



The League of Women Voters of Wilmette

VOTERS GUIDE

A guide to candidates in the
April 7, 2015
Municipal Election

Statements from candidates running for:

Wilmette Public School District 39

Board of Education

Wilmette Park District

Board of Commissioners

New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education

Village of Wilmette

Board of Trustees

Wilmette Public Library District

Board of Trustees

Avoca School District 37

Board of Education

This Voters Guide was funded by



And the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters of Wilmette

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

Table of Contents

Wilmette Public School District 39 Board of Education (vote for 3)	3
Lisa Schneider Fabes Tracy A. Kearney Frank D. Panzica Alice D. Schaff	
Wilmette Park District Board of Commissioners (vote for 4)	10
Gary Benz Jim Crowley Stephanie Foster Ryrie Pellaton Shelley Shelly	
New Trier Township High School District 203 Board of Education (vote for 3)	17
Cathy Albrecht Lori Goldstein Patrick O'Donoghue Greg Werd	
Village of Wilmette Board of Trustees (uncontested)	23
Senta Plunkett Dan Sullivan Julie Wolf	
Wilmette Public Library District Board of Trustees (uncontested)	28
Jan Barshis Virginia George Lisa McDonald Kathleen O'Laughlin	
Avoca School District 37 Board of Education (uncontested)	33
Louise Dechovitz Joel Raynes Sheryl A. Swibel	
Referenda on the Ballot	37

WILMETTE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 39 BOARD OF EDUCATION

What do you hope to accomplish if elected to the next term of office?

Lisa Schneider Fabes District 39 is an excellent school district in a vibrant community. Our district, like many others around the country, faces several critical challenges. Our financial future is unclear, due in large part to factors that are both difficult to predict and beyond our control. New standards, curricula, technology, and assessments have put increasing demands on our teachers and administrators. And perhaps most important, for our children to be globally competitive in a fast-changing world, the education we provide needs to constantly evolve. We cannot rest on our laurels and expect to remain a high performing school district.

My objective as a member of the Board will be to work with fellow board members and the administration to address these challenges by clearly articulating our priorities and focusing on the things that matter most. Together, we need to ensure District 39 is prepared for reductions in funding, is strategic about the timing of and support needed to roll-out new initiatives, and continues to foster a culture of innovation. We then need to effectively and transparently measure our progress as well as ensure that the budget is aligned to our stated priorities.

Tracy A. Kearney An effective School Board member understands her community and encourages the community's trust in its school system. As a result of my years of involvement in our District, I have experienced our school system from many different perspectives. I have worked in various capacities with our current board members, administrators, and teachers and am proud of the significant achievements and successes that we have celebrated as a result of collaboration and partnership. Further, my involvement has afforded me the opportunity to engage with parents and community members to better understand their aspirations and expectations. As a member of your Board of Education, I will bring these perspectives—the perspectives of all stakeholders—to all decision-making matters.

Additionally, there is presently an abundance of change underfoot in education. For example, enhanced use of technology in the classrooms, public policy proposals at the federal, state and local levels and funding implications attached to all of them. I stay informed of the issues affecting our education system. I plan to share this information with you, as a community member, so that you remain informed, educated, and actively engaged in the process since parents and taxpayers should be part of the conversation during the formation of significant policy initiatives. I will achieve this through continued open communication with you and other Board members. Using this information, I will work diligently to advocate for you; our students, our schools, and our community.

Frank D. Panzica After attending board meetings and talking with the community, the consensus is our schools are doing well. My favorite report each year is the survey of freshman Wilmette students documenting their being well prepared for the rigors of New Trier. However, the Board and administration must not rest on success. So first, I want to maintain our status as the benchmark for high achieving schools.

We also must drive our schools to do better. As part of the CRC team that wrote the 2009 CONNECTED strategic plan, I had a chance to help set future goals and our schools have

implemented several of these proposals, such as introducing Chinese language and iPads. I will continue to work with the administration to improve our schools in a financially sound way.

One area I want to pursue is adding a computer programming option. If done well, this can open new doors for both boys and girls (always a balance that should be considered). I would also use my experience as a business strategist to work with administrators and the community to explore where we need to be 5 – 10 years out. I will bring critical listening skills to hear new ideas, and question, improve and support the better ones.

The third area I will focus on is financial strength. Our schools must respect the investment that the taxpayers have made in them. A balanced budget and a realistic view of what is needed to maintain a balanced budget over the next 5 years is vital. With the issues in Springfield this will require constant analysis, planning and working with the administration to support financial stability.

I look forward to using my business experience to help maintain our schools as a benchmark for excellence in a financially sustainable manner, and view being a Board Member as my opportunity to use this experience to give back to our community.

Alice D. Schaff It has been my privilege to serve the community as a member of the Board of Education for the past four years and currently as Vice President. I am proud of the accomplishments of our District during my tenure, specifically its focus on fiscally responsible administration while advancing its education model to prepare our students to be dynamic leaders and citizens in the 21st century.

I will continue to strive to deliver the best education possible to our 3700 students so that they are well prepared for high school, college and career. I will act as a good steward of the financial resources of the District, work collaboratively with my fellow school board members and communicate with our many constituencies.

More specifically, I will take an objective role overseeing curriculum updates and improvements for all subject areas of study as well as the continued implementation of the Illinois Common Core recommendations. I look forward to working with the Board and administrative staff to implement effective formative and evaluative testing of our student's learning with the goal of continually improving the education of all of our students. Additionally, I will continue to foster a working environment of cooperation and respect throughout the District so that we can attract and retain high quality teachers, support staff and administrative staff.

With a new governor in Springfield, there may be significant changes to the way public education in Illinois is funded with respect to pensions, educational mandates and consolidation of school districts. How should the D39 School Board prepare for potential funding obligations?

Lisa Schneider Fabes Whatever happens with pension reform, the funding formula, tax reform or other changes at the state level, in all likelihood the State of Illinois will contribute less for District 39 in the future than it has in the past. In preparation, we need to:

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

While measuring the return on financial investments on educational outcomes is not easy, the Board needs to make a habit of evaluating the educational impact of expenditures. Doing so ensures that choices are consistent with the district's priorities and helps guide funding decisions. Indeed, evaluating progress toward meeting the district's priorities and identifying more effective expenditures are core responsibilities – and challenges – of the Board.

Tracy A. Kearney At the national level, the American public education system is rapidly undergoing unprecedented major changes. At the state level, Illinois' grim financial situation has ignited a myriad of conversations in the legislature around the topic of Education Funding Reform that will directly affect our District's budget and, ultimately, our ability to fund our children's education as we know it.

As such, it is essential that our School Board is populated with representatives who will commit the time and energy necessary to protect that for which we have worked so hard – our children's education, our community, our homes, and our future. As they say, "Knowledge is power". I believe the best way for our District 39 School Board to prepare for potential funding obligations is for its members to become well-versed about all issues and relevant pending legislation. The Board should also share with the community the potential impact thus enabling community members to engage and advocate as well, so we may proactively protect our local interests.

Frank D. Panzica The Board should inform and anticipate. Discussion within the community and with elected officials here and in Springfield will take place before decisions are finalized. The Board has a responsibility to gather accurate information, and provide unbiased fact based reports on the impact of various proposals. Board meetings currently include an 'update from Springfield' section as a first step toward 'educating'. Additionally, as the largest New Trier feeder district, I would lead an effort to include coordinated discussions with all feeder schools and the community to discuss common issues, including potential consolidation proposals.

The financial impact of proposals is constantly changing. Just this week 2015 SB 1 replaced 2014 SB 16 and potentially reduces some of the financial impact on District 39. However budget forecasts need to consider all likely impacts over the next 5 years. As scenarios change, on-going budget projections need to balance potential reduced revenue with reduced spending. I am very familiar with constrained budget decisions from my years as a Senior Director of product management.

Alice D. Schaff District 39 is already preparing for possible changes in the way public education is funded in Illinois. Beginning with the FY 2015 financials, allowances are built into our five-year projections.

There are two initiatives that are on the horizon at the State level: SB16 and the possible teacher pension cost shift.

SB16 redistributes State revenue from wealthier communities to those with fewer resources. The bill, itself, is in transition as a new version was just introduced on February 3rd. In its previous form, the State estimated that SB16 would cost District 39 just over \$2 million in lost revenues and this is what the District has provided for in its financials. The new version, if passed, will have a slightly smaller impact on our District.

The pension cost shift would gradually shift the State's responsibility for teacher pension payments to schools. This would involve shifting .5% of the State's obligation for local pensions to schools each year for approximately 15 years, for a total of 7.5%.

In addition to funding changes, the State is moving forward with the implementation of the Illinois Common Core Standards and PARCC testing. The District has high academic standards

and has already aligned much of its curriculum with the Common Core. One concern is implementing the PARCC test. Our Department of Curriculum is working hard to train teachers and to schedule 2,600 children for PARCC testing this spring, which is no small feat. After the test is administered, the Board will be working closely with the administration to evaluate the PARCC results and to understand if it gives us the information we need to inform education in our District.

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of iPad use in D39 and share your ideas for the iPad program for the Wilmette schools going forward.

Lisa Schneider Fabes The iPad Learning Program is a great example of how the district is utilizing technology as a tool to improve teaching and learning. I have seen in District 39 schools and in schools around the country, how the use of iPads in the classroom results in increased student engagement and provides unique opportunities for deeper learning, student collaboration, and more frequent formative assessments. iPads also provide new ways to enable teachers to differentiate lessons according to students' learning needs. Instead of the traditional geography lesson, imagine seeing students playing Mystery Skype. Students are asking questions to students on the other side of the world to figure out where they are located.

I believe District 39 should continue expanding the iPad Learning Program as planned. That being said, I have heard some parents are unhappy with the program. Unfortunately, glitches during the implementation of a new program often occur. In order to mitigate known problems with the program, the district needs to continually assess the program, operationally and financially. In addition, the district needs to ensure there is sufficient time dedicated to high quality, hands-on professional learning opportunities for all stakeholders – students, parents and teachers.

