

North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization

2008 Election Edition

North Kingstown Town Council and School Committee Candidate Questionnaires

We at the North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization believe strongly in a local government that is transparent, accountable and fair. Over the past several years we have worked to familiarize the voters with the ideas and opinions of the candidates prior to an election.

We prepared questionnaires and mailed them out to each candidate for the North Kingstown Town Council and School Committee. The answers serve as a means for candidates to share their own concerns and priorities and will be used as input to developing questions for the Candidate Forums.

**The North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization will again hold
Candidate Forums at the Wickford Middle School:**

Town Council Candidate Forum: 7pm October 8th

School Committee Candidate Forum: 7pm October 16th

Both are open public forums

North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization

Private Citizens Seeking Confidence in Our Local Government

NK taxpayers see the "value" in educating our children and giving them extracurricular opportunities, along with maintaining roads and dams, providing services for senior citizens, and providing public safety.

Keeping those priorities in mind, we cannot afford to "waste" taxpayers' dollars, particularly during this period of budget crisis at both the state and local level and while people are being taxed out of their homes.

NK taxpayers are looking for accountability, transparency and fairness.

Visit our Website
www.Nktaxpayers.org

If you wish to contact us by letter please write us at:

North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization
PO Box 1286
N. Kingstown, RI 02852

Or by Email at:
Info@nktaxpayers.org

Contents:

Town Council Candidate Responses, Pages 3 – 10
School Committee Candidate Responses, Pages 11- 14
North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization About Us, Page 15
Locations For The General Election, Page 16

1. Why have you chosen to run for a seat on the Town Council?

<p>Carol H. Hueston: (Republican) “I lived in this town for most of my life, and I care very deeply for it. I hope to be able to give back to the town.”</p> <p>Michael Bestwick: (Democrat) “North Kingstown has been my home for 18 years. The schools have soundly educated my two sons. The residents have supported my business for almost 40 years. Therefore, I would seek an opportunity to give back to our town whatever business expertise I can bring that would benefit North Kingstown town government. I think it would be an honor and privilege to serve the residents of this fine town.”</p> <p>Liz Dolan: (Independent) “I have chosen to run again for two reasons. First, I served as Town Council President from 2002-2004, and will bring my experience to what will be a clean slate of Council members during what will surely be a challenging Council term from an economic standpoint. Second, my family of four children are four years older; two are away in college and the younger two are 15 and 12; I have more flexibility to bring both time and energy to the next Council.”</p> <p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: (Independent) “I am an independent candidate with a serious focus on environmental, temperance and social issues, many of which are not shared by the other mainstream candidates. As a member of our Town Council, I would be able to do more to improve the quality of recycling, agricultural protective zoning, to enact ordinances minimizing or eliminating the harm caused to alcoholic beverages and tobacco products and to provide more effective oversight and supervision of our neighborhoods and multi-family housing projects.”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: (Republican) “As a concerned citizen of the town where my wife and I have chosen to live, I am keenly interested in our town government, how our tax dollars are spent and how we provide services for our residents. I believe my business experience enables me to bring an important perspective to solving the many difficult issues facing our community. I want to contribute to the process by which together we arrive at responsible solutions.