on the board.

In the future, I would hope that given the importance of the position, a larger group of experienced and talented individuals in our community will step up and run for the District 39 Board of Directors going forward.

**Lisa Schneider Fabes:** One challenge facing the District is ongoing state budget issues, including pension and tax reform and possible changes to the state funding formula. To address this, the District must closely monitor what is happening in Springfield and create budget scenarios to ensure it is prepared for possible reductions in funds.

Another challenge is finding an appropriate tool for assessing student achievement. D39 currently uses a combination of the state required PARCC test and Performance Series. Both have significant limitations. The District would like to replace PARCC with an assessment tool it is piloting this spring – the Northwest Evaluation Associations' Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), which is already being used by four other New Trier feeder districts. The Board will need to carefully review the results of the MAP pilot and swiftly move to adopt an assessment tool that minimizes the amount of time students are out of the classroom for testing and maximizes the information the District receives on student growth and achievement in order to improve instruction. As a Board member, I will prioritize the use of information to ensure growth of individual students, regardless of where they are on the performance spectrum.

A final challenge is determining how to appropriately utilize technology in the educational setting. Research shows that technology is a powerful instructional tool but also establishes

that in order to achieve positive outcomes for children, technology needs to be developmentally appropriate and seamlessly integrated into the classroom and curriculum. To prepare our students for what will be expected of them in high school, post-secondary and their careers, the District needs to continue to explore how to appropriately incorporate technology into the curriculum, train and support educators, and assess the impact technology is having on student learning and outcomes.

**Mark Steen:** Over the longer-term, perhaps the most exciting and underappreciated challenge D39 faces is individualizing the education it provides each student. While a single textbook and pace of instruction for everyone was acceptable 30 years ago, the cost of delivering lessons tailored for students has plummeted and the availability of content has skyrocketed. As a result, it's now economic to deliver a much more personalized education, allowing students to move at their own pace and truly master material before they advance. In D39, we have taken some steps leading in that direction. I have supported iPads (hesitantly) to enable individualization, and setting goals for student growth (energetically) to make feedback more useful for certain students. Individualization also broadens a strategy proven to be very effective for students with special needs - who, in many cases, currently receive highly individualized curricula.

However, as we explore the advantages of individualized education we will find many challenges. With individualization, we will need new curricula and resources, new lesson plans, new ways to measure our effectiveness, new professional training, and a new understanding of how classes operate, shared with parents and the community.

Challenges and uncertainties mean that little of this will happen quickly. And we are right to be cautious: we should not risk our current excellence for unproven methods. Our tasks in the near-term will be to learn what works and what is hype. We will need to perform small experiments - like our use of Khan Academy, TenMarks, and Duolingo - to move forward. Some will fail, but we'll have to have the fortitude to keep pushing ourselves to evolve, because continuous improvement is the only way we can ensure D39's students receive a truly world-class education for many years to come.

**Ellen Sternweiler:** Although “response-to-intervention” (“RTI”) models have met with varying success in other schools, District 39 has implemented this three-tiered model within our elementary schools with superior results. As such, our District has seen a notable decline in the number of children requiring continuing special education services beyond the elementary school level. Due to RTI results, innovative implementation of one-to-one technology, and newly-updated, flexibly-designed Learning Commons spaces, D39 has successfully moved closer to a more personalized, one-to-one education model that serves the unique needs of every child.

However, our reputation as an outstanding District has not gone unnoticed. As neighboring school systems have faltered, we've experienced an influx of students entering our school system after the K-4 level—particularly at Highcrest Middle School, where the size, adequacy and functionality of the physical space is of concern. We're faced with the challenge of successfully integrating a new, larger body of older students, some of who require substantive services, into our model. We must continue to think imaginatively to find creative solutions —programmatically, fiscally and physically—to continually enable each of our students to meet and exceed rigorous academic standards.

Recommendations may include renovations to existing facilities to improve the mix of targeted-use and flexible-use learning spaces, as well as enhancing the sensory outlets offered to our growing student population at the middle and junior high school levels.

Most importantly, with respect to challenges such as those outlined above, the school Board must prioritize its goals and analyze the most effective course of action in light of administrative, teacher, parent and student input as well as budgetary realities.

**Gail Szulc:** There is currently not a system in place to consistently evaluate student performance in District 39. Without a means of properly evaluating students, it is nearly impossible to track progress. I advocate a data driven model of evaluating student performance. This model will ensure students achieve growth each year. I believe this is the best way to make sure District 39 remains one of the highest achieving school district in the state. Maintaining and furthering these standards will continue to attract families to Wilmette.

## **AVOCA SCHOOL DISTRICT 37 BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Note**, in the race for District 37, there are five candidates running for four available positions. Responses from Dan Garbis were not received in time for inclusion.

**1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the District 37 Board of Education if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?**

***Gil Gibori:*** There are many factors pressuring our fiscal viability. Currently, all of the district's revenue sources are being challenged. The state is deliberating changing the funding formula to further reduce their contribution, a property tax freeze, while our revenue increase is already limited to the CPI. With revenues poised to decrease, major expenditures are rising. These include: the number of students outplaced for special services (costing \$30-\$50k each), teacher salaries as dictated by their contract, required building improvements. These are only a few. As a new board member, mapping out our fiscal strategy for the next several years will be a crucial priority.

Another immediate priority is deciding who will lead the district forward. Our superintendent, Dr. Kevin Jauch, will have the renewal of his contract considered early in the new term. This decision includes several layers of complexity, including the perspective of current board members, parents and professionals in the district. We need to decide whether Dr. Jauch is the leader to take us forward.

The third, of several other priorities, is the district's academic superiority. New Trier's newest data on the preparedness of Avoca students identifies specific areas for improvement. The complicated results of the MAP and PARCC tests have also identified challenges. The district has created a Curriculum Coordinator position to refine our curricular continuity between grades. The board needs to assess the position's value and consider whether to upgrade the role to a full time administrator. These are all factors that I will push the board to decipher, assess, and utilize to improve our educational strategy.

***Jamie Taylor:*** If elected to the District 37 Board of Education, I would like to support the administration and staff as they meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. My top priorities are to 1) ensure a vertically aligned curriculum from K through 8 to address common core standards and promote consistent communication and collaboration among schools and grade level teams, thereby safeguarding that students are ready for the rigors of New Trier High School; 2) ensure the examination and modification of math curriculum to meet more rigorous standards; 3) ensure the improvement of intervention systems to better assess, support and differentiate student learning; 4) promote effective communication from the District to parents and the greater community as a whole; and 5) encourage prudent investment in the District's aging facilities.

***Jun Yoshitani:*** As a parent of four children currently in the district, I recognize how fortunate we are to be in a very good school system. We have a diverse pool of talented students, supportive and engaged parents, and excellent teachers and administrators. But in my assessment, we are a good school district with the potential to be great. My top priority will be

to work with my fellow board members and the administration to quickly identify our key strategic objectives, develop targeted goals that can be measured, and communicate our progress against those goals on a regular basis. My vision for the district is to create a culture of high performance that permeates all areas: academics, citizenship, the arts, and athletics. We can debate about the tactics that will get us there, but we must first commit to the goal of continuous improvement and growth.

**Rick Zelinsky:** I have three top priorities for the upcoming term: 1) providing oversight and support for the recently created strategic plan, 2) enhancing communication and “connectedness” with both parent and non-parent communities and 3) maintaining fiscal discipline, including addressing the long-term plan for Avoca Center.

**2. How do you learn about challenges and opportunities in the school district and in K-8 education generally? What do you read to inform yourself about matters relating to public school governance and funding?**

**Gil Gibori:** A school board candidate must be extremely informed, period.

Reading local publications, Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE) and legislative updates should be the minimum. Fortunately, doing so, along with keeping abreast of the ever-changing landscape of education, is a critical part of my professional life.

Direct engagement with the myriad stakeholders in the Avoca community has been most informative. I have had several frank and probing meetings with each administrator, including several with the superintendent, the principals, the business office, other key team members and nearly all current school board members. Attending almost every school board meeting over the past year has given me a global sense of the district’s issues as well.

Committee work has allowed me to delve deeper into the details. Serving on several high-level committees including the Strategic Planning, Communication, Innovation Grant and the Pupil Services Director Selection committees, I have learned the inner workings of the district from the perspective of teachers, administrators and parents.

For the parent perspective, I have engaged key involved parents, the PTC and Avoca Caucus leadership. To better understand the concerns of the greater community, I have attended board meetings of each village included in the Avoca demographic and directly met with certain Village Board Presidents to discuss our district.

I am confident that I can join the board with a strong sense of the district’s finances, performance, and community’s - both taxpayer and parent – concerns.

**Jamie Taylor:** My best source of information regarding challenges and opportunities in the District arises out of primary source interaction. Over the past nine years I have developed strong relationships with administration, staff and other parents. I feel like I am ALWAYS at the schools. Specifically, I served on the Strategic Planning Committee last year, and I currently volunteer in the classroom, serve as room parent, volunteer to help with PTC sponsored events, chat with teachers, and attend bi-annual principal coffees and some Board of Education meetings. This year I am also chairing the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Committee, which provides me with a particularly close relationship with Marie Murphy administration and

staff. I also try to stay up to date on local governance and funding issues facing the state of Illinois by reading articles from trusted sources such as the Chicago Tribune and the Winnetka Current. Finally, I read national education news in the WSJ and from journalists aggregated by Real Clear Politics. I am skeptical of all information available on social networking sites.