Tracy A. Kearney Unprecedented flexibility in working arrangements, career changes, and a stampede of technological advances have ushered us into an era of lifelong learning. I strongly believe that technology has a role in a 21st Century education setting and I support the responsible and purposeful use of it in our schools.

I think there are several advantages of iPad use in D39 which include support of differentiated student learning, immediate feedback mechanisms, simplified collection and retention of materials, the ability to read and annotate paperlessly, shared access to files with other students for collaboration, and the opportunity for our children to responsibly acquaint themselves with technologies that will be used throughout their lives, both personally and professionally.

While Technology certainly has a role in education, it can work only when deployed as a complementary tool by a highly trained and well-supported teacher. Moreover, iPad implementation (or any technological trend for that matter) should never be viewed as a “one size fits all” solution since not all children learn the same way. I am proud that the schools in which my children receive their education are respectful, aware, and positioned to teach to the uniqueness of the individual student. I have often heard teachers say, “If your child does not learn the way we teach, we will teach the way they learn.” We must support the integrity of that commitment to our children. Investing in our teachers and their training, proactively engaging parents and taxpayers in the conversation, as well as recognizing and embracing both traditional and alternative learning methods for individual students will remain important goals to support in tandem with the iPad program.

Frank D. Panzica Technology is no longer optional. Technology sophistication is fundamental for our students to be successful, so the question is how to best achieve this knowledge. There

are many arguments for iPads such as: (1) New Trier now depends on iPads so we must prepare our students for this transition and (2) computers and the internet is how our children are learning, whether we offer iPads or not.

However, the iPad program is still new and needs to be monitored and improved. The Board needs to fully amortize this investment by making sure it is effectively used in every classroom. Budget impact must be monitored and costs contained. Fees need to be reviewed as the program matures; what are incremental fees and what costs become fundamental?

Community unease must be addressed and outreach implemented. There are concerns over total daily screen time, the need for flexibility for some subjects, the need to limit iPads to only school work, and concerns parents cannot keep up. The administration and Board have started addressing these issues. As a Board Member I will continue community outreach and will continue to address acceptance in the schools and in the community.

Strategically, I see iPads as a first step. A chance to learn and get it right for what will come 3, 5 or 10 years down the line. Technology is no longer optional, but it needs to be implemented in a responsible financial and educational manner.

Alice D. Schaff Some of the best presentations at our board meetings have been made by our students about the iPad learning program. Their reports on what they are learning and how they are learning have been very encouraging. As a result, I am confident that we are on the right track with this program, which is currently offered for 6th and 7th graders.

The use of iPad technology has many advantages for the students in our District. On a daily basis, our teachers use iPads across all subject areas to enhance student engagement and enthusiasm for learning. The iPads provide meaningful opportunities for our students to collaborate, demonstrate understanding and communicate with peers and teachers. The iPad program also helps to improve students' organizational abilities. Finally, it assists teachers in differentiating instruction for individual students as online formative tests are easy for teachers to administer and results are immediate.

The challenges for the iPad program have been to ensure that our schools have adequate technical support and infrastructure to accommodate the use of more technology. My initial concerns included long-term affordability of the program, professional development, distraction and cyber safety of our students. All of these issues have been addressed and are continually assessed so that improvements can be made on an ongoing basis.

The plan is to extend the iPad program to the 8th and 5th grades for the 2015-2016 school year. I support these decisions.

Describe what you see as the difference in the role of the School Board versus the role of the school administration.

Lisa Schneider Fabes School boards and school administrators need to honor their roles to ensure good governance and a productive relationship. In a healthy board-administration dynamic, the school board sets clear direction and the superintendent and staff use their professional expertise and district resources to carry out district policy.

The School Board:

- Hires and evaluates the superintendent
- Provides financial oversight, including approving the budget
- Sets the education objectives
- Adopts and enforces policy
- Represents the public interest

School administration:

- Manages day to day operations of a school
- Implements the educational program
- Make personnel decisions
- Manages the finances

Tracy A. Kearney School Board members are elected to represent the interests of both the taxpayers and parents to the school administration. Board Members also need to communicate the needs of the School District and its students to those same constituents.

Simply put, the School Board sets policy and the administration conducts business. The School Board does not operate the district on a day-to-day basis – that is the job of the Superintendent, who is the District's chief executive. The School Board sets policies, goals and objectives that give direction to the Superintendent and staff enabling them to effectively manage the District. The School Board hires the Superintendent and holds him and his staff accountable for implementing prescribed policy, approving and monitoring budgets, negotiating and monitoring district contracts, and fulfills all duties as assigned.

Frank D. Panzica The schools are run by the professional administrators and teachers. The School Board's job is to represent the entire community and to oversee that the schools are run well and are financially responsible. There is a community expectation that our schools will remain a model for high achieving districts. The Board should support and monitor the Superintendent by reviewing proposals and adding guidance for consideration. The Board is the ultimate oversight on budgets and must ensure that money is spent efficiently. The Board must represent all the taxpayers in the community, while maintaining a responsible, sustainable short and long term budget.

Alice D. Schaff The basic idea of a school board is to provide local control over the education of our children and to represent the local citizenry. The primary job of a school board is to employ and supervise a superintendent (or CEO) who heads up the district and is responsible for managing the district and setting the vision for education. The board sets the educational, budgetary and operating objectives for the superintendent and reviews his/her performance.

Additionally, the board is responsible for the business of running the district: setting district policies, overseeing the budget and other aspects of the financial operation, maintaining physical facilities, evaluating the educational program and approving curriculum.

If you held a point of view on a Board issue not shared by the majority of the Board, how would you handle the situation? If the final vote/decision went against your position, how would you proceed on that issue?

Lisa Schneider Fabes There is a time and place for debate and then a time to support the chosen direction. If I held the minority opinion, I would state my case clearly, presenting facts to support my point of view. Equally important, I would listen to others and ask questions so that I

understood all views. If the final vote went against my position, I would accept the decision and assist the Board in supporting the decision.

Tracy A. Kearney Your Board sets the standard for communication within the district. School board members must have the ability to work collaboratively, be flexible thinkers, and embrace compromise. There will be times when changes must be made, when status quo will come into question, and when pressure must be resisted. A successful Board Member will understand the community's perspective and work to advocate for and represent those needs to the rest of the Board.

While elected as an individual, an effective School Board member must also collaborate and respect her fellow Board members. That said, collaboration and respect do not necessarily mean agreement. At times, respectful disagreement and spirited discussion may occur. As in any sincere democratic process, Board members vote and majority rules. There is honor in casting a sincere vote, win or lose, and after such a vote, an effective board member should embrace the outcome of the decision and move forward but remain aware of the issue should it arise in the future. I will be this effective School Board member.

Frank D. Panzica To be a productive Board Member it is important to have a timely, well reasoned, researched view on topics. With strong, qualified Board Members there will be times when viewpoints differ. During the gathering of information phase, discussions with the community and other Board Members can help develop a position. I have found in my business experience that in most cases well researched facts presented from multiple points of view result in a balanced position that can be agreed upon by a strong consensus. Sometimes this is not possible. After doing the work up front, if I find myself in the minority, it is then my responsibility to support the majority. I still will have the opportunity to add constructive feedback to improve the result, but it should be supportive. If there are enough issues, there will be another opportunity to gain a consensus, but this should not be done in a disruptive manner.

Alice D. Schaff In my experience working with my colleagues on the Board, we have had a very collaborative and respectful working relationship. That does not mean that we always agree or have similar approaches to various issues. If and when I have a different opinion, I present my thoughts and arguments and listen to my colleagues' ideas. Then we discuss the merits of the ideas. We work together to come up with a solution that is best for the children of District 39. Most often the issue is more complicated than first meets the eye. If a decision went against my position, I would realize that I am only one vote of a group of seven and would support and respect the majority decision.

WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Why are you running for the Wilmette Park District Board of Commissioners and what do you hope to accomplish in the next four years?

Gary Benz I decided to give back to the Park District that gave my family so many hours of fun by running for Commissioner in 2011. During the past four years I have served on the Financial Planning, Lakefront, and Parks & Recreation committees. I bring this District experience, which includes dealing with weather emergencies, renovation projects, and new construction planning and executions to the office of Park Commissioner. Dealing fairly with Wilmette taxpayer issues and staff personnel has been a hallmark of my first term. I know the significant time commitment required of this position and look forward to applying my professional skills of consulting for national corporations, managing local businesses and running my own real estate property management business to the Wilmette Park District. I plan to bring the Lakefront parks up to standard within budget and on time during my term.

Jim Crowley As I stated in my biography, I believe that we all need to contribute in some way to the community we live in to make it better and safer for everyone. Many residents volunteer to support the great organizations we have here in Wilmette to help sustain our belief in one another. I chose to contribute my time and energy to the operation and improvement of the Wilmette Park District. Having been an elected commissioner for some time now and recognizing the current need for continuity to a young board, I feel it is an important asset I can share. I believe that the Park District reaches out and touches the lives of most of our residents. I believe that in doing so they make people's lives better. I want to be part of that team.

First and foremost is to see the Lakefront Project through to its completion. Based, of course, on the results of the April 7th Referenda.

Monitor and improve the first full year of the recently completed golf course renovation to insure maximum user satisfaction and revenue generation.

Continue the improved personnel structuring process and complete the ongoing succession planning with Executive staff.

Look for ways to improve the working environment for our staff so they have the best tools to provide fulfilling experiences for our users who we should really be referred to as our customers.

Stephanie Foster I moved to Wilmette in 2008 right as my oldest daughter was starting kindergarten. I enrolled her in the Wilmette Park District's Kindergarten Enrichment and had an amazing experience. Since then, my family and children have been active participants in many of the Park District's offerings and I appreciate and care about this wonderful part of living here. In addition, I have been involved in sports and recreation all my life. I spent 13 years coaching collegiate and professional soccer. I want to provide a service to my community, and I have experience in leading in sports and recreation.