</p>	<p>Tracey A. McCue: (Democrat) “As a lifelong resident of NK, I have watched our local government become less open and accountable. I want to bring these qualities to town government. All of as taxpayers have the right to know how our money is being spent. As taxpayers we need to be embraced and encouraged to participate in our government. Our elected officials need to remember that they work for the taxpayers; government is for the people by the people”</p> <p>Matthew H. Leonard: (Democrat) “I am running for Town Council because of my love for North Kingstown and passion about preserving its beauty while developing our current business zones. North Kingstown is where I received a great public education and learned the true meaning of community. It’s where my mother struggles to live on her retirement in my childhood home. My extended family also calls North Kingstown home. The North Kingstown Town Budget has surpassed 93 million dollars. Residents expect and deserve more for their tax dollars. The cost of our water, electricity, heating, food, and health insurance is climbing faster than our incomes. The reality is that State and Federal funds are becoming scarcer. Local governments are squeezed in the middle. This undisputed trend means our Town Council must make difficult decisions. The solution cannot be increasing our taxes. I have the experience and determination to implement real solutions to address taxpayers concerns. I’ve worked tirelessly to develop proposals that will provide real results and look forward to provide my plans to the citizens of North Kingstown. I will not allow petty and trivial issues to distract tough decisions. I have no interest and will not participate in scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up my sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle our town’s biggest problems.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: (Republican) “I have lived in North Kingstown for 28 years. This Town has been very good to me and to my wife. Now that I am retired and working locally, it is time to give back and serve the people of this community.”</p>	<p>Steven R. DeToy: (Democrat) “Because I love our town where our children were raised and educated with the quality of life my wife still enjoy. Our town, and all the others in RI, is facing severe challenges due to the fiscal mismanagement of our state government. My experience working in and around government for the past 28 years has taught me that government works best when the taxpayers take an active role in the decision making process. Yet with all five members of the current council not seeking reelection I felt a sense of duty to offer my experience, qualifications and commitment to the voters for their review. I have been successful in my career working to find solutions to the issues at hand. We can turn these challenges into opportunities to redefine how we deliver essential town services and how we pay for them. We can think in new and exciting ways to find the solutions to these challenges. I know I am qualified to be one of those elected to carry on the work of our current Council.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: (Republican) “I am running for Town Council because I love this town and want it to continue to be great. North Kingstown has deservedly earned its reputation as a great place to live, raise a family, and retire. I want my children to be able to have a top notch public education here. When my children are adults, I want them to be able to find good paying jobs in North Kingstown and be able to afford to live here. Specifically, I would like to offer my skills and abilities to help figure out: How can we best consolidate services within North Kingstown and/or cooperate with neighboring towns to share services in order to save taxpayers’ money? How can we fund our schools in a way that keeps them high performing for students and affordable to taxpayers? How can we revitalize the economic health of Post Road more quickly while simultaneously protecting the overall quality of life of our residents? How can we realize true synergy with the Quonset Business Park so that its resident neighbors and nearby Post Road businesses can also benefit from the job development activities within the park?</p> <p>Note: One candidate did not return the questionnaire.</p>
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2. What unique abilities do you bring with you that make you more qualified than the other candidates?