**Jun Yoshitani:** I talk to parents in the district to understand their perspective on what's working and where there are challenges, I read district publications such as newsletters and The Vision, and various local media providing coverage of education issues. I also use the many resources on the IASB (Illinois Association of School Boards) website.

**Rick Zelinsky:** I've participated in over 160 board meetings in addition to attending numerous school events and contributing to other District committee work. I'm an active reader of IASB's *The Journal* publication and NSBA's *asbj* monthly magazine. I'm an ED-RED member and have attended that organization's Cook County-based events. Additionally, I follow both local and state lawmakers on social media and subscribe to various education-related blogs. I am especially intrigued by the active State of Illinois education legislation and budget discussions surrounding the "Grand Bargain."

### 3. How will current state budget issues affect your approach to decision-making within District 37?

**Gil Gibori:** Illinois is last in state funding and first in the share of property tax needed for schools. The possible property tax freeze, recalculation of the school funding formula and shifting of pension responsibilities being considered by Illinois' legislature have the district in an unpredictable situation.

My priorities will be defined by two pillars, our values and fiscal realism. The district has operated in similar tax-cap, budget cutting environments before. Limiting revenue without increasing the state's contribution to our schools will require the board to continue its practice of being proactive and maintaining a healthy reserve to prepare for the unexpected.

Our community values education, so we need to fund our district in a manner that reflects that. Strategic spending is critical in a field that is always evolving - aging facilities, outdated technology, and curricular alignment will all require significant funding. Doing so without spending beyond our budget is an imperative. We need to govern realistically and creatively.

**Jamie Taylor:** My educational background and work experience in banking and finance provide me with the experience to tackle any budget issues facing the District. I hold an undergraduate degree in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley and an MBA from the University of Chicago. Although I am currently a stay at home mom, my previous work experience includes structured finance and loan syndications for a commercial bank and equity analysis and portfolio management for an investment advisory firm. At any rate, I anticipate that the District's state funding will continue to decline given the deepening financial woes effecting the state of Illinois. According to the 2016 Illinois District Report Card, for the 2014-2015 school year, the District's revenues were obtained from 94.8% local, 3.7% state and 1.5% federal sources. Fortunately, District 37 does not rely heavily on anything other than local funding sources. That being said, District expenses continue to outpace

revenues so judicious fiscal management is essential. If elected to the School Board, I would help administration prioritize how the District spends its very limited resources to maximize academic outcomes and the social well-being of the student body. I would encourage the District's Chief School Business Manager to obtain the most cost effective contracts with vendors. I would expect the Superintendent and Director of Pupil Services to research and obtain any available grant funding. I would also push the Superintendent to investigate sharing auxiliary services with other local New Trier feeder schools. Please note that I do not advocate outsourcing teaching or pupil support services to other districts. I would also consider pursuing the sale of the Avoca Center and re-investing such proceeds back into facilities. Finally, and as a last resort, I would support the passage of a tax referendum or the issuance of more debt. However, I would prefer to reduce non-essential services before asking the community for more tax revenue.

**Jun Yoshitani:** My approach to decision-making in light of potential shifts in funding is directly tied to the importance clearly defined strategic goals. We have to decide what's important to us in order to prioritize spending decisions. Changes including a potential property tax freeze, the new funding formula, and a potential shift in the cost of pensions are all risks that we must account for by developing multiple budget scenarios and contingencies for reductions in revenue. By focusing on innovation, and remaining flexible, we will be able to adapt and make the hard decisions that will inevitably come with changes in funding.

**Rick Zelinsky:** There are two particular areas of pending legislation that would have a dramatic impact on District 37. First is the proposed property tax freeze. Over 95% of District 37 revenues are based on property taxes. The District is allowed to increase the tax levy by CPI plus new growth. If the CPI component is eliminated, there will be no ability to keep pace with growing expenditures. Second is the topic of pension reform. While many proposals are on the table, it's likely that a cost shift will occur (at some point) transferring additional pension cost to the district to shore up the State's mismanagement. While it's likely this cost will also be shared with pension recipients, this has a high probability of increasing overall District expenditures with no offset via additional revenue. Should either or both of these situations come to fruition, the Board will need to look intensely at non-critical programs, District fees, non-essential expenses and, last, our educational programs to achieve the necessary savings.

**4. As a Board member, how will you navigate parental and community concerns that may conflict with each other?**

**Gil Gibori:** Though board members may be parents, taxpayers or neighbors, we need to bring our neutrality, even temper, and solid judgment to any discussion. As a parent, who is constantly in the building, I will make every effort to listen to concerns. As an educational professional, I will continue to study the trends and best practices of innovative education.

I will be on the board to serve everyone, balance issues and make definitive decisions. There are real complexities to the decisions made by the board. I will be informed and analytical, and, in the end, I will use my judgement to make choices that reflect our values.

Serious people, without specific agendas, ready to put forth new ideas, are critical for the next school board. Simply, I want to be one of the stewards of our community's education - bringing experience, imagination and sober judgement to an important position.

**Jamie Taylor:** First and foremost, I will strive towards the highest standards of professionalism at all times if elected as a School Board member. I will show respect towards and maintain confidentiality with all parties in all matters related to my duties serving the District. We all have different perspectives based on our experiences, identities and goals. However, I will work towards the common good in the context of the Mission, Vision and Values identified within the District's Strategic Plan.

**Jun Yoshitani:** First, I think it is vitally important to let all voices be heard, especially with more controversial issues surrounding education. After all, we're talking about people's children, and we should be sensitive to that. Ultimately, my guide will be what's in the best interest of the children.

**Rick Zelinsky:** I am the only District 37 candidate who is running as an incumbent, and I have broad perspective because I have served on the Board as both a parent and a community member. During my eight years on the Board I have worked well with all other Board members, and I had the Board's unanimous support for my election to the leadership role of Board Vice President. Avoca is an amazing district that has consistently performed academically as one of the finest districts in the State of Illinois. We embrace our diversity and small classes to provide a unique, personalized education with substantially fewer resources than other New Trier sender districts. Interestingly though, over 75% of our taxpayers do not have children in the District. Even so, the community as a whole values our focus on a quality education and has provided the financial support necessary. I do not take this community commitment lightly, especially in a current Illinois reality of very high taxes and underwhelming state government and services. I am fully devoted to ensuring that fiscal discipline remains a principle guiding our programs and long-term decisions.

**5. What other challenges and/or issues do you think are affecting District 37 at this time, and how would you recommend that the Board of Education address them? Please specifically include your views on the path forward for Avoca Center.**

**Gil Gibori:** The most pressing is the committed adoption of the new strategic plan. As a participant on the committee of parents, teachers, administrators and board members, I was helped design the district's guiding plan for the next five years. Plans are only as effective as their execution. Consistently assessing its deployment and keeping the leadership of the district accountability to its timeline is a top priority for the board.

An issue that has not attracted serious attention is the complete lack of diversity among our faculty. Avoca is by far the most culturally diverse student body feeding into New Trier, yet has the most homogenous professional staff. This incongruity between student and teacher populations is concerning. With a 97% Caucasian faculty, our students do not interact with teachers and specialists of similar cultural backgrounds. We are a community that prides ourselves on diversity. We need to analyze the district's recruiting process resulting in this disparity.

The fiscal challenges of our district have led to a serious and energized debate about the future of Avoca Center. The board's deliberations have made it clear to me that investing the estimated \$6 million to update the building, requiring 30 years of revenue to recoup, is untenable. The board presented selling the land to a developer for the building of a limited number of homes. After the board's poor roll out of this choice, many in the community have vehemently expressed concern. Even though the influx of several million dollars from this sale would delay any increased tax levies, there is a strong argument that the public land should remain Avoca property after the building is razed. This option comes with its own issue, the \$500,000 cost. Thirty years ago New Trier came very close to selling the west campus, convinced it would never need it. Now the campus is bursting with students. This is a precedent worth studying. Undoubtedly, this issue is complex. This board has completed extensive research on the options at hand. I elect to wait, if given the opportunity, to delve into the copious information to make my final determination. My priority will be to push the board to do so quickly and decisively.

**Jamie Taylor:** The adaption of Common Core and PARCC testing has resulted in significant change to the District's academic curriculum over multiple disciplines. I will support the administration as it continues to make modifications to curriculum to better align with these new standards, which I believe are more rigorous and better for students. As important, I will encourage the administration to concisely and clearly communicate these changes to the parent community so parents are better positioned to support their children's learning. As mentioned previously, I would consider supporting the demolition and/or sale of the Avoca Center because it is the best solution for the District from both a financial and operating perspective. However, I would advise our administration to take the process as slowly as possible as many constituencies are impacted by this decision. I would be open to working with the Wilmette Park District to find a solution that is mutually beneficial.

**Jun Yoshitani:** I believe the district's stated mission of "maximizing the unique potential of each child" is at odds with how some curriculum decisions are currently implemented. We need to find an approach that looks at all kids as individuals, and develop a plan to intervene with students that are not performing to their full potential.

Innovation is another area that poses a challenge to the district. Considering our size and the talent level of our students, we should be more innovative and willing to try new approaches, especially with advanced learner programs.

Celebrating diversity can be seen as an opportunity. While more than 25% of the district's student population are minorities, that diversity is not reflected in the teaching staff or administration. To be a truly great school district, we need to be vocal about embracing diversity and promoting tolerance in our schools. I believe that begins with a diversity statement that makes it clear we are committed to recruiting, supporting, and retaining people of diverse backgrounds at each level of our school district.