My goal is to listen to the wide range of people we have in Wilmette and work with people to improve our existing programs.

Ryrie Pellaton Wilmette has great natural resources; a beautiful lakefront, numerous parks and an active recreational community.

In the short term, I hope to be able to help make positive contributions in the decision making process regarding the Lakefront referenda and plans. I have been working and will continue to strive to encourage community input and ensure that it is both valued and implemented.

We all want the best possible Park District facilities that are both feasible and fiscally sound. Work needs to be done to renovate many aspects of the facilities at Gillson. Whether or not the referendum is passed, I will work with my fellow Commissioners to help determine what form those changes take and at what cost.

My one clear area of disagreement with the current board is with their self imposed deadline for the referendum and the start of construction. We have told repeatedly that the planning has been going on for more than six years, but the plan is (somewhat incredibly) still unfinished. The landscaping plan was presented to the Board for the first time last month. The Board needs to give the elements of the plan more careful individual consideration and the voters need time once that process is complete in order to make informed decisions. We can do better.

In the long term, I hope to offer insight and guidance from my personal and professional experience as a construction manager and educational facilities/operations manager and to utilize input from the residents of Wilmette to assist the Park District staff in making improvements to existing Park District programming, maintenance and operations. I intend to work to improve Park District relations with new and existing non park district recreational groups.

Shelley Shelly I am running for a second term as Park Board Commissioner for several reasons. To me, the lakefront is the “Crown Jewel” of Wilmette and there is so much work yet to be done on a project that began over 6 years ago. I would like to continue on the Board for the culmination of this. I believe, the lakefront project supports the Park district’s mission to enrich the quality of life in the community by maintaining the parks as well as promoting wholesome activities. My hope is to help make the lakefront more desirable for Wilmette residents and make this asset once again a community gathering spot. Once the renovations are complete, I believe we need to address the resident versus non-resident fees and usage and adjust daily rates as necessary.

As a mother of three children who heavily use all areas of the Park District including classes and sports, tennis, pool, beaches, and parks, I feel I have a solid perspective into the needs of families using the park districts many wonderful offerings. I will continue to be a voice of all moms and parents with children using the Park District first-hand. As I said 4 years ago — I am “in the trenches” with other families that actively use the parks and the programs and will continue to actively reach out to residents on a daily basis.

If the two referenda for the lakefront renovations do not pass, what would be your plan to address some of the clear deficiencies that have been noted at both Gillson Park and Langdon Park? (See page 37 of this Voters Guide for the two referenda that will be on the ballot.)

Gary Benz In the unlikely event both lakefront referenda do not pass, my plan would be to work with the Board of Commissioners to prioritize the most dangerous, unsafe, and illegal structures in both lakefront parks and establish a timetable for repair and replacement. Funding

would have to be raised through new taxes and construction scheduled as funds became available.

Jim Crowley Operational funding will be needed to address the structural integrity of the Beach House at Gillson. In addition, the bathroom facilities at the Beach House must be improved and made fully operational as will the sewer system that supports it. The clock is ticking with regards to complying with ADA guidelines for an elevator at the Lakeview Center.

Langdon Park will still need a new safe playground as the current one is 30 years old and must be replaced or removed. The eroding path to the beach will need continued grooming for safe passage to and from the beach. With no referendum approval there would be no beach house bathrooms at Langdon, but I would push for updated Porta Johns which, while not the perfect solution would be better than what is there now.

All of this will take funds and significantly deplete the capital funds balance. The likely result will be offsetting increases in all Park District-offered activities to pay for the necessary band aid repairs. The impact on other capital needs throughout the district may have to be delayed or forgone to pay for the lakefront repairs. In both the short and long term the costs of maintaining rather than replacing these assets will be a burden to all the users of the lakefront and the residents of Wilmette.

Stephanie Foster While there are many excellent features of the Lakefront Plan, I oppose using the referendums to raise money at this time. I will go back to the community and listen to the very important concerns that have been raised, and work to adjust the plan into smaller, more manageable, necessary, and cost-effective pieces.

Ryrie Pellaton The beach house at Gillson and the sailing shack are both in need of repair or replacement, however, as has been noted, this has been a recognized problem for more than six years. The current plan, despite its \$12.7 million price tag still requires the use of Porta Johns at various locations throughout Gillson. The landscaping plan was presented to the Board for the first time last month and it didn't include a list of the many mature trees which it intends to remove, both at Langdon and Gillson. There is a need to install an elevator at the Lakeview center and to make it accessible but how and at what cost? The Board and the community need time to review the elements of the plans in detail and determine what is the best solution for Gillson for the coming decades. We have many accomplished intelligent and creative residents many of whom could assist in this process if their input or professional advice was solicited. Instead of soliciting competing ideas and designs the Board has selected and paid more than \$750,000 in a no bid, non competitive contract for consultants who have done a poor job of listening and designing an appropriate plan for our Gillson and Langdon parks.

Shelley Shelly In the event that the lakefront renovations do not pass, I feel one of the first priorities will be the rebuilding of the beach house at Gillson Beach. In addition, the roads and sewers have also exceeded their useful life. These structures are not safe nor sanitary any longer.

I also feel the sailing beach is in need of updates. The current "Shack" was built 30 years ago and was built as a temporary structure. With the increased popularity of kayaks and paddle boards, the scope of the sailing beach has changed. Washroom facilities are needed to accommodate these changes and bring this area up to date.

What recreational activities currently offered by the Park District would you like to see expanded or reduced? Is there a new activity you would like to see available through the Park District?

Gary Benz I feel the Park District's natural resources need to be presented to the public in available and easy-to-use form so they can be used in educational programs and nature events. Our different flower gardens, nature walks, birding venues, photo opportunities, star gazing areas, and lakeshore resources can be highlighted to include essays and presentations from local naturalists to heighten the appreciation of Wilmette's outdoor assets.

Jim Crowley Theater performance: While we do have a full plate of performances, both musical and plays for adults and children, we might be able to do more and take it to another level. To see the thrill of the performers and the reaction of the audience for *Children's Theatre* is special.

For a new activity I would like to see programming centered on science and nature. Activities that include hands on experiments that are educational, fun and utilize the great natural assets we already have at our disposal: Activities utilizing the Lakefront, Forest Preserve and the night sky, Astronomy. I would like to see the Park District develop a nature center to tell the real story of how Wilmette and particularly Gillson Park came to be. These are real possibilities that have little dollar investment and can be implemented sooner than later.

Stephanie Foster The Park District has a great way of monitoring use of recreation programs. The current sign up statistics tell us what the community is interested in, and we can plan our capacities from there.

I will work with our independent recreation providers, such as Wilmette Hockey and Wilmette Tribe Hockey, Wilmette Wings, Trevians, and Scottish Soccer, Wilmette Harbor Association and the Yacht Club, Canal Shores Golf and Wilmette Baseball to help manage our recreation program capacity. I believe in good relationships with other community programs and working together to continue to make our Park District amazing.

I would like to see the Paddle Program explode like the sport is on the North Shore, in the greater Chicagoland area and nationwide. Our Park District invested in a beautiful facility for this popular sport and I know it will continue to expand with the correct oversight. New programs and activities would have to be cost-effective and loudly demanded by the community. Listening to the concerns and hopes of the community is my biggest priority.

Ryrie Pellaton I feel that the Park District offers a wide selection of activities and does a great service to the community. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be constantly reviewing the offerings and looking for areas of potential improvement.

I began swimming a few years ago in order to be able to compete in triathlon. Because there is no Park District indoor swimming facility in Wilmette, our residents, who want to swim at any time other than three summer months when Centennial is open, must go to surrounding villages and pay to use their facilities. Even during the summer, Centennial is so heavily used that opportunities to swim are restricted.

I have heard from members that the swim clubs and individual swimmers in Wilmette need more pool time year round. I would be interested in hearing from the residents to see if there is interest and support from the community in creating an indoor swimming facility similar to the one at the Glen. But this is not the only suggestion that I have received from residents who would like more from their already good Park District.

Shelley Shelly As a paddle enthusiast, one of my goals 4 years ago was to bring paddle tennis to Wilmette. After 1 full season, the Wilmette paddle tennis program is off to a great start. The facility has exceeded expectations by outperforming the budget and in the first year all operational costs were covered and even a small profit was produced. Not only are many members of the community using the courts and hut, but it's also proving to be a great place to meet new friends and neighbors.

As the chairperson of the Facilities Committee, Staff and I hope to see many more paddle programs added in the next few years. Some of these programs include increasing the number of women's paddle teams in the league to accommodate a variety of levels and skills. There is continued interest in the children and teen programs and I hope to see this expanded as well. In addition to the revenue generated from additional classes and teams, the facility itself provides a great rental atmosphere which is a revenue resource that can be expanded for the Park District.

I also believe there is interest and growth opportunities available with Nature based educational programs. With the renovations and new landscaping and gardens at the lakefront, we have a great opportunity to educate kids in conjunction with camps and offer new programs appealing to all ages.

Describe an experience in which you dealt with competing interests, or held a point of view not shared by public opinion. What was your role and how did that experience prepare you to hold a position on the Board of Park Commissioners?

Gary Benz During my first term I was not a booster of Wilmette's paddle tennis program. When public opinion was shown to support a new recreational facility, I wholeheartedly worked to ensure the plans, construction and marketing of the new program moved it to success. My candidacy reflects a desire to determine what Wilmette residents desire in their parks then execute that desire within budget and on time.