<p>Michael Bestwick: “I believe that everyone that seeks public office brings abilities and goals to their campaign. It would be presumptive and somewhat arrogant to assume that I am better qualified than others, but these are the qualities and abilities I would hope to provide: Honesty in handling town affairs; A spirit of bi-partisanship to the deliberations of our council. I would try to be a person who would seek cooperation from all factions and parties on the Council; A hard-nosed approach to town finances and budget making. My experience in business for 37 years has made me very conscious of two things: You cannot spend more than you take in; You must always be ready for the unforeseen event whether it be a drop off in state aid or severe down turn in our tax base.”</p> <p>Steven R. DeToy: “ 28 years of experience in and around government including 7 years working on municipal budgets in the City of Cranston, 4 years helping RI’ers deal with issues they may have with the federal government. I have experience with the US Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities and RI League of Cities and Towns where I was involved in the creation of the RI Interlocal Risk Trust insurance purchasing pool for cities and towns. 18 of those years have been in my current job where I have been highly successful bringing people from diverse points of view to common ground, I have been a small business owner, as was my father, I know those challenges. I believe that every idea is worth considering and I am committed to finding ways to encourage and facilitate greater taxpayer involvement in crafting the solutions we need.”</p> <p>Carol H. Hueston: “I’m a good listener.”</p>	<p>Jim Berson: “I believe that I would bring a valuable combination of professional leadership experience and track record of community involvement to the Town Council. That said, I do not know enough about the other candidates to state why I might be more qualified than them.”</p> <p>Matthew H. Leonard: “I am humbled to be a candidate and honored to be running with so many talented residents who want to make North Kingstown the best it can be. One of the key differences between my opponents and myself is our backgrounds. I was employed with a privately held company that grew into a 3-billion world wide publicly traded corporation. Working as a Business Assessment Engineer provided me the education and ability to manage budgets, develop and implement processes to increase efficiency, and reduce cost while improving service. I currently work for a 4th generation food distribution company in Cranston. This has been an “eye opening” experience on how small companies in Rhode Island struggle daily with the high cost of taxes, fuel, insurance, electricity and other expenses. I am the only candidate that did not seek the endorsement of their political party. I’m running for Town Council to work for all citizens; republicans, democrats and independents. I’m proud to be a democrat but will work for the taxpayers not a political party. I will "Listen to the citizens.” I’m committed to a non-partisan rational decision-making process that has the best interest of the citizens of our town.”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “I bring the knowledge and skills developed during a business career in the senior management of two large financial services organizations. I have experience in governance, finance, investments, law and management. I am a problem solver and a good listener.”</p>	<p>Liz Dolan: “As noted above, I am the only Council candidate that has had prior Council experience. I also bring four years experience on the Planning Commission and two years experience on the Charter Review Commission.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "I have over 30 years of senior management business experience. I owned my own business in Providence for many years; I was a senior officer at Taco Inc. in Cranston and was a senior manager with Weil-McLain from which I retired in 2002. I have been responsible for budgets equal to our Town’s budget. I have had to make the tough decisions when it came to cutting expenses.”</p> <p>Tracey A. McCue: “Having grown up in NK, I understand the history and characteristics that make NK what it is. Having that insight helps understand the needs and concerns of residents. Not only am I a resident but a local small business owner. My experience in business has allowed me to work with many different personalities. I understand that it takes trust and openness to make things work. I have negotiations contracts and labor issues. I have looked at both sides and looked for the best result for all. No one can have it all their way; it is a give and take. This is what I can bring to the council. “</p> <p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “As a senior, approaching age 71, I have a wealth of life experiences to guide myself. I graduated from South Kingstown High School, class of 1955, attended URI. Completed three years, with additional courses totaling about 180 hours or credits. This included a number of courses in History, Political Science, and the Sciences. During the 70’s I served one year on the Executive Committee at the Board of Directors of South County Community Action. I have lived at King’s Grant for over 34 years and am very familiar with the problems in federally subsidized housing.”</p>
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3. What do you believe are the three most important issues facing the upcoming Town Council?