Finally, on the topic of the Avoca Center, I am in agreement with the unanimous decision of the board to not renovate. Given the large financial cost of renovation, and the looming changes to funding, this was the most fiscally responsible decision.

**Rick Zelinsky:** As Board Vice President, I have been intimately involved with the hundreds of hours of work that have been expended to get to this point regarding Avoca Center.

Through my Board leadership I have been instrumental in ensuring initiation of a long-term plan for Avoca Center. In December 2016, the Board voted to terminate the leases with our existing tenants, commencing the process and reducing the risk of this property to our taxpayers – a critical first step. As a District, our focus needs to be on the education programs and facilities used by our children, not acting as a landlord for an aging rental facility in substantial disrepair. The Board concluded the facility would never be used to educate District students and maintaining it is not core to our educational mission. Multiple options are still being considered for the ultimate use of the land. Possible options include selling the parcel to a residential developer or razing the existing the facility to retain the land and/or work with local municipalities (i.e. Wilmette Park District) for use that would provide a broader benefit to the community. The next seated board will weigh the pros and cons regarding the ultimate disposition of Avoca Center and be tasked with moving this process forward to conclusion.

## NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Note:** There are seven candidates running for four positions on the New Trier Township Board of Trustees.

**1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the New Trier Township Board of Trustees if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?**

**Kevin Boyd:** My goal as New Trier Township Trustee is simple “Continue to provide necessary services to the residents of New Trier Township at the lowest cost.” My top priorities are:

- a. Review the current staffing, processes and services of the township to determine if they are as efficient and effective as they can be.
- b. Improve the effectiveness of the communications about the services offered by the Township. Make all appropriate efforts to ensure that Township residents know about the services that are available to them. Focus communication efforts on digital whenever possible (e.g. email, Facebook, etc.) to reduce costs and ensure that communications are as timely as possible.
- c. Create a four year strategic plan for the Township. The most recent strategic plan was through 2012. I believe there is value in the Trustees and the professional staff of the Township discussing the priorities, opportunities and challenges for the Township beyond a single budget year. The Trustee term is four years, so it would be helpful to have a plan align with the term of the trustees.

**Bob Costello:** My number one priority is to make sure the township continues to provide emergency assistance and long-term assistance to the people that need help in our community. We need to provide compassionate care for those in need, while we uphold our responsibility to the taxpayers that this is done efficiently and effectively. I want to bring fresh eyes to the position and make the Township more accessible and transparent to the people of the Township.

**Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg:** In predominantly affluent areas like ours, it is easy to assume that the entire populous is doing well, but that is not the case. I hope to serve as New Trier Township Trustee to help my neighbors in hard times---economic, mental, physical, social---with the dignity that each citizen deserves. Accordingly, I would maintain or expand the services the Township now provides to our residents. The Township currently distributes \$1.5 million to 34 different local non-profit agencies that operate 48-some programs serving New Trier Township residents across all socio-economic levels. At least 5-7 agencies might cease to exist or have to drastically scale back their services without township funding, especially those agencies serving youth who rely on the Township for at least 25% or more of their funding. Of the agencies that are most reliant on Township funding, most serve only or predominantly our communities. I would also explore which services might need to be expanded in this rough economic time and how we can ensure our grant recipient agencies can maintain their services given the state budget crisis. I'd like to revise the Community Grant Program so that mental health disorders are treated on par with developmental disabilities and assess whether the Township should add a second, part-time social worker to better serve residents. I hope to expand the use of peer juries, so that additional young people can stay out of the juvenile justice system (with those attendant costs to the community) while decreasing recidivism. I hope to reduce overhead expenditures by ensuring Township government is run as efficiently as possible and that every dollar spent is accountable to the residents. Residents deserve to know that our staff is exceeding their expectations. I'd

revise office hours so that there is at least one evening a week where the office is open for intake and donations from those who work regular office hours. I'd also analyze and revise the Township's Strategic Plan, which expired in 2012, to ensure that the Township is preparing for the anticipated needs of our residents over the foreseeable future.

**Kathy Myalls:** My top priority is to make sure that the Township continues to provide important services to its residents efficiently and effectively. I would increase awareness of the Township and solicit more input from its residents as to how and where Township dollars should be spent. I would want to stop doing things "because they've always been done that way" and be sure Township business is conducted in a way that makes sense today.

**Elliott Robbins:** My highest priority will be to advocate for the preservation of the Township. A well-organized movement is presently underway to abolish township government in Illinois. Having volunteered at NTT for the past 17 years (see my Biography at [www.facebook.com/RobbinsforNewTrierTownship/about](http://www.facebook.com/RobbinsforNewTrierTownship/about)), I have a deep appreciation for the need for services provided by NTT, particularly for our most vulnerable residents, and I can articulate the value provided by NTT to all our residents. I am familiar with most of the social service agencies that depend on our funding and leadership, and I can explain the dire effects that dissolution of NTT will have on those agencies and on our most disadvantaged residents.

In the next four years, I believe that the new Board of Trustees will face a referendum or another form of legislative hurdle that is presently being formulated in Springfield, which will challenge the continuation of our Township. I will utilize my position as Trustee to inform our electorate of the values of preserving NTT and the likely effects of its dissolution. Assuming NTT remains a viable governmental unit, my top priorities will be to continue to provide exceptional service to Township residents with full transparency and fiscal responsibility.

**John Thomas:** With extensive pro-bono experience, I am quite familiar with both being a Trustee generally and the role of the Township specifically. In my third term as an elected Winnetka Park Commissioner, 14<sup>th</sup> year on the Winnetka Plan Commission, plus several years' service on ZBA, all the ethics and restrictions attendant on an elected official are by now ingrained.

Also, as a North Shore United Way Board member. I saw firsthand the devastating effects of the abrupt change in direction by United Way headquarters on many of our local agencies. My first priority will be to make sure that doesn't occur here.

A second priority will be to understand deeply area of current Township operations like the food pantry, peer jury and scholarship programs. I will then look at ways to improve and expand inter-governmental activities for the benefits on residents.

**Stacey Woehrle:** My top priorities are to effectively and efficiently provide services to our neighbors in need, increase transparency in New Trier Township government, and to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars.

If elected to this position, my goal is to understand the details of where the funds are currently allocated and how many citizens of New Trier Township are being served by these existing services. I would then take a fresh look at how we can improve fund allocation, whether that be to offer additional services and/or serve more citizens of New Trier Township. I also think it is

important to evaluate Township expenses and overhead and reduce those expenses where appropriate.

**2. What do you believe is role of the township, and how efficiently and effectively is New Trier Township fulfilling that role at present?**

**Kevin Boyd:** The New Trier Township's mission is clearly stated as "provide leadership, advocacy and resources to benefit the physical, mental and social well-being of Township residents." As a very local form of government close to the people it serves, the Township is able to be responsive to their needs. The Township can work at a faster pace than larger forms of government to get residents emergency assistance and even food (through the Township Food Pantry) when and where they need it. With approximately 56,000 residents in six communities, the Township is large enough to gain economies of scale, but small enough to effectively serve the needs of individual residents in need of assistance.

I believe the Township should deliver its services with the lowest possible administrative costs. I will make this a priority. I believe that current the current services provided by the Township are valuable to our residents and a reduction of services could harm some of the most vulnerable Township residents.

The Township currently operates in a relatively cost effective manner for the services it delivers. On a home valued at \$500,000, the Township annual tax levy is \$77.39. For most residents, the Township is about 1% of their property tax bill. For the year ending February 29, 2016, the township budget included \$2,266,997 in property tax revenues. Of the total of \$2,712,370 spent by the township for the year, \$1,957,370 (72%) was spent on programs and services and \$754,000 (28%) was spent on administration. This is good, but I believe could probably be better. I'd like to see administrative costs at 25% or less of the total budget.

I believe that there may be opportunities to improve, but this will require a more detailed review of staffing, processes and services. This would include a review of how external service providers are used (e.g. legal, consulting and communications) as well as when work should be done in house versus contracted externally. I'd also like to explore whether the current staffing is optimal.

**Bob Costello:** The Township's essential role is to provide human services and emergency assistance to the people in need in New Trier. The role of the township has dramatically change since 1850 when it was first established. Over the years several of the duties of the Township, such as Constables, Commissioner of Highways, Justice of the Peace, Pound Master, and Collector, have been transferred to other political bodies.

Currently the Township is focused on human services, and it does a good job of providing grants to non-profit organizations that provide essential human services to people in need in our community. I believe our volunteer constituent committees do a great job of reviewing and recommending social service grants. I believe more of the work at the township can be done by volunteers.

I don't believe the Township is efficiently doing its job. The overhead of the Township is just too high. Trustees can be better financial stewards, if we decrease or eliminate compensation to the Township elected officials, which are all part-time positions. Also, I am concerned that the staff is

too large and more expensive than we need to deliver necessary social services and emergency assistance. The larger the staff the more future pension obligations will grow for the Township. One example of excessive expenses is the Township spending \$20,000 annually on the phone system. The phone system could be done on a much lower cost basis.

The people of New Trier Township continue to see their property taxes increase, while their home values decrease. The residents need property tax relief. Illinois has the highest property taxes in the country. The Township property tax levy is a very small part of the overall property tax bill (less than 1%), but the Trustees can be better stewards of taxpayer funds, while still delivering the essential services to those in need. We can deliver these services more efficiently.

**Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg:** New Trier Township's mission is to provide leadership, advocacy and resources to benefit the physical, mental and social well-being of Township residents. Because the Township is the closest form of government to the people, it is in a unique position to be responsive to their needs. Township can work at a faster pace than larger forms of government to get residents emergency food and financial aid when they need it most. The Township is small enough to work with individual residents on their needs and big enough to minimize per-resident costs.

As a homeowner, I too feel the shock when I open my property tax bill. But as a Citizen I recognize the importance of doing my part—it's the main reason I am running. Of course, the Township—like all forms of government—should be a lean endeavor, but reducing services could harm resident pocket books. Less than 1% of our property tax bills presently go to the Township. Not only does more than twice the population of Kenilworth receive Township services, but we all benefit from reduced costs associated with ensuring that our population is healthy, happy, and safe. For instance, youthful offenders who go through the peer jury program experience a 5% recidivism rate as compared to 50% for comparable offenders.

That said, there are almost certainly ways to make Township more efficient. I am particularly concerned with spending on unspecified legal services and consulting fees as well as for communications, printing, and publishing given the limited reach current communications efforts have had. I'd also like to explore whether our current staffing is best suited to the effective, efficient provision of services.

**Kathy Myalls:** Much of the original role of the Township has become obsolete, as those functions have migrated to other government entities. What remains is to offer additional protection to the most vulnerable citizens in the Township by providing or funding human services. Currently the Township does this primarily based on the recommendations of three committees comprised of volunteers. These committees evaluate prior donations to a defined pool of charities and recommend adjustments to those prior donations to reflect current needs. Essentially, the Township's primary function has evolved into funding the services that other entities provide. Unfortunately, the Township does not perform this function efficiently. The Township spends approximately 35% of its revenue on overhead. For perspective, a charity whose overhead absorbed 35% of its revenues would receive an "F" from ratings agencies.

To the extent the Township provides services directly, these services are, in many cases, duplicative of the same services offered elsewhere. For example, the Township assessor is one avenue available to residents to appeal the valuation of their property. However, Cook County offers the same service. The Township processes passport applications, as does the United

States Postal Service. The Township would be better stewards of taxpayer dollars by re-evaluating the size of the Township staff and related expenses. Personnel costs alone (salaries, pensions, and related contributions) total \$500,000. These costs should be decreasing as Township services are available elsewhere, but they are not. I have been a proponent of ending the stipends of elected officials who serve in a part-time capacity, and the Township recently voted to end these stipends. Perhaps this timing was coincidental to the first contested election and the platform of the independent candidates to rein in costs of this type.

**Elliott Robbins:** I believe in the present mission and guiding principles of NTT, which include providing leadership, advocacy and resources to benefit the well-being of our residents, particularly our vulnerable residents, including at-risk youth, disabled persons, seniors with limited means, victims of domestic violence, substance abusers and their family members, and families experiencing sudden economic hardship due to unanticipated job loss or catastrophic health crisis. I further believe that NTT must remain vigilant about identifying new and evolving social service needs, and thoughtfully address those needs as they arise. We must strive to measure outcomes of all programs we fund, and we must always act in a fiscally responsible manner. I believe NTT is reasonably efficient and effective in fulfilling these goals at present.

The “Independent” candidates attempt to distinguish themselves by claiming that they would like to “reduce the Township’s substantial overhead.” This assertion is unfounded and requires explanation. I am unaware of any material expenses that could be characterized as unnecessary. The “Independent” candidates need to come out of the shadows and explain their views.

**John Thomas:** The Township has several vital roles. It provides an important information center at its Winnetka HQ to help residents deal with Cook County taxes and assessments as well as applying for passports. It operates a food pantry that can be a lifesaver for less fortunate residents. Most importantly, the Township gives grants to over 40 social service agencies serving Township residents. These grants are vital given the major pullback five years ago in the North Shore by United Way mentioned above.

**Stacey Woehrle:** The Township’s essential role is to provide social services to the people in need in New Trier Township. The Township is delivering those services, but I don’t believe it is doing so efficiently. With administrative and overhead costs well over 30%, I believe there is definitely reason to take a look at why these expenses are so high. A well-run charity has closer to 15% administrative and overhead expenses. The people of New Trier Township deserve better.

**3. How should eligibility for township services be determined, and how closely does your vision for service allocation match current practices?**

**Kevin Boyd:** In general, I believe that eligibility of financial assistance programs should be based on need to best allocate limited financial resources. In fact, there are Township-administered programs that have statutorily defined criteria which determine eligibility based on a maximum income. Unfortunately, there are families making more than the maximum income who still have challenges living from month to month. I support the programs the Township has established with its community partners to meet the needs of residents who may not meet the strict statutory criteria like the Angel Fund. Whenever possible and practical I believe Townships

services should be provided to all who have need. I am pleased that the Township has been able to offer services like the Peer Jury, Text-a-Tip, and various services for youth, developmentally disabled and elderly residents without regard for income level.

**Bob Costello:** It is not completely clear to me how current eligibility is determined for general assistance. All program eligibility should be based on need. We must make sure no one in need falls through the cracks.

Most of the Township programming funds are given out as grants to social service organizations. I have been very impressed by the work the volunteer committees do to review and make the recommendations for these grants. I believe we need to expand the role of volunteers in the Township. We live in a community that is rich in potential volunteers. I believe one of the roles for trustees is to recruit more volunteers.

**Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg:** There are Township-administered programs that have statutorily defined criteria which determine eligibility based on a maximum income. Many families making significantly more than that are still struggling, especially due to the economic and budgetary atmosphere in Illinois. Thus I appreciate the programs the Township has established with its community partners to meet the needs of those residents who may not meet the strict criteria like the Angel Fund. With limited funds, I agree that most services should be need-based, but I am proud that many services like the Peer Jury, Text-a-Tip, and agencies working with youth, the disabled, or the elderly serve residents no matter their income levels.

**Kathy Myalls:** It is not clear to me how all Township services are allocated, although I understand that for some need-based allocations, the income qualification level has been raised several times to no avail. In other words, the Township can't give some of it away. Instead of providing services that target such a small percentage of the Township population, I would like to see the Township offer services that would serve more constituents. I also believe that more of what is done by the Township can be done more efficiently by increasing the volunteer pool. I believe it is the job of the board of Trustees to make these volunteer opportunities better known through the Township through improved outreach efforts.

**Elliott Robbins:** Measuring eligibility and need for services varies by program, and thoughtful criteria must be pursued, which has largely been the practice of the Township in my observation, although we can do better. I disagree with the present Board's decision to end the mental health support grants program, as I believe that objective and consistent standards could have been designed to determine eligibility. I generally oppose lottery-type allocations of funding, and I believe more in an equitable sharing of finite resources, assuming all applicants have met uniform eligibility requirements.

I will constantly review criteria for eligibility to insure that NTT is nimble and cognizant of prevailing economic conditions, continued deterioration and unreliability in State funding, and potential deterioration in health care availability for sick persons or persons with pre-existing conditions, as well as the demographics of our aging population. I anticipate that demand will increase upon the Township by our residents for social services and funding, at least for the next 2 to 4 years, due to my perception of present State and Federal priorities.

**John Thomas:** Eligibility for routine services must be available to any resident. Eligibility for grants should be, and is, based on agency serving mainly Township residents and with a service

needed but not otherwise available. At present, it seems to me the Township does a very careful and thorough job investigating applicants to determine if they meet the necessary criteria. Follow-up monitoring by Township staff is also continuous and thorough. I would pay very close and ongoing attention to that process to make sure my confidence in it is well founded.

**Stacey Woehrle:** Eligibility should be determined based on need. I would take a look at the number of residents served for each allocation and determine with the other trustees and supervisor whether we could offer either the same services to more residents or different services that would help a larger number of residents.

**4. This race has drawn a large number of candidates. To what do you attribute that interest?**

**Kevin Boyd:** I and my fellow New Trier Economy Party candidates, Robbins, Eisenberg and Thomas, were slated by the non-partisan New Trier Citizen's League to serve the Township in the role of Trustee. We share in common a desire to see the Township provide services efficiently and effectively for the residents of New Trier. We each responded to the call from the Citizen's League, because we think it's important to support and give back to the communities in which we live. I moved to Wilmette in 1992 and have served on other Village of Wilmette committees in the past.

I won't speculate too much on the motivations of our opponents. I find it interesting that two of them have written in the past that they support eliminating Townships.

**Bob Costello:** The premise of your question, "a large number of candidates" is very interesting. There are only 10 candidates for seven elected positions in the township election, which means there are three positions with only one candidate, and the four Trustee positions have only seven candidates. If we had fewer candidates, say three less, all the seats would be unopposed. If there were fewer candidates what would be the need for voters? I wish we had more candidates. Competitive elections provide healthy debate and exposes the people to the responsibilities of the township. Elections hold township officers accountable to the taxpayers. Competitive races make all the candidates better. My hope would be in four years all seven of the offices would have competitive races, then organizations like the League would need to play a larger role.

**Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg:** The non-partisan New Trier Citizens League did a fantastic job encouraging residents to volunteer. I responded to the call because I wanted to invest in the community where I intend to raise my family and model good citizenship for my children. I was humbled to be endorsed by the League after more than a year-long vetting process of many qualified candidates. I know that my fellow candidates Boyd, Robbins and Thomas, are similarly motivated by a desire to serve the community. It is hard to speculate why the three Coalition candidates were interested in running because they hadn't previously been involved in the Township.