Jim Crowley A few years ago the park district was approached by a group of residents requesting support in creating a skate board park. While the request was not new, it did at the time have a strong following and a thoughtful, passionate proposal. After a review of possible sites it was the board's determination that Hibbard Park was the best location. Public opinion from neighbors surrounding Hibbard Park was adamantly against the idea. As a board member at the time my responsibility was to weigh the pluses and minuses of the proposal, listen carefully to the residents in opposition and keep an open mind to the swirling debate. Ultimately the board and I voted in favor of the proposal. The input received led to the site selection, sound containing berms, security cameras and more. I firmly believe that the resulting facility was a fair compromise for both sides. One of the lessons learned from the experience was that each side of a debate has legitimate concerns and ideas. The art of the debate is to get both sides to willingly agree to compromise so that the end result harms no one.

Stephanie Foster In my career as a soccer coach, it was constant that I dealt with competing interests or held a point of view not shared by public opinion. This was as small scale as dealing with team dynamics and management to competing with other coaches/universities to proposing and opposing complicated rules and regulations with the NCAA. I am fully prepared to take an unpopular position if it is the "right" decision. In the role of Park District Commissioner I would make the voice of the community a top priority while coupling that with thorough research and the financial integrity and prosperity of the Park District.

Ryrie Pellaton During the ten years I spent at the Francis Parker School in Lincoln Park, the school underwent multiple construction projects totaling \$90+ million dollars. As the Director of Operations, my primary job was to determine the needs of the students, the faculty and administration, the parents, the neighbors, the board members and the construction companies, the city of Chicago and a church which rented the auditorium regularly and then to come up with a plan that would satisfy those needs in tightly controlled budget environment.

There were always differing needs and conflict to reconcile and resolve, e.g., construction noise disrupting classroom activities or neighbors whose alley parking was blocked for months by our construction. We accomplished that by meeting regularly with all of the interested and affected parties before and during the planning process, listening to them and working out a mutually agreeable and fiscally responsible plan and then ensuring it was implemented in a timely fashion. Communication, transparency and reasonable accommodation were how we minimized and resolved conflict.

Shelley Shelly Having served the past four years as a Park Board Commissioner, I have gained expertise in dealing with competing interests. My goal is to always keep an open mind and think about what is best for the community. Typically, a small -- yet vocal -- group can form when strongly in favor or opposed to an issue. I try to carefully gather as much input and information from both sides and make a decision that is in the best interest of the entire community.

A specific area in which I have been involved on the board were hours of operation at Centennial pool and working with all the competing groups to best meet the needs of the community. After listening to all parties involved, Staff and the Facilities Committee were able to adjust hours to meet the needs of all the groups involved. This outcome has been favorable. I view my role as a commissioner to be a liaison for the community with the staff.

The Park District provides monitoring of the Elmwood Dunes region of the lakefront on behalf of the Village. Do you feel the oversight has been effective or are changes needed?

Gary Benz I feel the Park District's role in assisting the Elmwood Dunes project reflects the kind of intergovernmental cooperation Wilmette citizens expect. As Elmwood Dunes landscaping expands, I would expect the Park District role to change. I look forward to being able to assist this wonderful resource as a Park Commissioner.

Jim Crowley Certainly positive changes could always be enacted. The village owns the property and ultimately controls what happens at Elmwood. The Park District tries to assist the village by monitoring the beachfront on weekends and holidays during the summer season and enforcing the no swimming rule at the beach. At this point in time the Park District does not control or determine how Elmwood Dunes should be administered, but our inclusion by the Village is a positive step in intergovernmental cooperation. If, at some time in the future, the Village desired more involvement by the Park District in the day-to-day management of the Dunes then by all means we would be willing to explore the possibilities. It's a wonderful natural experience which provides a less programmed beach opportunity to the community and maybe more involvement by the Park District could enhance the experience. Elmwood Dunes was reclaimed by an active citizen group and highlights the best of what people can do for others.

Stephanie Foster Elmwood Dunes is a unique property that shows what Wilmette can do when the Village and volunteers work together to improve recreational space. Wilmette Open Lands and the Friends of Elmwood Dunes have really worked hard to make this property

another beautiful part of our recreation system. We need to evaluate how much involvement the municipality should have with this property. As a first-time candidate for office, I don't see many reports about Park District monitoring of the Dunes, but would be eager to listen to Park District and Village staff, volunteers and neighbors to keep our lakefront in great condition.

Ryrie Pellaton I think it is a natural fit for the Park District to manage the dunes area as they already are managing the much larger Langdon and Gillson beach areas nearby. Beyond some occasional watering of the new plantings and emptying the two new trash cans, I have not seen evidence that the Park District is doing much to manage the evolution of Elmwood. Most of the work to restore that site has been done by volunteers. I think it is time that the Park District took a more active role in providing support and managing Elmwood.

Shelley Shelly Elmwood Beach is owned by the Village of Wilmette and monitored as a non-swimming beach by the Park District. Its been a great experience for the community to have acquired this additional beach area. We are willing to take directives from the Village as needs may change. But again, the Park District is always willing to be a part of a positive recreational experience for the community.

NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203 BOARD OF EDUCATION

**For the incumbents, what motivates you to run for an additional term of office?
For the new applicants, what knowledge or experience do you have that would
make you a valuable member of the board?**

Cathy Albrecht I want to serve on the New Trier school board to add my strengths to its role as the community's education watchdog, accountable for setting priorities for both delivering a superior high school education and ensuring the best use of finite taxpayer dollars. A strong New Trier also is strong for property values. I believe I bring the right balance of public body service, school and community involvement, and legal and business expertise to meet New Trier's current leadership needs.

My experience includes: 8 years (two terms) on the Wilmette Transportation Commission (last two years as chairperson); lawyer and former law firm partner with 13 years prior experience in mergers and acquisitions transactions and international joint ventures and privatizations; since 2005 co-founder and principal of an office equipment sales, services and logistics business; 4 years on the St. Francis Xavier (SFX) Finance Committee; 3 years leading the SFX religious education parent advisory board; multiple PTA past leadership roles in Wilmette public elementary schools, especially involving child and school safety issues; chair of the Wilmette Village-wide PTO civics and safety committee working with local police, parents and school administrators; current New Trier parent and volunteer for the past six consecutive years with children in fine arts and cut and no-cut sports.

In serving on boards and commissions, I invite public discussion and listen with respect to the community and other members on current issues. It is also vital to be prepared, weigh the facts and rely on research and precedent when making decisions. In helping to run the business side of our company, I have insight into operational priorities and insist on justifiable spending. Every career and service role I've served in has required reasonableness and a willingness to compromise and work toward consensus to get the job done.

Lori Goldstein The passion I had in 2011 to join the Board has grown with my active Board participation for the last four years. New Trier continues to be successful because of incredible teamwork and collaboration by administration, faculty, students, parents, the Board, and taxpayers, and Board work is efficient, meaningful and productive.

I enjoy the organizational and school issues I've handled on the Board and in various school and board positions, including budget, staffing, curriculum, strategic planning, school improvement planning, bylaws, policy, and student health and safety. My Board role is enhanced by 30 years of legal experience as an employment attorney, dealing with contracts, negotiations, human relations, employer-employee relations, hiring, firing, staff cuts, discipline, and policy.

Board membership and living in the New Trier community for almost 25 years have enabled me to understand the varied perspectives. I feel strongly about equity and fairness, and I consider all positions on an issue and seek to make balanced decisions. I have significant communications experience and feel strongly about transparency, honesty and listening to our

constituents. It is essential for School Board members to engage with the community, and to ask questions, voice opinions and actively participate at the Board and committee meetings.

Serving on the Board provides an opportunity to give back and to participate in managing the district conservatively, efficiently, transparently, and in the best interests of the community. As NT moves forward with continuing and new issues, including maintaining a balanced budget and academic excellence, building the Winnetka renovation, finding a new superintendent, and negotiating key agreements, I strongly desire to remain involved and continue this important work.

Patrick O'Donoghue I think my record proves I have provided value to the board and offer prospective shared by the community and I would gladly serve a second term if elected.

Greg Werd I have been fortunate to have had a long career in the financial services industry. In this capacity, I have been exposed to numerous experiences and situations that have served me well in the school board setting. These include negotiation and conflict resolution, financial discipline and accountability, investing and cyclical capital markets, as well as teamwork, strategy and people development, and establishment of appropriate goals and objectives.

I have utilized these skills during my years as a board member of both the Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth District 38, as well as the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, whose boards I currently serve on.

The implementation of Common Core Standards and the associated new testing program (PARCC) will have a financial and educational impact on the district. What should the Board's role be regarding the implementation of Common Core Standards and PARCC testing?

Cathy Albrecht New Trier is continually recognized as being among the top in the country in student achievement. The Board's role is to evaluate valid and reliable methods of assessing that achievement, including through standardized testing. PARCC is new testing to assess the successful application of federal Common Core standards and replaces the Prairie State achievement tests in high school. The testing is mandated by Illinois for this spring. PARCC doubles previous standardized testing hours, reducing classroom teaching time and costing the districts to train teachers on PARCC methods and parameters. Reports on trial testing at some schools found the platform to be cumbersome. Many of the 26 states originally committing to PARCC have now withdrawn or delayed testing. The State is not permitting waivers and threatens non-compliance with sanctions. The Board will need to closely monitor the reliability and development of PARCC testing methods and results and actively communicate with the community and Illinois and federal education and legislative leadership on the effectiveness of that testing at New Trier.

Lori Goldstein Government-mandated testing and educational requirements are generally well-intentioned and can serve a crucial role in school districts that are at risk and need such guidance. But, New Trier and many other neighboring districts have been academically successful for years, using education and testing processes to which the Common Core Standards and PARCC pale in comparison. We often find such mandates have little relevance to our district, but also understand that funding may be tied to the mandates, so we have to balance interests. District 203 is in regular communications with our sender and neighboring districts on this issue.

PARCC replaces a single end-of-year test (ISAT or Prairie State) with hours of testing throughout the year. This will significantly reduce classroom instruction time, and can conflict with ACT and AP testing times. For this year, our District elected an option to give PARCC testing to freshmen only. This will positively impact the calendar and logistics and cause less disruption than testing additional students. The Board and administration should evaluate the new testing impact, and watch closely as the State implements and possibly broadens PARCC in future years.