<p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “With a high unemployment rate, serious housing problems with our national financial institutions in more trouble since the Great Depression, our next Town Council is going to need skilled experienced councilors at the helm with vision, flexibility, strength and resolve to keep our ship afloat and guide it through very troubled waters. This may mean no pay increases or an across the board pay cut for all town employees. What it does not mean is cutting services for our children, the elderly, the handicapped and our low-income residents.”</p> <p>Carol H. Hueston: “Taxes, Economic Development, Education”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "A. Taxes . . . These are tough economic times in North Kingstown and in the State of Rhode Island. At this time we will have to look at ways to reduce Town expenses. We may be forced to reduce or freeze our budget, we must learn to live with less. B. Economic Development . . . we need to promote economic development to expand our tax base and bring additional revenue into the Town. C. Consolidation . . . one way to reduce Town expenses is through consolidation of services not just within the Town, but with adjoining communities, such as East Greenwich, South Kingstown, and Narragansett. Perhaps we should work to consolidate all nine towns in Washington County!”</p> <p>Michael Bestwick: “A: First and foremost I think the Council must be ready in the event of falling state revenues for North Kingstown that force us to experience short falls in funding, especially in education and safety services if the Rhode Island state budget cuts back, the Council must be ready to make adjustments and possible reduction in some areas. Second, we must hold the tax line.(No increase in taxes) our residents and businesses are trying to deal with a poor National economy which results in personal setbacks(Unemployment) and lack of business growth. Third, we must continue to seek consolidation and cooperation with our neighboring towns to eliminate needless repetition in spending. The current Council is making splendid progress with East Greenwich in areas such as road overlays, building inspection and town support services. This approach must be continues and expanded wherever possible.”</p>	<p>Steven R. DeToy: “ 1. The state budget and its impact on NK taxpayers. 2. Improving relations between the Council and School Committee. We simply cannot continue with to have these two bodies not working more closely together on spending issues and where those tax dollars come from. 3. Continuing the work of the current council to find ways to share the cost of delivering services either through agreements with other towns, the school committee or the private sector. This would also include creative ways as to how we deliver services.”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “1. Financial Management: We must learn to do more with less, to stretch every dollar and to be sure we are spending wisely and well. Consolidation will play a critical role in this effort. 2. Planning: We need to develop a long term strategic plan for town owned buildings and infrastructure, including a financial plan to pay for maintenance and improvements. 3. Revenue growth: We must grow our tax base by thoughtful development and business growth with particular attention to the Post Road corridor and the Quonset Business Park.”</p> <p>Tracey A. McCue: “Budget: We need our budget to be clear and accountable. We can not continue to ask taxpayers to tighten their belts when the town and schools do not. Throwing more money to a problem doesn’t correct it. We need to see where the waste and overlap of services are. If the taxpayers had a clearer view of how their money cam and went, they might be more willing to pass some bond issues that have been shot down. The message was sent and now elected officials need to listen. QDC: Our voice as a town needs to be heard louder and stronger at QDC. What happens in that park effects the town as a whole. Consolidation: This goes hand in hand with the budget. We can not consolidate services if we don’t have a clear idea as to how and where our money is going.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: “Financial Management – managing our spending and constraining our taxes so that we can make and keep our town an affordable place for all generations to live; Consolidation and regionalization – finding opportunities within our town and with other towns to create efficiencies in town services; Finding affordable ways to make needed investments in our infrastructure (such as sewers, Post Road revitalization, etc.)”</p>	<p>Matthew H. Leonard: “TAXES: The town is spending at an escalating and unsustainable rate. Many seniors including my mother that live in North Kingstown on fixed incomes will be forced out of their homes if we don’t stop the relentless tax increases. BUDGET: North Kingstown’s Town Budget exceeds \$93 million dollars – That’s got be enough money to run our town! Any member of the Town Council who can’t find a little fat in the budget is out of touch with the real-world budget choices families face every day. In the real word and in these tough times, people are tightening their belts and spending less on some items in order to buy the essentials. Our town needs to follow the same process. Transparent and zero based budgets must be implemented for both the town and School Department. Taxpayers have the right to know where their hard earned tax dollars are being spent and the confidence that all revenues are accounted for. REVITALISATION: Storefronts remain empty on Post Road and in Wickford; while other areas that were once farms or fields are developed and lost forever. No longer is Quonset being developed and marketed as the “Premier Industrial Park” in Rhode Island, but just another retail plaza. North Kingstown is now competing for the same businesses with QDC (Quonset Development Corporation). Businesses are starting to leave Post Road and locate within Quonset. A TRUE partnership with the neighbors, businesses, Town Council, and QDC (Quonset Development Corporation) on the development of Quonset is necessary and obtainable. No longer will political insiders be allowed to give “sweetheart” deals to QDC that have a horrific impact on our neighborhoods, town budget and current taxpaying businesses. The Post Road Corridor Plan that was created in 2005 must be implemented to help our current businesses and lure new ones to our town. Wickford needs to be preserved and treated as one of the most beautiful historic districts in our nation.”</p> <p>Liz Dolan: “1. Managing the town wisely and efficiently while delivering the best services possible during challenging economic times ahead. 2. Supporting the revitalization of the Route 1/1A corridor to expand our commercial tax base. 3. Creating a "team" of knowledgeable and collegiate Councilors that are responsive to the needs and concerns of the taxpayers.”</p>
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4. What do you believe are the two most important issues facing the School Committee and it’s relationship to the Town Council?