**Kathy Myalls:** The race has not drawn a "large" number of candidates. There are 10 people running for 7 open seats, so 3 of those seats are completely uncontested. But there are definitely "more" candidates, since the chosen slate has never been contested. With 16 taxing entities grabbing a piece of local taxpayer dollars, it is not surprising that some elections are uncontested. I think this is a shame, as competition fosters accountability. For example, until our candidacy was announced, the minutes for the prior 18 months of meetings were not available on

the Township website. Until last week, the budget passed last May, for the fiscal year ending in a week, was not available on the Township website. All were finally posted in response to inquiries from the independent candidates.

But to answer the question directly, I believe that the tragic fact of rapidly increasing property taxes, coupled with dramatically falling home values (Kenilworth down 31%, Glencoe down 25%, Winnetka down 22%, Wilmette down 22.5% over the last 8 years), has fostered a greater interest in making sure that those tax dollars are well spent, and I hope more elections are contested in the future. Voters are better informed when candidates discuss the important issues. And I believe that voters should pick their elected officials, instead of having those officials selected by small caucus groups.

**Elliott Robbins:** This race has drawn four candidates who were thoroughly vetted by the New Trier Citizen's League, which is a non-partisan watchdog group that has been overseeing Township government for 104 years. The League advertises extensively for interested residents to come forward. The slate of four trustees was carefully selected with checks and balances in mind, using procedures followed by the League for decades. On January 23, 2017, the three "Independent" candidates approached the League through their representative, Danielle Mergner (who has since been appointed Chair of the New Trier Republican Organization), and inquired whether three of the slated candidates might be willing to drop out, to avoid a contested election. Ms. Mergner claimed that her three candidates knew nothing about the slating process, which was troubling to the League members who questioned how her candidates could be genuinely interested in Township affairs and in serving the Township, yet allegedly knew nothing about the slating process.

I have greatly enjoyed my 17 years of volunteer service to NTT, and I believe I am ready to play a greater role. To my knowledge, none of the "Independent" candidates has done anything for the Township. On the contrary, in her unsuccessful campaign as the Republican Candidate for the 17<sup>th</sup> District Illinois House in 2014, one of Kathy Myall's platforms was the elimination of township government in Illinois. Bob Costello's LinkedIn page reflects that he has served on various anti-government organizations, including National Director of Americans for Limited Government and Chairman of Liberty Markets Fund for Freedom, which advocates unleashing America from the chains of big government.

The residents of NTT should be concerned about the true intentions of the "Independent" candidates before handing them the keys to the door of our 167-year old Township.

**John Thomas:** Last September a close friend who knew of my extensive pro-bono service, suggested his "Citizens League" was seeking possible New Trier Trustee candidates. I applied, was one of many interviewed and was selected in October as part of a four-person trustee slate. In 2017, the Citizens League appears on the ballot as the "New Trier Economy Party". The non-partisan Citizens League has been vetting and selecting New Trier Trustee candidates for decades with unquestioned veracity, energy and success. The excellent qualifications of my fellow candidates are a solid testimony to the thoroughness of this decades-old process.

Speaking to the "large" number of candidates, in January the head of the New Trier Republican Organization came to the League and presented three other candidates Those three had done

the appropriate paper work to be on the ballot. She asked if the League would replace three of their slated candidates with the three she represented. The League said no.

Not being a mind reader, I don't know the motivations of the three "independent" candidates. However, two of the three have been on record in the past as in favor of eliminating Township governments. And, being presented and represented by the head of the New Trier Republican Organization suggest strongly they will be backed by that political party. In turn, the supposedly non-partisan election may well be partisan?

**Stacey Woehrle:** I don't believe the Township to date has done a very good job with the taxpayers' money. In addition, as stated in question number five, the majority of residents do not have a clear understanding of the Township's role and how to become involved if they have an interest. I believe competition fosters accountability and transparency.

5. **Most residents do not have a clear understanding of the Township's role. What would you do to promote transparency?**

**Kevin Boyd:** I think the Township needs to be much more proactive with its communication to residents about the programs and services it offers. The website is currently somewhat out of date with many pages still referencing 2014 information. In 2017, the Township should be focusing most of its resources on digital communications. There should be a regular (weekly or monthly), attractive and engaging email newsletter about Township services. The sign-up for the email should be easily accessible on the home page of the web site. The email newsletter should be promoted at every possible opportunity. It may be desirable to continue a print newsletter for some residents (perhaps on request after some number of issues), but it should always be used to promote the timeliness of the digital resources (including Facebook and Twitter). It should be a priority to improve the Township web site and improve search engine optimization so that residents searching online for assistance will be more likely to find the services available to them from New Trier Township. Search engine optimization helps to ensure that even if residents don't think about the Township every day, they will find the services they need "just in time" when they need them. A better organized web site will help improve transparency for the Township and communication overall.

**Bob Costello:** I would go further and say a lot residents do not realize that there is a distinct political unit of government named New Trier Township with its own taxing authority, that is separate from New Trier Township High School. Part of the reason for this is that there has not been a competitive election for any New Trier Township positions in several decades.

Transparency is a major reason Kathy, Stacey and I are running for trustee. Now with three independent candidates running this year transparency has improved already. This competition itself will help citizens take notice of the Township. Not only will citizens take notice, but the Township office has taken notice. Township Board meeting minutes for 2016 meetings were finally posted after it became known that there will be competitive elections. The 2016-2017 budget (which ends 2/28/17) was passed by the Board on May 26, 2016, but it was only put up on the township website last week. The Trustee recently eliminated the compensation that trustees receive (a savings of \$4,000). This was the right move and it probably only happened because of the competitive Trustee race.

If we are elected, here are five tangible transparency proposals we will put in place:

- Post on the website as soon as they are available: meeting minutes, and budgets - not 9 or 10 months later.
- Post the Township monthly board meeting agenda on the website at least one week prior to the meeting.
- Make all Township expenditures transparent by posting both Township checkbooks online in an easily accessible and searchable format. Every Township resident can know how every Township tax dollar is spent, in real time.
- Undertake an e-mail campaign with New Trier Township residents who want to be kept up to date on township activities and services.
- If a staff position at the township needs to be filled, it will be publicly posted and open to people in the community to apply, and not just filled by a friend of one of the elected officials in a closed process.

Transparency and accountability go together and we plan to increase both.

**Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg:** The approximately 5,500 Township residents who utilized Township services in the last fiscal year, likely have a good understanding of only a few parts of the Township's role. Any citizen engagement should be an opportunity to discuss other aspects of the Township. I would promote transparency for the other 50,000 residents by updating our website to modern, mobile-friendly standards, reorganizing the content by population served to make the website a more efficient resource to those looking for help, and updating the calendar to ensure committee meetings are accessible to the public. I would reassess the paper newsletter, which reaches few residents for the cost, and increase placement of limited printed versions at agency grantees, schools, community centers, and municipal buildings. I'd emphasize electronic communications by cross-promoting our new and improved e-newsletter with other local governments, and increasing our social media presence. During this campaign I have begun "Township Talks," around the community; I'd like to continue if elected.

**Kathy Myalls:** I'm not even sure that most voters know that there is a Township. Transparency is a key reason Stacey, Bob and I are running for office. Transparency comes both in proactive and reactive forms: the Township can reach out, and the Township can have information readily available when residents reach in. We feel that the Township currently does neither, as evidenced by the missing minutes and budget. There is simply no visibility into what the Township did and is doing.

I also believe the Township should do more outreach. Despite living in Wilmette for 12 years now, and considering myself active in the community, I have never heard from the Township except for an occasional mailing. I only discovered when exploring this run that the Township appoints committees of volunteers to help determine how Township funds will be spent. I also learned that an assessor position was recently filled by one of the grade school classmates of the supervisor. Again, I saw no outreach to Township residents advising of an open position or soliciting input as to qualified candidates. While posting notices in newspapers is a quaint

method of reaching some people, the lack of digital outreach by the Township is surprising, and the lack of visibility into Township business is disappointing.

If elected, we will be diligent about posting Township business, and will undertake an e-mail campaign to be sure that the Township communicates with any residents who wish to be kept updated. We will create and maintain a social media presence, and will work to host events to encourage community participation beyond making donations at the food pantry. We will guarantee total visibility into Township finances by posting the Township checkbooks online.

Accountability comes from transparency, and we expect to increase both.

**Elliott Robbins:** NTT has improved its transparency in recent years, particularly with its robust and informative website ([www.newtriertownship.com](http://www.newtriertownship.com)), but more can be done. I would propose that Township officials, in concert with representatives of some of our key social service agencies, participate in the annual Freshman orientation programs at all our Township high schools. When incoming Freshmen and their parents are examining extracurricular opportunities, they should be informed about the Township's pre-eminent Peer Jury Program ([www.newtriertownship.com/services/peer\\_jury\\_program.aspx](http://www.newtriertownship.com/services/peer_jury_program.aspx)), as well as other volunteer opportunities at the Township and within the many diverse agencies that partner with the Township. At the same time, their parents should be informed about the adult opportunities to serve on our Township's four advisory committees that oversee the Township's funding of our social service programs. ([www.newtriertownship.com/get\\_involved/volunteeradvisory\\_committee.aspx](http://www.newtriertownship.com/get_involved/volunteeradvisory_committee.aspx)).

**John Thomas:** My friends and neighbors have little idea what the Township is or does. Township staff needs to do a significantly better job of directly informing residents of what it is does and why. While the Township web site is full of information, it is a reactive tool, not proactive. Better use of emails, social media and other emerging internet tactics could carry Township messages better and further.