Patrick O'Donoghue The board should urge the administration to comply to the minimum required by law, because CCS and PARCC regulations interfere with the long record of high standards New Trier has already established.

Greg Werd The Common Core and PARCC are both state-mandated initiatives which our district must undertake or face potentially severe consequences at both the district and teacher levels. Although it is up to our administration to best figure out how to implement the PARCC testing and the Common Core standards, the Board can provide its input as to how the process is being carried out, as well as the ramifications for our students, faculty, and district resources.

In addition, to the extent our board members have input/feedback about these initiatives, I believe it is valuable to communicate these thoughts to our state and federal elected representatives.

The special needs budget at New Trier is steadily increasing and is significantly higher this fiscal year compared with the previous year. How would you address this budget issue while ensuring special needs services?

Cathy Albrecht To prepare for the possibility of new shortages in governmental aid that help New Trier fulfill its obligations to its neediest students, the Board will need to closely monitor current expenses in our special education budget and examine options to reconcile the increasing demand for these services with revenue sources. The district is mandated under federal and state law to provide special education resources to students with disabilities. Students with IEP's comprise about 16% of the current student body. About 92% of IEP students are placed in varying extents within the mainstream student body while also receiving additional special education services. The remainder requires services outside the mainstream at greater and increasing costs. Even a small increase in the number of students requiring outside residential placement can immediately escalate special education expenses. Federal and State sources which supplement our special education revenue have been stagnant or decreasing. New Trier risks losing more state aid, currently representing about 2.4% of our revenue, if initiatives in the Illinois legislature are approved which reallocate education aid away from wealthier districts.

Lori Goldstein As a member of both the School Board and the NSSED Governing Board since 2011, and as a long-time member of Family Action Network (FAN), I have closely followed the trends in special education needs, services and related costs. Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and suicide, have increased nationwide. Specialized treatment, day and residential facilities are more prevalent and the costs are necessary and significant.

We need to closely monitor our special education budget to ensure that we are receiving value for our expenditures. This includes special education services we provide in-house, those we use through our NSSED membership, and private treatment facilities. As New Trier's liaison to NSSED, I also have an important role in overseeing the administration and finances of NSSED

and in communicating between our Board and the NSSD Board on issues important to our member district.

Patrick O'Donoghue Special Education needs fluctuate. Fortunately, New Trier has a healthy reserve, which can handle these fluctuations. The board is continually working with the administration to develop new programs to mitigate the District's exposure. However, costs are not always predictable due to transient student populations and the changing nature of IEP's.

Greg Werd In my experience the special needs expenditures the district faces are driven by two primary factors – the number and specific needs of our students, combined with the fiscal operations of the NSSD.

We of course do not have control over either of these two issues. However in an attempt to control costs, we can look at items like providing in-house services instead of outsourcing to the NSSD where economical and working with the NSSD and their administration to ensure that we are getting the best “bang for our buck” as well as participating in the ongoing board management in an effort to ensure the organization is being managed in a fiscally prudent manner.

A major responsibility that will require significant time from the Board over the next few years is the reconstruction and expansion of the Winnetka Campus. What do you see as the Board's role in the success of this major undertaking? What are some criteria the board should use to monitor progress and measure success?

Cathy Albrecht The Board is responsible to the taxpayers and the community for ensuring that the facilities construction project is on time and on budget and has a positive impact on the school's learning environment, while also minimizing the disruption to students and neighbors during construction. The board has already approved having an independent cost estimate to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the construction firm's proposal and should use that resource in negotiating construction contracts. The Board will monthly review and approve bill payments related to the project. It is likely during the course of the project that there will be tradeoffs when unexpected or higher costs arise and it is the board's job to judge the feasibility of the tradeoffs while maintaining the integrity of the project as presented to taxpayers. Initial good news is that the Bond interest rates at offering were lower than anticipated, saving \$11 million in interest over 20 years with a direct cost savings for taxpayers.

Lori Goldstein The Board will continue an important role in overseeing the project from various aspects: financial/budget, safety/security, calendar/logistics, design/construction, and community engagement. Financially, we will focus on staying on budget, remaining fiscally conservative, and retaining our reserves cushion and AAA rating. The safety and security of students, staff, visitors and neighbors will be a key priority. We plan to evaluate the impact of the different calendars and all of the temporary logistics changes on a regular basis. Both our Facilities Committee and our Finance Committee will work closely with the architects, builders and project manager to ensure we achieve a beneficial design economically. Finally, continuing and open communications with the community will inform and engage taxpayers to provide input.

Patrick O'Donoghue The board should continue regular progress reporting of the project and verify the progress adheres to the timetable and costs as planned.

Greg Werd The Board's role should be to provide oversight for our two most important variables on the project – time and money. Is the project moving along on time and on budget? This information and project milestone criteria will be provided by our primary constituencies which are executing the project on the district's behalf: our administration, our architects (Wight), our GC (Pepper), and our independent construction advisor (Pat Sumrow).

A project of this scope, size, and complexity calls for a complete team effort and expedition behavior -- the board must have frequent communicate with all of the above parties to ensure that it is being properly managed – on time and on budget!

With a new governor in Springfield, there may be significant changes to the way public education in Illinois is funded with respect to pensions, school funding formulas, educational mandates and consolidation of school districts. How should the D203 school board prepare for potential dramatic changes in school funding obligations?

Cathy Albrecht Our new governor has endorsed education funding as a priority, but there is uncertainty over how education will be funded and whether there are sources of new revenue since the State is in financial crisis. Some cost savings have been discussed through consolidating school districts and potentially eliminating some redundant regional education offices. Some of the proposed state funding reforms also would reallocate state education aid away from districts with high property tax bases and could shift school-related pension costs away from the state (after decades of underfunding) to the school districts for management. At the same time school districts are required to pay for underfunded education mandates, such as in special education, Common Core implementation and standardized (PARCC) testing. These reform funding measures would severely impact New Trier's revenue sources and expenses and put pressure on local property taxpayers to pay more for education. The Board needs to work diligently to maintain the highest quality education environment for our students, keep a tight budget, and work with similarly-positioned school districts to generate a unified voice with our legislators and government officials on education funding issues to minimize the impact on our local taxpayers.

Lori Goldstein We have already kept a close watch on the legislature and the courts as they pursue controversial issues of pension reform, equitable school funding, tax reform, and charter schools. Collective bargaining will remain impacted by the potential changes to district financial obligations as well as the tax cap and a low CPI. Contract parameters must ensure the financial soundness of the institution well into the future while enabling the school to deliver a high quality education experience. We need to be realistic and fiscally conservative for the short term and the long term.

Balancing the students' and taxpayers' needs, continued streamlining and cost containment should be done with the least negative impact on students. With economics and taxpayers in mind, we should strive to competitively maintain and recruit excellent teachers and administrators while providing development opportunities for 21st century learning. Also key are the physical facilities and equipment needed to provide a safe environment that enables our students to thrive. Meanwhile the Board must stay informed on potential government changes that significantly impact our budget planning.

Patrick O'Donoghue New Trier's Finance Committee should continue to examine 'what-if' scenarios to anticipate future funding dilemmas. My priority rests in examining the current cost drivers while working in the present framework.

Greg Werd I think the short answers for this question at this point are, a) hope for the best and plan for the worst, and b) focus on the things which you can control. The board must be prudent in managing the financial operation of the district, maintaining a conservative fund balance with an emphasis on fiscal discipline. We must be as prepared as possible in the event that additional liabilities are imposed upon the district in the future, and this preparation includes a strong balance sheet and a thoughtful approach to our expenses, contract negotiations, and expenditures.

VILLAGE OF WILMETTE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Note: The three candidates running for the position of village trustee for the Village of Wilmette are unopposed. The questions and responses that follow are presented to inform Wilmette residents about some of the current issues the Village Board will grapple with during their next four-year term and to share the positions of Trustees who will either serve another term or join the board.

Why have you sought one of the open seats for the Village Board? What in your past experience has prepared you for the position?

Senta Plunkett I have sought a position on the Village Board for several reasons. My husband and I have lived in Wilmette almost eleven years and enjoy raising our three children in this wonderful community. From the great municipal services the Village provides, the downtown with some of our favorite restaurants and shops, the beautiful lakefront to the excellent schools and the wonderful park district programs, Wilmette has proven a fantastic place for us to raise our family. I am excited to give back to the community and have a small part in making it a great place to live.

Over the several years I have become increasingly involved with the Village by serving on multiple commissions. My positive experiences with the Village, including its excellent staff and the dedication of those I have worked with, have spurred my enthusiasm even more to serve Wilmette in a greater capacity.

I feel that my background is a great match for the position of Trustee. I am a lawyer by profession and spent several years working with the City of Chicago's Law Department. In that role, I became very familiar with the workings of a municipal government and its departments, including streets and sanitation, sewers, police and fire. After leaving the city, I was able to work and gain experience in the field of commercial real estate.

Five and a half years ago, I was appointed to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission. I became Chair of the Commission and feel that I truly gained an appreciation of the history of Wilmette and many of its wonderful buildings. I learned how those historic structures are an integral part of our modern lives. A year and a half ago, I was appointed to serve on the Board of Police and Fire Commissioners. It has been a great experience and I feel truly lucky to live in a community with such dedicated public servants. My work in both of these positions has given me invaluable insights into the workings of the Village.

Dan Sullivan Having served on the Zoning Board of Appeals of Wilmette for nearly nine years has allowed me to develop an appreciation for the Village of Wilmette and our local government that leads this community. The current Board, Village Management and Staff have done an exceptional job positioning our community for success and today Wilmette is a desired place for people to live, shop and enjoy the many amenities we offer. My interest in serving as a Trustee is to ensure that we continue this momentum with a focus that we maintain the services and infrastructure our residents need, desire and expect.

I have over 20 years of experience in the financial industry and currently lead a large team at a regional bank headquartered in Chicago. The economic downturn we all experienced starting in 2008, allowed me to understand how to work through challenging financial situations and

implement solutions that allowed clients and our organization to grow and prosper today. The Zoning Board of Appeals provided me an understanding of Wilmette, our government structure and the interests of our residents. As a member of the ZBA and Chair of this committee over the last few years, I saw first-hand the passion our residents have toward proper development of the community.

I will bring all of this experience to serve the residents in their best interests with a focus on the continued growth of our community while maintaining the cost controls needed.

Julie Wolf I am looking forward to serving a second term as Village Trustee so I can continue to work to make the village a vibrant place to live, work, and raise a family, while maintaining a sound fiscal base. During my first term, I helped lead the way to establishment of the Elmwood Dunes Preserve, and now chair the Municipal Services Committee. Prior to being elected to the Village Board in 2011, I served on numerous Village commissions, including Appearance Review, Sheridan Road Beautification, and the Lakefront Commission. My educational background includes an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and a BS in Landscape Architecture from Iowa State University.

The Village provides many services to residents and the Board prioritizes, reviews and funds those services. From your point of view, how should the Board handle indirect long-term costs when evaluating board decisions (e.g., access to housing, effects on public health, environmental concerns).

Senta Plunkett There is always a balance to strike when you have limited resources and yet strive to provide residents with the best services possible. Notwithstanding those finite resources, the board has a duty to fully evaluate those indirect costs with each of its decisions. When it comes to police and fire vehicles on the streets every day, you need to strike the best balance between public safety, energy efficiency and cost. In terms of capital improvements to buildings, the same criteria should be evaluated each time as well. Likewise for roadway improvements and sewer construction. The Village's goals of providing affordable housing should also be thoroughly explored when those opportunities arise.

In the best case scenario when evaluating future road construction projects, sewer projects, capital improvements and housing developments, these interests will be in alignment.

Dan Sullivan Maintaining a focus on long term costs is critical to a successful operation and this is one of the most important priorities for me as a Trustee. As we have all experienced with the economic downturn over the last few years, it is important that we focus on our needs beyond the present time. It is important that we think about those long term needs, such as capital projects and infrastructure improvements, and determine a plan for how those are funded. Developing and funding indirect projects is just as important as our community will change over the years. We need to be a place where housing is accessible and diverse with options. My interest to be a Trustee is to play an active role in the financial management, direction and budgeting so we can maintain our current stability and gain further independence so these costs and projects can be funded. My desire is to continue serving Wilmette for many years and I want to make sure our community continues to grow and is well positioned to fund these needed services well beyond 2020, without a significant cost or negative impact to our residents.

Julie Wolf The primary responsibility of the Village is to provide essential services such as fire and police protection, water, sewer, streets and sidewalks. This must remain the top priority in all budgeting decisions; balancing these needs while keeping property taxes low, encouraging

development, and maintaining a balanced budget is complex. Access to fair and affordable housing for all Village residents is a policy that the village should continue to support, although this may not take the form of a line item in the Village budget as has been the case in the past. Any indirect long-term costs associated with any such board decisions need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, and wherever possible sources of funding that limit tax increases should be found. For example, the ad hoc committee convened in 2014 to study housing outlined some excellent suggestions, and staff is currently working with the Board to seek grants to support environmental initiatives.

Describe what your top policy priorities will be as Village Trustee to best secure Wilmette's future.

Senta Plunkett This is an exciting time for Wilmette. It is evident by the new restaurants and businesses popping up downtown and other areas and construction of the new West Park Storage facility.

Wilmette, like many other municipalities, is still playing catch-up from the recession, however. In the last seven years, \$15 million in non-property tax revenue was lost while at the same time operating expenses and Village pension contributions have continued to rise. As a result, budget cuts were made, eliminating many full time positions in the Village, and important capital improvements were deferred. Now the Village desperately needs to address the results of these deferred capital improvements. Streets, alleys and sidewalks are in need of resurfacing and repair, public buildings have critical building repairs to be done, and many police and fire vehicles are at the end of their useful life.

I think it is critical for the Village now to address these issues that have been deferred, while at the same time minimizing any property tax levy increase and maintain a balanced budget.

Dan Sullivan My top priority as Trustee will be to maintain our current economic stability and policies. The board and current Village team have done an excellent job leading Wilmette over the last few years while maintaining strict cost controls, especially with capital needs. With potential changes coming from Springfield, the benefits the Village receives from the State may not be there in the future. It will be important for us to focus on our financial position so we can continue to make investments and enhancements to our infrastructure today and in the future. It will be important to continue to attract new businesses and residential development that will drive increased recurring revenue to fund the capital needed by the Village.

Julie Wolf Sustainability is my top policy priority for the Village – economically as well as environmentally. The Village is in excellent shape financially, and we need to continue the current economic policy of maintaining a balanced budget, looking for operating efficiencies, and keeping taxes low while providing a high level of service. The most urgent environmental issue is stormwater management. Like all communities in the Chicago area, Wilmette is feeling the effects of more erratic weather in recent years combined with impervious surfaces due to development – it simply is impossible for stormwater to dissipate quickly. Recent engineering studies have provided information and opened the way to discussions regarding the best way to approach the problem.

**In your opinion, what kinds of businesses should we try and attract to Wilmette?
What steps should be taken?**

Senta Plunkett This is a fun question. A few days ago I would have said Wilmette could really use a wood-fired pizza restaurant. Then I just found out that a wood-fired pizza restaurant is in fact coming to Wilmette as well four new retailers and the rebranding of at least one other restaurant. Yea!

I believe the influx of new restaurants and establishments in the downtown district has paved the way for more restaurants and new retail. Other businesses that I would like to see downtown include a coffee, tea shop, or juice bar, which would attract people during the day and ideally serve as a gathering spot for teens and young adults in the evenings. The Rock House's success in this area can be an example for other businesses. It would also be fun to see a business similar to Growth Spurts take hold in downtown Wilmette. The Village Center is ringed by several schools and I think there is a market for this as well as for party venues.

Further, I would love to see public art installations that would attract even more people to the downtown area.

While Wilmette doesn't currently have financial incentives for new businesses, the arrival of new restaurants and retail demonstrates that the Village has made the application process as business-friendly as possible. I will further encourage this and reach out to businesses that I think would be a good fit for Wilmette.

Dan Sullivan The Village has taken many steps to revitalize our business offerings over the last few years. Maintaining the vibrancy of Village Center and some of our other business districts such as Eden's Plaza is critical to increasing revenue for the Village. Today, Wilmette is a desired place to eat and shop for our residents and more so, non-residents who live in neighboring communities. We no longer need to leave Wilmette but rather we are staying here, utilizing the offerings which support business owners and our community. It is important for us to continue to seek these businesses that will bring people to Wilmette and use the services we offer.

The Village management has made opening a business and development of our community very streamlined and easy. As Trustees, we will need to continue to review the services these businesses need to maintain their successful operation. We need to focus on costs they incur for these regular services, such as waste removal. As important as these businesses are to Wilmette, it is more important that they earn a sustainable profit for their operation. Wilmette needs to continue to be a well-run, welcoming business community so these operations stay and new ones relocate to us.

Julie Wolf Dining, shopping and entertainment options are increasing in the downtown and neighborhood business areas, and make Wilmette a desirable destination not just for residents but for visitors from other communities. The Village should continue to market this concept, and work with the Chamber of Commerce to increase awareness of Wilmette as a great place to open a business. I also believe that arts-oriented businesses such as theater and dance schools add a great deal to the vibrancy of the community, as well as bringing people in, and I would like to see more of this type of business.

If you find yourself supporting a position that is different from the majority of the Board, how do you see your role advocating for the dissenting opinion? If the final vote/decision went against your position, how would you proceed on that issue?

Senta Plunkett I would certainly have no difficulty asserting my opinion even if it differs from the majority. Information, knowledge and the clear communication of those are the most important tools in this respect. Dissent can occur when people don't have all the facts. I also believe that most of the time common ground can be uncovered upon which a compromise can be built. I have a lot of respect for the Trustees who serve the Village, and if ultimately the final decision went against my position, I would support them.

Dan Sullivan Though the Zoning Board of Appeals was advisory only, we often reviewed cases that were split decisions and sometimes my vote was in the minority. This to me is the best part of our political system as everyone is allowed to have an opinion but that may not be on the side of the majority. Sometimes dissention from the majority is important as we challenge ourselves to think of all potential impacts but it is important how we handle the outcome of the vote. As a Trustee, it will be critical to stay involved beyond the vote as issues are implemented. I will embrace the decision but work hard to make sure the final outcome has some representation of the minority opinion.

Julie Wolf My role in advocating for the dissenting opinion on the board comprises gathering and presenting facts to support my position, and trying to make a convincing argument. I always make an effort to be as well-informed as possible, both about current board agenda items and about best practices from other communities. Even if a vote or decision does go against my position, I think the fact that I have had a chance to voice and justify my position publicly is of value in policy decisions.

WILMETTE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Note: The four candidates running for the position of Board of Trustees for the Wilmette Public Library District are unopposed in the current election. The questions and responses that follow are presented to inform district residents about some of the current issues that the library board will grapple with in the next four years and the positions of these trustees who will represent the community.

You have served on the Board of Trustees for the public library in Wilmette and want to continue for another term. What are your recommendations for solving particular challenges that you foresee the library will face in the coming years.

Jan Barshis The major challenge for the library in the coming year for both patrons and staff will be the renovation project scheduled to begin in March 2015. Keeping the library open and functional will be difficult, but plans are being developed to do so. Information will be published periodically to let patrons know what sections of the library will be affected, when, and for approximately how long, so patrons can plan around areas which will be temporarily off limits.

Another challenge for the Library is to continue to serve as a model for other public institutions in reducing their environmental footprint. From the use of permeable pavers in the parking lot, to the incorporation of staff suggestions, to a series of environmentally responsible construction initiatives, the Library is helping educate the Wilmette community in sustainability.