**Stacey Woehrl:** One of the key ways I will promote transparency will be to start an email newsletter summarizing key issues and highlights with the Township either monthly or quarterly. I also believe the Township should have a presence on social media promoting events and encouraging community participation. Also, timely posting of financial information (both budget and actual) along with meeting minutes will help to promote transparency within the Township.

## NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203 BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Note:** The four candidates running for the Board of Education for School District 203 are unopposed.

**1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the District 203 Board of Education if you are elected (or re-elected) to the position? What are your top priorities?**

**Keith Dronen:** First, I'd like to provide a few words on my background. I am a graduate of Northwestern University and Chicago Kent College of Law, a New Trier High School Finance Committee community member, a director of the Western Golf Association, a past president and former board member of Wilmette Public Schools District 39, and a member of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities.

I would like to contribute my experience and enthusiasm to help ensure New Trier continues to provide one of the best high school programs in the country while being fiscally responsible to residents of New Trier Township. I am a hard worker, approachable, open minded and a good listener. I will consider all sides of an issue before making a decision. I am always striving to learn especially in the area of education. It is important that the board builds a strong and supportive relationship with the new superintendent, Dr. Paul Sally. Another priority is that the Board of Education maintain and improve upon the District's education program consistent with its mission statement and strategic planning objectives. It is important that the Board openly communicate with the public on all matters to the extent possible. Transparency is a must. The Board must continuously evaluate its own performance through self-evaluation.

**Carol Ducommun:** My immediate priorities as a member of the New Trier School Board will be to get acquainted with and develop a working relationship with the other members of the Board and to support Dr. Paul Sally, our newly appointed superintendent, as he settles into his role upon Dr. Linda Yonke's retirement. Helping Dr. Sally ensure a good start will be a critically important responsibility for the newly formulated Board. While Dr. Sally has many years of experience in the District, it is a significant change to report directly to the Board of Education, to be responsible for all aspects of the District's performance, and to be the face of the District to the New Trier Township and the greater community. A Board is most effective when it directs a superintendent with a unified voice, which is achieved through thoughtful conversations and consensus-driven decision making. It will be important for the Board to be steady and supportive of Dr. Sally while being honest about issues that arise and offering constructive feedback as needed.

I have no specific agenda for my four-year term other than working to deliver the highest quality education possible to our students that taxpayers are willing to support, finding solutions to the district's challenges, and representing the residents by listening carefully, doing my homework diligently, and using my best judgement and abilities. Inherent in these goals is understanding the needs of our students, our community, and our staff in order to make decisions that reflect the ideal balance of those needs.

**Marc Glucksman:** During my current service on the District 35 Board of Education, I view decisions based on a "what is best for the student" perspective. I am eager to apply this lens to the over four thousand students who attend New Trier High School. The BOE exists to provide excellence in local school governance, to support the highest quality education and to represent

the citizens of the Township. It enables local citizen control over education by creating opportunities for the voices of parents and students to be heard and acknowledged. I hope to continue to be part of this process and bring my current experience to the larger needs of the New Trier township community.

My professional background as academic faculty at a university allows me to offer a unique and complementary perspective that can augment the strength of the current District 203 Board of Education. I am an educator as well as an administrator on a team that responsibly utilizes millions of dollars in taxpayer money for medical research. At my institution, I have additionally participated on a Board of Trustees with the associated fiduciary responsibility, board governance, stewardship, and ethical considerations afforded to the position. Finally, I will soon be completing six years service on the District 35 Board of Education, with the last three as Vice President. Our team has worked diligently to accomplish many changes that have enhanced the education of the children. I am the proud parent of two children who are in the District and of course, I am also a taxpayer. Therefore, I represent several different facets of the stakeholders of New Trier Township.

I believe that top priorities for the incoming Board are the collective bargaining negotiations for Teachers, Associates and Physical Plant Employees. These will begin one year after the new board is seated and continue through 2019. Despite the success of the new construction on the east campus, other priorities will be continued maintenance and/or upgrading of aging facilities and physical infrastructures on both campuses. I also anticipate that the Board will need to comply with new educational mandates generated externally by future state and national policy. I am well-informed by my previous participation in finding viable solutions through data aided decisions.

**Greg Robitaille:** I want to generally preserve and protect the traditions and standards of excellence that NTHS has embraced for 116 years. More specifically, I will focus on maintaining the financial health of the District in the face of low CPI-driven increases in revenue, potential Springfield budget priorities that may shift costs back to local districts and/or restrict a district's ability to increase revenue to offset increasing costs, and increasing employee group costs. I will also work to integrate the new leadership team into the District in a way that supports them while also holding them accountable to advancing NTHS's mission. Since we will complete the Winnetka Campus Renovation and Addition in September 2017, I would like our focus to turn to inadequate and outdated athletic facilities for our sports programs (scholastic, club and KW). Finally, maintaining positive school-community relations and confidence within the community for what we are doing at New Trier are paramount.

**2. Now that campus construction is complete, what would you highlight as top priorities for the new superintendent, and why?**

**Keith Dronen:** Timely completion of Phase II of the Winnetka campus facilities project is a priority. Once this work is complete, there will still be decisions related to short and long term maintenance of buildings and grounds on the Winnetka and Northfield campuses. It is important to revisit and update the Long Range Facilities Plan adopted by the Board in 2009. The Board, with input from the community, must continue to address facility issues. For example, some issues are related to critical campus needs (health/life safety) such as roof replacements and heating/cooling system maintenance and upgrades. Other projects relate to non-health-life-safety

projects such as resurfacing parking lots, repairing concrete, and renovating some classrooms. Funding for these projects will require careful planning by the Board and the administration to pay for the projects from existing funds and the debt service levy.

The Board approved the last Strategic Plan in 2005. The 2005-2010 Strategic Plan did not include finance or facilities issues, it focused on whole student development. After the transition period, when Dr. Sally settles into his job, priority should be given to updating the Strategic Plan to include all district goals, action plans, and initiatives, including financial and facility issues. This will allow the new superintendent to lead the district through a process and develop a plan that really helps him understand community needs, and a plan that he can enthusiastically support.

**Carol Ducommun:** It will be important for Dr. Sally and the Board to set some goals for the next year or two, very early into Dr. Sally's first year as superintendent. It would seem that a new strategic planning process would be an appropriate and useful way to establish some priorities for the District moving forward, given Dr. Sally's new tenure as superintendent, as well as the fact that the last strategic planning process was initiated almost 15 years earlier. While some, but not all, of our facilities challenges will be solved with the \$100 million construction project that is scheduled to be completed by the time school starts next fall, there are additional needs that have been identified, particularly by the Athletic Department. A strategic planning process would be useful to re-envision what New Trier should become and how we can best address the future needs of our students, our staff and our community, including any additional facilities issues, and to understand how these needs might be addressed as well as the community's appetite for addressing them.

**Marc Glucksmann:** Dr. Paul Sally, the new Superintendent chosen after a nationwide search, has been formulating a vision to be implemented for NTHS. During the initial vetting of the new Superintendent, stakeholder groups outlined ideal attributes for the position and these were heeded. For an effective and successful transition, the Board of Education should support initiatives with fiscally prudent oversight. These must be student-focused with both academic and social emotional learning aspects, and enable students to achieve their individual potentials as assisted by the support of associated educational infrastructures that nonetheless acknowledge what the "real world" entails. Administration, teachers and staff should be given ample opportunities for professional development to meet these goals.

**Greg Robitaille:** The construction project will be completed in September 2017 for the new school year. We will retain Dr. Yonke's services on a consulting basis for three months following her retirement to let her provide day-to-day management of the project through completion and opening of the building. That said, it will still be Dr. Sally's responsibility to ensure the project is completed on schedule and within the budget parameters the board has approved.

Following project completion, Dr. Sally's main objectives will be to complete a new long term strategic plan. This is important to help guide New Trier's priorities and goals. Another priority will be assessing the financial realities of how the District can maintain balanced budgets in the face of low CPI, Springfield cost-shifting/tax freeze initiatives and an expense base that is increasing faster than the rate of inflation. We have avoided an operating rate referendum for 14 years. I would like to maintain this stance.

**3. How will current state budget issues affect your approach to decision-making within District 203?**

**Keith Dronen:** Because the State of Illinois is in such poor fiscal health, all school districts including New Trier must be prepared for budgetary issues if Springfield decides to cut funding, implement a property tax freeze, and/or shift pension costs to suburban and downstate school districts. Should one of more of these events happen, New Trier must continue to attract and retain the highest quality teaching staff but do so in a fiscally responsible manner. The budget must reflect community values.

**Carol Ducommun:** The stability of Illinois and its fiscal health is of great importance to all who live in the state, including our children and youth who all deserve an excellent public education. The State's financial problems are firmly entrenched and, to date, the solutions are elusive. While a variety of ideas have been floated over the past several years, none has yet to find support on both sides of the aisle. It will be important for the New Trier School Board to stay abreast of legislative solutions that seem to be gaining traction, reacting as necessary to whatever, if any, changes are likely to be instituted. New Trier has an excellent track record not only in delivering an excellent education to our students, but also for making sound decisions with regard to our assets and finances. I am confident the District will research carefully and make thoughtful recommendations regarding the levers and resources we have available to us, including cost reductions, reserve balances, and revenue enhancements, in order to offset any revenue shortfalls resulting from State actions.