A final challenge will be to keep up with future technological advances for finding information, using new equipment, and making information available. The library should continue being proactive in providing classes which help patrons keep up with new equipment, learn new ways to access information, and experiment with new ways to read books.

Virginia George The most immediate challenge as well as a tremendous opportunity is our construction project. The construction will update the Youth Services department on the 2nd floor. We will also make our washrooms accessible for all. HVAC systems will be improved and made more efficient. We want to remain open while all this goes on so that is the challenge. We made it clear throughout the planning that staying open is very important. Our contractors and subcontractors are willing to make the effort to work within these constraints.

Lisa McDonald

Challenge: Parking— WPL is landlocked and the city owns or has plans for any space that can be leased or secured for additional parking.

Solutions currently utilized:

- Stagger programming so that there are never two high attendance programs at the same time
- Continue digital offerings, data bases, etc so that patrons can access WPL '24 – 7

Challenge: Ongoing Community Engagement targeting non-users of WPL

Solution:

- Ongoing education and outreach of the programs, resources and services the Library offers through the newsletter, internet, and presence at community events.

- Continued opportunities for feedback through comment cards, e-mail comments and outreach to other organizations.

Challenge: Reaching Young Adults/Teens since attendance tends to decline

Solution:

- Remain relevant by continuing to offer programs that interest them – *Pizza Study Breaks during Exams*, *Teen Advisory Board* are some of the ways staff engage the audience. The Rehab will feature additional study rooms for tutoring and small group meetings which are always in demand

Challenge: Succession Planning

Solution:

- Some of WPL's Staff is aging and it is important to cross train and have succession planning in place for the leadership.

Challenge: Funding

Solution:

- Continue to be financially conservative and set aside reserves to maintain the infrastructure. The current rehab project is being funded with reserves that have been set aside each year.

Challenge: Privacy & Surveillance – Restoration of Constitutional privacy rights of library users and all American lost since "9-11" – Section 215 of the Patriot Act

Solution:

- Educate the public on the impact of the phrase 'individualized suspicion' which expires May 2015 — I value the privacy and security of our patrons and they need to be protected.

Kathleen O'Laughlin According to the community wide survey taken by the library a few years ago, the Library is well regarded by the community with only a few recommendations on how to improve or expand service. Among those recommendations was an increase in services to youth and a better use of space for comfortable reading areas for adults. The Library has already moved to address these issues: it has increased its youth programming and will address some space and usage issues in the upcoming renovation. Other recommended areas were to maintain the current level of service, such as arts programming and adult education programming.

A major current challenge is to continue this while undergoing a renovation of the HVAC that will touch the entire building.

How and where should the library strike the balance in the assignment of space, personnel and budget to traditional (printed matter and images in various forms) versus digitally encoded, electronically stored, compact replicas of the traditional means of providing information to the public?

Jan Barshis The proliferation of electronic and digital resources for gathering, storage, and use of information poses an ongoing challenge for the library administration and staff. Increasing costs and a finite amount of storage space have forced staff to discontinue a number of subscriptions to "hard copy" periodicals and other research materials in favor of electronic/digital versions of the publications. Many library patrons are more familiar and comfortable with "hard copy," and the computers and other electronic devices used to access information are heavily used. So staff members must use all of their skills to find and maintain a balance between traditional and electronic resources. They do this by analyzing patron preferences, training patrons in alternative ways to access information, and maximizing the use of existing

electronic resources. This is an ongoing process, and my job as a Board member is to represent the public's interests by ensuring the balance is maintained in a fiscally responsible way.

Virginia George As different formats for delivering information develop, the library collection evolves. We provide materials in many ways. It is important that we do so. Some patrons prefer paper books, some audiobooks, some ebooks. We strive to meet the preferences of most, and will continue to do so. On-line resources for language learning, databases and magazines are other ways we serve the public from their homes or other locations.

Lisa McDonald WPL continuously culls its inventory and adds additional titles based on patrons' requests and wait lists.

RAILS facilitates the transportation of inter-library loans so that patrons can access infrequently requested publication from other libraries.

It is a fine balance managing the demand for e-books and hardback publications. The staff does an excellent job given the inconsistent fee structure and policies of e-book publishers.

WPL strives to provide a variety of easily accessible media formats to patrons. Hoopla which allows the streaming of movies, music, audio books and TV to your computer or digital devices is a recent addition. Also, Overdrive allows access to e-books and the library orders additional titles based on demand.

Kathleen O'Laughlin This is a continuing challenge for the library as needs change. One way of addressing this is to choose flexible space options when appropriate. For example the space in the current AV room can be completely reconfigured to other uses if needed. Any balance struck now cannot be assumed to be one needed some years in the future. According to the community survey the library is appropriately addressing the current needs of the community. The library continues to evaluate and keep current as those needs change.

To what extent, if at all, should the library take a role in the introduction to, and the training of the public in the use of, eBooks, 3D printers, and making videos, for example, as a means of gaining or creating information?

Jan Barshis It is part of the library's mission to educate its public about accessing and using information resources. The library has thus far done an excellent job in providing patrons with knowledgeable staff and specific workshops in the use of the various electronic resources available to the public. I have personally attended workshops on the use of e-readers and ways to access digitally stored information and have found them to be helpful. I have benefitted from the level of expertise of the librarians and other service staff throughout the library and have found them to be courteous, trained, and skilled in the newest technologies available to patrons.

Virginia George The library provides training on new formats for accessing information as well as training on new tablets, e-readers etc. Library personnel go off-site to provide training to seniors and others. As far as 3-D printers and videos, I am open to providing these technologies as our budget allows.

Lisa McDonald The library should be the go to source for books and media. Classes through the Digital Universe such as instruction on E-books and iPads fit WPL's mission since that is a format that patrons are increasingly accessing literature.

WPL does not have a Maker Lab, which is where one usually finds a 3D printer. Running a 3D printer requires space, unique core competencies, staffing and education. A Maker Lab is not in the rehab plans because Youth Services needed more program and play space given that the current programs are oversubscribed. They focus on programs that serve more patrons and reinforce STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and literacy.

Kathleen O’Laughlin Currently the library has classes to assist patrons in the use of ebooks, IPADs (which can be checked out) and other electronic media. Right now given the upcoming renovation the Library is not looking to expand in this area until the renovation is complete. Any patron can bring his or her own device in and a librarian will be happy to assist with getting started on ebooks, magazines (Zinio) and movies (Hoopla).

Should the library continue with, or even expand its special events and other fora, that entail presentations and colloquia, invited guest authors or other especially knowledgeable persons, as an alternate approach to providing information to the public?

Jan Barshis The library has done an excellent job in presenting different kinds of special events as described above from music, to book and film discussions, to opportunities to learn new skills, and more. As a source of information and learning, it has provided many different formats to do so in order to reach as many people as possible and should continue to do so as part of its mission.

Virginia George The library should continue its excellent programs that inform and engage the community. While the construction may temporarily curtail or relocate some programs, a key function of the library is to serve as a place for the community to gather. Support groups, arts groups, and book groups all use the library. We also strive to make welcoming spaces for all ages to work, study or just read a book or use a computer.

Lisa McDonald ‘The Wilmette Public Library District exists to serve the informational, intellectual, cultural, and leisure needs of the Wilmette and Kenilworth resident and business communities.’

The above mission statement was developed with the Staff, Volunteers and Trustees based on the community survey. Based on the mission, patron interests, as well as attendance figures the staff develops programs that educate, inform, support and inspire residents. I strongly support the diversity and variety of offerings that meet this goal. If you look at The Beacon’s calendar section on any week — 2/3rd of the offerings in Wilmette occur at the WPL.

It is also imperative that WPL continue to work with with partners to enhance these offerings whether it is Wilmette Junior High School who hosts *One Book Everybody Reads Series* that is programmed by staff and sponsored by Friends of the Wilmette Public Library which reached over 500 people including the supplemental program, or How to Appeal Your Taxes during Money Week with the Federal Reserve. We also partner with the Wilmette Park District, school districts and senior housing. These collaborations and outreach efforts will become more important while WPL is undergoing renovation in the next year.

Kathleen O’Laughlin This has been a significant focus over the past few years with presentations and seminars offered on the Civil War, World War I and Muslim Journeys. There has been good attendance for these events. *One Book Everybody Reads* continues to be a very

popular and well attended program, which includes an author lecture as well as other presentations related to the book selected.

According to the most recent Cook County Treasurer's report, the Wilmette Public Library District has funded only 74.5% of its pension liability, leaving about \$1.33 million from being fully funded. What measures do you support to fully fund the library's pension fund liabilities? [See Cook County Treasurer's report here.](#)

Jan Barshis The Library's pension fund is part of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) and is not part of the highly publicized and deeply troubled Illinois public pension system. Before the recession, the fund was fully funded. When IMRF investments, like those elsewhere, because of the recession, suffered, part of its pension obligations became unfunded. However, each year, the Library pays the full amount requested by IMRF, so it has fulfilled its obligation. It owes the pension fund no money. This is why, on our tax bill, it shows that the Library owes zero. Continued prudent fiscal management by Library staff and an improving economy for IMRF's investment portfolio should keep the Library's pension obligations at a manageable level.

Virginia George The pension body that covers public libraries is the IMRF. Each year the library receives a funding notice from the IMRF that the library pays in full. The pension amount owed each year changes based on anticipated retirements and anticipated investment earnings. The library is able to meet the requirements of the IMRF, and has the resources to fund its pension obligations. Investment income is expected to "make up" any gap.

Lisa McDonald WPL gets an annual statement from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) which recommends WPL's rate of contribution to the pension fund. The Board, including myself always votes to comply with IMRF's request since they manage the fund and are the experts. The calculation is based on a 28 year amortization period for most employees. Fluctuations in the amount funded are due to fluctuations in the market.