**Marc Glucksman:** One cannot predict the future with respect to the budgetary issues plaguing the State of Illinois. What we can be certain about is that State revenue flowing back into the Township will be diminished and that the amount of pension funding assumed by the State will be shifted to District 203 and will further add to financial burden. "Worst case scenarios" will prepare us for any eventuality by hypothesizing different financial contingencies linked to the requisite potential budgeting. The byword is to attempt to "expect the unexpected". This approach worked well in District 35 where I currently serve on the Board.

**Greg Robitaille:** We are encouraging our advocacy groups to promote policies in Springfield that don't negatively affect public schools. We are maintaining a very high operating reserve. We are negotiating with our employee groups and vendors to keep increases in expenses as low as possible. Finally, we have reinstated the Cost Containment Committee that last year found more than \$600,000 of expense savings. What we won't do is to not move New Trier forward out of fear of what Springfield might do, how they will do it and when they will do it. So, we'll stay financially strong but keep moving forward with our mission to provide our students with a high-performing environment at New Trier.

**4. How can the NTHS best prepare students to think critically about national and world events? Please provide examples.**

**Keith Dronen:** Simply put, a board member must embrace the mission of New Trier: commit minds to inquiry, hearts to compassion, and lives to service of humanity. Every action and decision should consider how it supports this mission. Every time a new course is proposed or a new extra-curricular activity is proposed, we should ask how it will best support this mission. New Trier must continue to encourage all students to develop leadership skills by participating in

athletics, clubs, performing arts, and various other student groups. Teachers must instill a love for learning in our students and help them become critical thinkers. Long after the academics are forgotten, it is the love for learning and critical thinking skills that will best prepare our students to understand and address national and world events.

**Carol Ducommun:** Critical thinking has long been a hallmark of a New Trier education, with the concept of “committing minds to inquiry” embedded in the school’s motto for decades. This cornerstone of our curriculum finds daily expression through lively and challenging classroom discussions that are facilitated by our faculty and are based on thorough preparation, both by the teachers and the students. In addition to classroom discussions, New Trier is fortunate to have access to a variety of speakers, field trips, seminar days and extracurricular activities which expose students to a wide variety of areas that help to inform a student’s overall New Trier education and their understanding of the world around them. Seminar days have been a staple of the curricular programming at New Trier for years with various iterations, including some that were organized and led by the students. New Trier also has an extraordinary breadth of extracurricular activities that expose students to a variety of views about local, national and world events, including volunteer opportunities on the North Shore and in the City of Chicago, summer trips abroad, Model UN, and clubs with international and multicultural themes. These clubs and activities appeal to our students and thrive through the years based on the students’ enthusiasm and leadership.

**Marc Glucksman:** The motto of New Trier High School is: “To commit minds to inquiry, hearts to compassion, and lives to the service of humanity”. The tradition of excellence that is associated with an education obtained at New Trier is not to rest on what has been accomplished, but on continuous quality improvement. What is crucial to the ongoing success of students at New Trier High School is that our young adults are taught *how* to think and not *what* to think. Another way to view this is by a quote from William Butler Yeats who said, “Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire”. There are opportunities to advance initiatives where future jobs are in the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) and interdisciplinary areas that are just being created. These are areas I have advocated for in the past. Volunteer and internship opportunities through a robust and dedicated alumni network can also be an avenue to nurture our future graduates and help position them for post graduate success.

**Greg Robitaille:** Our All-School Seminar Day is a great example of this. I support our teachers and administrators who designed and executed this day exploring racial civil rights issues. It challenges our students to think about issues from many different perspectives, to challenge assumptions and “accepted” ideas and it requires them to engage in a challenging, sometimes difficult subject. An added element of critical thinking has emerged as some of our parents and members of the broader world community have expressed concerns about the inclusiveness of ideas and points of view in the content of the day. I can’t think of a better way to ask students to think critically and come to their own conclusions based on facts, different experiences and examining issues from opposing perspectives.

5. **What other challenges and/or issues do you think are affecting the high school and its community at this time, and how would you recommend that the Board of Education address them?**

**Keith Dronen:** While we should recognize the recent discourse surrounding the Seminar Day, it's important to focus on challenges identified by the New Trier community and discussed in the New Superintendent Profile Report (September 2016):

- Highly engaged community with high expectations
- Illinois fiscal issues
- High property taxes
- Lack of diversity in the student body and staff
- Concern that strong traditions and success can create a status quo
- Always being under the microscope with a national reputation
- Making sure all students fit in at New Trier
- Facility improvements
- Tremendous stress and competitiveness for students
- Concern for finding a place for students who can't make varsity sports or select art groups

It is the responsibility of the Board to govern and provide the District with clear direction regarding the above challenges and continually engage the community in the process.

**Carol Ducommun:** We live in time with extreme rhetoric across the political spectrum that does not serve our community and our country well. In keeping with one of the parameters identified in the last strategic plan of ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment that is conducive to learning, we should strive to model appropriate behavior in our classrooms, our school, and our community that demonstrates a more respectful level of discourse than is currently evident across the country and in the media. All students at New Trier should feel comfortable appropriately expressing their opinion on a variety of topics without being labeled or looked down upon, and New Trier should foster an environment that respects all forms of diversity, including intellectual diversity.

**Marc Glucksmann:** I am honored to be a candidate for this Board where almost 1,000 community members can attend a Board meeting and have a civil discourse on disparate views of an issue. We are not so insular as to separate ourselves from the outside world beyond our Township boundaries. The most important attributes of public trust are effective communication and transparency. There are certainly opportunities for greater engagement with our involved, passionate, and caring community that can be used to supplement the regularly scheduled meetings.

**Greg Robitaille:** I think an important issue at New Trier continues to be achieving balance between a high-achieving, high-performing environment on the one hand and an environment that provides social-emotional support and skills as well. Too many of our students experience emotional challenges when they come to New Trier. Although the school has implemented many programs, resources and outlets for social-emotional learning, we still have too many students who struggle with mental health and self-worth issues while at New Trier. I don't have the answers but I do think the Board of Education has a role in asking questions and making sure we're funding these programs to their fullest. Enhancing early warning detection, better and more urgent care coordination among teachers, staff, parents and student and a more tailored, coordinated re-entry program are some of the areas that New Trier is working on and will improve with the Board's support. I intend to continue to advocate for this.

## WILMETTE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Note:** The three candidates running for the position of Board of Trustees for the Wilmette Public Library District are unopposed in the current election.

**1. Tell us why you would like to serve on the Library Board. What are your top priorities as a Trustee?**

**Dan Johnson:** Thanks for asking and for your work to inform the electorate.

I love libraries. They are physical manifestations of the acquisition and distribution of knowledge. The Wilmette Library is no exception. It's a gem. I'd like to improve it and think I might be able to offer some ideas and suggestions as a Trustee.

I'm interested in digging into our cost drivers, especially health care for employees, to see if we can forge a partnership with other local governments to develop a more efficient, cheaper method with one large pool of insured lives to buy the health care our public employees need. I suspect that each local government buying their own small health insurance plan isn't the best bang for the buck and we can enjoy stronger negotiating power with providers if we band together in one large pool.

In that vein, I suspect similar shared services with other local governments are worth investigating for potential efficiencies. Maybe we can partner with the Park District on issuing the same ID card. Maybe we can coordinate the mailing of our print newsletter with the Village, the Park District and the School Districts into one large combined mailing to reduce printing and postage costs. Maybe there are deeper partnerships to be forged with our school libraries that essentially offer the same services, just in a different location.

Since I'll be the newest Trustee on a Board with an exemplary record, my top priority is to learn from my future colleagues and see how any of these ideas might make most sense.

**Ron Rodgers:** My enthusiasm for libraries has grown throughout a lifetime of learning, teaching and research. I earned three degrees from Northwestern University, worked seven years as a Chicago newspaper reporter, and taught in Northwestern's Schools of Education, Journalism and Management. I serve as consulting psychometrician (testing specialist) for credentialing exams in over 50 professions. My devotion to libraries began in sixth grade when I volunteered to help catalog books for my school's first library.

My goal as a library trustee is to strengthen and promote the Wilmette Library's role in facilitating discovery, enjoyment and learning for library users of all ages. Wilmette's Library welcomes over 1,100 patrons per day. The Library circulated over 1.7 million items since July 2014—among the nation's highest circulation rates—and provides direct online access to 23 other north suburban libraries.

I have worked closely with public sector boards for over 40 years. My legislative efforts in Springfield and Washington helped secure over \$900,000 in state grants for Wilmette library building projects. I look forward to continuing my efforts to keep library services among Wilmette's most cherished and valuable resources.

**Stuart Wolf:** My goal is to give back to the library for having been and continuing to be such a great resource for me and my family, as well as our community, over the 18 years we have lived in Wilmette. My top priorities include: #1 - To help the library stay relevant to the community as a significant source of information and as a vibrant meeting place in a world where the influence of technology constantly redefines what that might be. #2 – Based on informal and formal community and staff feedback, the Library primarily gets very positive reviews. I strive to help the Library maintain and improve on this level of community service.

**2. What is the appropriate level of funds held in reserve by the Library? Is the Library at its target level?**

**Dan Johnson:** Building up a reserve fund for capital expenditures seems like a cheaper method of financing expenses than borrowing money (with interest) through a bond issuance. The appropriate level of funds to hold in reserve is a function of expected capital costs in the future. I don't know whether the Library is at the right level this year, but I suspect it is.

**Ron Rodgers:** The Illinois Public Library District Act defines how library districts manage Library funds, facilities and services. The Board creates Long-Range Plans using surveys, focus groups and discussions with Library users and staff to define requested services. The Operating Fund pays for staffing, materials and related costs; the Building and Equipment Reserve Fund supports capital expenditures. Library law defines the Reserve Fund as a primary tool to manage resources that support Library services requested by Wilmette residents in Long-Range Plans.

Each Wilmette Library Long-Range Plan since 1985 has identified additional parking as a primary need. The Library has leased spaces since the 1990s so that Library patrons and staff can park in the adjoining Village lot, but the most attractive way to guarantee long-term access to these spaces would be for the Library to combine these lots into one environmentally friendly parking area. This also would allow the Library to improve safety and traffic flow when construction ends across the alley. Reserve funds can support this project, which residents have requested since the 1980s. Reserve funds paid for the Library's permeable brick parking lot in 2012 and the 2015-16 project with redesigned Youth Services, improved quiet study spaces, and updated HVAC, plumbing, bathrooms, lighting and energy efficiency for a safer, more comfortable Library. Reserve funds will be used in 2017 to replace over 100 aging Library computers and will support future building security, equipment and safety needs. Illinois Library law defines these as proper uses of Reserve Funds.

Wilmette Library taxes have remained below 5% of Wilmette property taxes since residents voted to create the District in a 1975 referendum. We REDUCED the Library's 2017 tax levy last November based on our forecasts. Library budgets and Reserve Fund balances have been discussed openly during regular monthly broadcasts of Library Board meetings since 2000. Wilmette's public access channel decides when meetings are aired; Library archives include these recordings. Minutes of monthly board meetings document all Library District tax levies and

Reserve Fund balances since 1975. These all are in the Library's public records and open to anyone who asks to review them.

**Stuart Wolf:** The Library and the Board are governed by the Illinois Public Library District Act. Abiding by these laws and based on community driven feedback and survey information, the Board and the Director regularly create long range plans to determine the practical needs of the Library. In fact, after thorough and careful analysis by the board, we lowered the requested 2017 tax levy at our meeting this past November. So, the current reserves are appropriate and at the target level for the Library.

**3. What new Library programs would you like to see initiated? What decision-making process should the Library use to add or replace programs?**

**Dan Johnson:** I have a few ideas I'd like staff to consider. I think it would be fun to partner with other libraries around the world to set up pen pals and build some person-to-person diplomacy, especially in countries with governments that aren't currently enjoying warm diplomatic relationships with our government. I also think it would be fun to partner with some genealogy companies and capture family histories of library patrons for posterity. Perhaps this is a program that ought to be run in partnership with the Wilmette Historical Museum.

While circulating my nominating petitions, I was asked whether the Library might be able to help get free public wi-fi for downtown Wilmette, particularly at the Metra station. I think we should consider taking the lead on that initiative as well.

**Ron Rodgers:** The Library soon will invite Wilmette residents and our extraordinarily attentive staff to provide information for the Board's 2018 Long-Range Plan. This process has guided all Board decisions about the Library's building and services for over 40 years. Selection of specific services depends on what Wilmette residents request in surveys and ongoing communications—and their cost.

The Library's new director, Heather McCammond-Watts, also will suggest new programs and services based on her experience in other libraries. She offered many ideas for new services during interviews last fall.

The Board continuously invites Library patrons and staff to suggest new services. Library staff propose and test many new services using Innovation Grants the Library has funded since 2006 with gifts from residents and patrons each year. The Library's Butterfly Garden emerged from an Innovation Grant and many other new services have started this way.

**Stuart Wolf:** I would like to see programming that allows our tech savvy library patron teens to mentor and tutor those, regardless of age, who would like to become more tech savvy in how they utilize the library resources and their own technology. I think this could lead to some very instructive, insightful and community building cross-generational experiences.

Having recently completed a major renovation, the Library is once again gearing up to full programming capacity—a part of this is to conduct community outreach (formal surveys and informal feedback) to determine what programming to add, and if feedback warrants, replace. In addition, the Library Director and Staff are very active in participating in Library Association and

Library associated meetings to further broaden the scope of possibilities for the Wilmette Library. We all strive to make the Library as accessible and as approachable and receptive as possible to meeting the requests and needs of the Wilmette/Kenilworth community. Along with gauging the attendance at existing Library events, this interaction and community and staff feedback is an effective way to guide our programming decision-making process.

**4. How has the explosion in technological innovations affected how the library interacts with and provides services to residents? What trends today may provide some insight into future services?**

**Dan Johnson:** I'm not a Trustee, so I don't know the answer to these questions.

**Ron Rodgers:** The Library's website already provides 24/7 access to over 40 online databases. Since July 2014, these services have supported:

- Over 550,000 visits to the Library website.
- Over 315,000 "borrowed" E-books.
- Over 74,000 visits to two Library-hosted genealogy sites.
- Over 7,000 visits to study websites that offer online tutoring.

While we do not aim to be on the "bleeding edge" of every emerging technology, we also strive to provide services that reflect current needs and resources. Library staff support most downloadable books, e-readers and tablet computers. Wilmette Library patrons determine these trends as they acquire and ask for help using their new technology and research tools.

**Stuart Wolf:** The Library offers an ever-growing number of services for patrons to receive via internet download materials they want to borrow from the Library. This currently includes: books and audiobooks from such sites as MyMediaMall, OneClick Books and TumbleBooks, magazines from Zinio and movies, TV programs, music and audiobooks from Hoopla. In addition, among its wide variety of programming, the Library offers a wide array of technology related classes to keep patrons-especially those beyond college/traditional schooling years – informed on new technology and how to best utilize it.

Current trends obviously suggest that a growing number of patrons enjoy the option of having whatever they borrow be available to them on an easy to hold and carry portable device. As a result, one future service is the Library's ability to remotely offer its resources to community patrons while they are traveling, or living for long stretches, away from home. In addition, thanks to technology, it has become much easier to keep track of how frequently items are being checked out-and through inventory management and acquisition, ensure that in most cases, a Library patron never has to wait more than three or four weeks for a requested item.

While stepping firmly into the future and future trends, I do think to best serve its patrons, it is also important for the Library to continue to offer traditional forms of most or all of its materials. In the not too distant future, maybe even now, there are those that are well-served to get a break, even briefly, from having to interact with technology/something electronic. There are many patrons, of all ages, that remain most comfortable with the traditional forms of the books, magazines and other resources the Library has to offer.

5. **Can the Library move even further into the role of a welcoming community center? If so, what ideas do you have to encourage this process?**

**Dan Johnson:** I imagine every institution can improve, but I don't have any specific ideas on how the library can be more of a welcoming center. Perhaps longer hours would help.

**Ron Rodgers:** Wilmette Library users and staff have shaped the Library's role as a welcoming community center with their requests. This process will continue to enrich Wilmette with more continuing and new services, activities and programs.

In addition to circulating over 1.7 million items, the Library has supported the following community activities since July 2014:

- Attendance at over 2,200 events using Library facilities totaled over 55,000 people—despite severely reduced activities during construction in 2015-16.
- Library staff have answered over 215,000 questions from Library users online and in person.
- Our Friends' used book sale has funded over \$50,000 annually in Library services since the 1990s and is staffed by a community of over 50 volunteers.
- The Library has hosted dozens of recitals, plays and other live performances.
- Many adults search for new jobs and conduct business activities aided by Library resources.
- High School Pizza Study Nights before semester and final exams fill Library seating and parking to near capacity.
- Adult programs have focused on investing, genealogy, business practices, health care, parenting, armchair travels, streaming media, digital design and countless other topics requested by Library patrons.
- Featured children's and teen's programs have included story hours for all ages, Kids and Teen Library Councils, fun ways to use math and science, comedy, learning babysitting skills and digital design tools.

**Stuart Wolf:** Yes. In my experience with the Library, both as a patron and as a Trustee, the Library has continued to evolve and grow as a welcoming community center. This includes staff-inspired expansion of Library sponsored events taking place in various locations (area schools, Vattman Park, etc.) throughout the community. In essence, creating community building events away from the Library building itself.

Our Library staff has been very proactive on this subject, as is our new Director, Heather McCammond-Watts. So, first and foremost is to support them in their efforts and continue to ensure they have opportunities to share, develop and implement their ideas.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share some of my perspectives about the Library.

**ELECTION DAY IS Tuesday, April 4, 2015**

**Polls on Election Day are open from 6 am to 7 pm**

**Early voting will be  
Monday March 20rd through Monday, April 3th**

**Check [www.cookcountyclerk.com](http://www.cookcountyclerk.com) for location.**

**Hours vary, check  
[www.lwwilmette.org](http://www.lwwilmette.org)**

#### **ABOUT THIS VOTERS GUIDE**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that neither endorses nor opposes candidates or political parties. Our purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. It is our purpose in producing this Voters Guide to provide information to the public about all the candidates seeking election to local government.

The Voters Guide contains information as submitted by candidates for the above-listed answers within a total word limit. The material submitted by the candidates was NOT edited by the Wilmette League of Women Voters prior to publication, although the format was made consistent throughout the publication. Candidates are listed alphabetically.

The Voters Guide also can be found on the Wilmette League of Women Voters website, [www.lwwilmette.org](http://www.lwwilmette.org).

The League of Women Voters of Wilmette wishes to thank the North Shore Community Bank & Trust Company of Wilmette for its funding of this Voters Guide.



## **The League of Women Voters of Wilmette**

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