Kathleen O'Laughlin Each year the library receives a funding notice from IMRF (the pension body) that covers libraries. The library pays that amount in full. The stated gap is not a gap in what the library owes, because as calculated the gap is assumed to be closed by some amount of investment earnings. The pension amount is affected by a number of factors, such as investment earnings and the actual dates of anticipated retirements. The library has the resources to pay the amount required by IMRF. The library does not however attempt to pay this amount in advance by speculating what the upcoming investment experience of the fund might be.

AVOCA SCHOOL DISTRICT 37 BOARD OF EDUCATION

Note: The three candidates running for the Avoca School District Board of Education are unopposed. The questions and responses that follow are presented to inform district residents about several of the current board issues and to share the positions of board members who will either serve another term or join the board.

What would you like to accomplish as a Board member in the next four-year term?

Louise Dechovitz My first priority will be to continue the good work of the District 37 School Board in helping the District balance competing financial priorities while maintaining focus on all activities that directly impact the education of our children. My second priority is to do everything I can to help our District build upon its commitment to maximizing the unique potential of every child it serves in core academics, in the arts, in our high achieving and special needs students, and in our community values. My third priority is to ensure we maintain our position as a highly attractive place to work and build a career in education so that we continue to attract and retain the best faculty for our District.

Joel Raynes To continue being a member of the finance committee, having a balanced budget and keep our reserves healthy. To continue monitoring our long-range facilities plan and implement our life safety program over the next several years.

Sheryl A. Swibel I have had the unique privilege to serve as a member of the Avoca School Board both from 1996 – 2005, when my children were students in the district, and again over the last 2 1/2 years, as an empty-nester. My experience puts into perspective the effects of recent state mandates and personnel changes in the administration.

In the next four years, I hope to support execution of the Board's strategic plan – our blueprint for the District. Among other aspects of the plan, I would encourage professional development for all classroom teachers in the area of social-emotional curriculum. In the spirit of a continuous improvement model, I would like to approve a technology plan that completes an audit of infrastructure, systems, curriculum and personnel. I also believe it is imperative that we prioritize a prudent long-term facilities maintenance schedule. And in the area of curricular studies, I would like administrative feedback on pilot programs.

Additionally, I have long recognized the importance of community connections. In addition to continuing our community communication efforts, in the next term, I hope to conduct more informal "check in" meetings with parents and non-family constituents. This can be accomplished by inviting the community to on- and off-campus "town meetings." In addition to our communication efforts, I support reinstating computer classes for our constituents to demonstrate giving back to a very supportive community.

With a new governor in Springfield, there may be significant changes to the way public education in Illinois is funded with respect to pensions, educational mandates and consolidation of school districts. How should the D37 School Board prepare for potential funding obligations?

Louise Dechovitz We will need to consistently monitor our principles and the framework through which we consider financial priorities for the District. While we may not know the specifics of any future changes, we do know as a community what is important to us, which elements of education are non-negotiable, and where there might be opportunities to be creative in areas outside of classroom spending. My priority will always be to shield our children from any negative effects of potential funding changes and ensure the absolute best educational experience for our sons and daughters.

Joel Raynes As a school board member, I am concerned about what is happening in the State of Illinois. We all realize that public education may change and we as a board will deal with whatever the changes are. Collectively, we will come up with ways to fund and deal with whatever changes are dictated by the Governor and the State of Illinois.

Sheryl A. Swibel The discussion in Springfield about teacher pensions has been looming over school districts for the last few years. We approve our annual budget with the knowledge that we must maintain healthy reserves to protect for the unknown, which could include the state shifting responsibility to local districts for the employee portion of teacher pensions.

The district has a record of being proactive and acting responsibly prior to enacted legislation. In our recent past, the district prepared for setting budgets in a tax-cap environment, required balanced budgets, cut expenses across the board, and planned a timeline for maintenance projects during stressful economic times. In the spirit of being proactive, we will continue district practice to monitor actions in Springfield and prepare for the unknown regardless of who sits in the governor's mansion. We will inform all stakeholders, if and when, new local obligations arise.

In your view, what has the Avoca School District done well over last four years? What improvements, if any, should the district undertake?

Louise Dechovitz The top two achievements of the Avoca School District in the past four years have been 1) maintaining fiscal integrity in a very difficult financial climate, and 2) the District has smoothly implemented Common Core State Standards while not compromising on our holistic educational priorities and values.

In terms of what needs improvement, I believe we need to benchmark key services against similar high-performing districts and create clearly defined goals for non-core academic but critically important areas such as the social-emotional curriculum, special needs education and services, and the gifted program. We must have evidence-based and data-based SMART goals if we are to maintain a leadership position in these areas.

In addition, communicating with busy parents and other community members is always a challenge, but with the upcoming implementation of PARCC testing, facilitating a dialog between the District and the community on the best way forward should be a top priority for the Board.

Joel Raynes As a member of the finance committee, we have come in with balanced budgets and have kept healthy financial reserves. Being a former banker, I scrutinize over the financials of the school district. The school district is implementing a Life Safety Plan over the next several years.

Sheryl A. Swibel The Avoca District has performed very well in several areas. We continue to experience high achievement in the academic area while maintaining balanced budgets and healthy reserves. The district has anticipated state legislative mandates that would affect the academic program, evaluation and testing areas, such as with the Common Core Standards, the Performance Evaluation Act (PERA), and the upcoming PARCC testing. The district's strategic plan recognizes the importance of aligning the curriculum that would ultimately prepare our students for the new state standardized testing. The district's professional development efforts have appropriately focused in these areas.

The strategic plan also calls for analysis of the district's long-term facilities plan. The Board has successfully received approval for a mandated life-safety plan and prioritizing capital facility projects. The district solicited financial experts for assistance in developing the district's financial plan and securing an upgraded AAA bond rating. The improved bond rating, coupled with our healthy fund balances, has positioned the district to comply with state initiatives. We also enlisted architectural experts to advise us regarding the best and most cost-effective ways to approach our commitment to housing our students in safe and secure buildings and maintain our facilities without additional tax burdens to the taxpayer. Prudent planning, advice from experts, and diligent work directed by the Avoca Board has made this possible.

I am proud that Avoca is a leader in academics and technology, but I see room to enhance our programs aimed at the academic and social-emotional development of students, as contemplated by the strategic plan and embodied by our mission "to maximize the potential of each child." In particular, the social-emotional curriculum needs to be reviewed and executed to meet the needs of all of our students, and provide professional development for our classroom teachers. We need to encourage more community engagement by informing the community about district goals and accomplishments. An informed public will understand our goal to balance providing an outstanding education with financial responsibility.

The inappropriate use of social media in the schools has made headlines in the last few months. What steps should the school board take to ensure that technology is successfully managed in the schools?

Louise Dechovitz There are three key steps that the School Board should take:

1. Keep current with the latest software on school computers to protect our children from inappropriate content;
2. Provide ongoing education for the students including facilitated dialog to raise awareness of the dangers of inappropriate use of social media;
3. Encourage an ongoing conversation between the School District and parents on the appropriate use of technology and social media both in the classroom, at home and in the wider community.

Joel Raynes As a school district, we take technology very seriously. Currently, our filters block social media sites in the schools and we are continuing to block access to those sites. Each school teaches Digital Citizenship which helps students make appropriate choices.

Sheryl A. Swibel The Board of Education governs in accordance to approved policy and legislative mandates. District 37 recognizes the changing social media landscape and the

potential impact on its users. We expect the management of technology throughout the district to require all users to sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and to certify they have read student handbooks. The AUP and student handbooks define what is not acceptable and appropriate.

Consistent with state law requirements, Avoca Policy No. 7:180 addresses bullying and harassment, and the District is committed to taking appropriate action in response to cyber-bullying. In addition, the district is required to use a web filter to protect students from inappropriate internet content. The district guards against students from using social media sites on district devices or district servers. Our technology team is trained to monitor student behavior and requires “Digital Citizenship” of our students. The school’s curriculum focuses on digital etiquette and emphasizes this topic and provides students with the tools to appropriately navigate social media.

What would you like to say to teachers, to parents, and to the taxpayer community about the upcoming teacher contract discussion?

Louise Dechovitz It is critical that we maintain a total rewards package for faculty that is both fair and competitive in order to attract and retain the best talent available. We know that teachers are the key ingredient in the successful education of our children and that teaching is a profession and a calling that must be respected and celebrated. However, we have to recognize that budgets are finite and we need to achieve a balance between capital spending, variable costs, total compensation of teaching staff and direct spending on student education.

Joel Raynes I am hoping that the teachers, parents and community will think that the new contract will be fair and reasonable.

Sheryl A. Swibel As an Avoca Board of Education Member, my guiding concern is ensuring excellence in education. Superior faculty and staff are integral to that goal. I am committed to seeking a fair and equitable contract for our fine professionals and our deserving public. Given our revenues, expenses and uncertainty in the state mandates, we will be prudent and responsible to our families and constituents. The board will form a negotiation committee. The committee will exchange information with the teachers and enter negotiations with a mindset of mutual respect.

ELECTION DAY IS Tuesday, April 7, 2015

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

Early voting will be at Centennial Park & Recreational Complex
2300 Old Glenview Road
Wilmette, IL

Monday March 23rd through Monday, April 6th

Hours vary, check www.lwwilmette.org

Referenda on the Ballot

Wilmette Park District Referendum: Gillson Park

Shall bonds of the Wilmette Park District, Cook County, Illinois, to the amount of Twelve Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$12,700,000) be issued for the purpose of constructing, equipping and maintaining infrastructure and facilities in Gillson Park?

Wilmette Park District Referendum: Langdon Park

Shall bonds of the Wilmette Park District, Cook County, Illinois, to the amount of One Million Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,800,000) be issued for the purpose of constructing, equipping and maintaining infrastructure and facilities in Langdon Park?

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 Web site, www.lwvwilmette.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.

Join Us!

The League of Women Voters of Wilmette
Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport



P.O. Box 432
Wilmette, IL 60091

Check our Web site (www.lwvwilmette.org)
for upcoming events
and find us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/LWV.Wilmette>