<p>Steven R. DeToy: “ 1, The need to be a more responsible committee, one that is focused on the tasks at hand, not paralyzed by petty bickering and infighting. 2. Using that new found behavior pattern to work more closely with the Council to find ways to share more services and other expenses to ultimately eliminate needless duplication.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "A. Working together to reduce expenses at the same time maintain the highest quality education system we can afford. B. Developing a positive working relationship built on mutual trust.</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “The School Committee, as an independent and separately elected body, must identify and prioritize the issues facing the school community. As a councilman, I will focus on establishing a constructive relationship and ongoing dialogue with the School Committee to assure good communications and clear understanding. A superior education system is the linchpin of a healthy and successful community.”</p> <p>Michael Bestwick: “A: The School Committee and the Town Council must cooperate to end redundant purchases and services. Second, both the Committee and the Council must agree that FY2009 is a time for retrenchment and cooperative savings. New ideas and programs must be continued where feasible but any new expansion spending must be put on hold!”</p> <p>Carol H. Hueston: “Educating the students is the important issue between the School Committee and Town Council.”</p>	<p>Matthew H. Leonard: “The Town Council and the School Committee must work together in order to regain the trust of the taxpayers that fund our schools. There have been too many past allegations of miss-appropriated funds and no internal controls with managing revenue. The School Committee must implement a zero bases budget and develop policies and procedures that will bring transparency to the budget process. We need to work as a community to reestablish neighborhood elementary schools (K-5) and eliminate pairing FOREVER. We need to work together and develop long-term approach with school configuration. We have too many schools in the northern end of our town and too few schools in the southern part; which still is the fastest growing area within our town.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: “While State legislation and the Town Charter create significant separation between the school committee and town council, I believe that the two bodies would best serve the town by establishing a long term (beyond an election cycle) planning process that both operates within the framework of this legal separation and, at the same time, explores issues such as: Sustainable funding of our school operations; Potentially locating new school buildings (and/or renovating existing school buildings) to accommodate increased growth in different areas of town; Resolving the dynamics that all too often pit the interests of taxpayers without children in the public schools against the interests of taxpayers with children in the public schools. Concurrently, both bodies would best serve our community by putting past disagreements behind them, meeting more regularly to establish better communication, and seeking opportunities for collaboration and consolidation.”</p>	<p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “North Kingstown has what many consider to be the best school system in Rhode Island. This candidate would fight to keep it this way. One change that I believe is necessary is a town ordinance providing for a functional review process for the School Department budget, including an oversight role for the Town Council. Again, providing a quality education for our children is this candidate’s top priority. Pay raises for teachers and administrators comes second, come hell, high water or the Rhode Island Supreme Court.”</p> <p>Tracey A. McCue: “Budget: The school committee must understand that their budget is part of a whole. They must present a clear and fiscally responsible budget to the taxpayers. When this happens maybe they might succeed in getting bond issues passed. Work force: Instead of eliminating positions on the front line (teachers, paraprofessionals) look at the administration level and look for overlapping jobs. If a person is retiring from a position the SC should see if that position can be eliminated. There is room for compromise.”</p> <p>Liz Dolan: “1. Maintaining a functional and civil relationship and dialogue between the two separate bodies. 2. Ensuring that both groups see the value and the import of maintaining the high quality of education that we have been providing over the years. We cannot afford to see the quality of our educational delivery decline as our quality of education that has made us one of the top three school districts in the state is one of the most valuable assets that North Kingstown has to offer.”</p>
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5. What do you believe are the two most important issues on the State level that will affect your time on the Town Council?

<p>Matthew H. Leonard: “Rhode Island’s job market went from bad to worse as more payroll jobs vanished and the state unemployment rate spiked to 8.5 percent — the highest level in more than 15 years. Rhode Island in June and July had the second-highest unemployment rate in the country, next to Michigan. Rhode Island’s mortgage default rate is already the highest in New England, and experts say that the labor market problems will delay the housing market recovery. The state ended last year with a \$33.6-million deficit. The budget for this fiscal year is unraveling as projected cost savings are not being realized. The budget for the year that starts July 1 is already forecast to have an \$83-million shortfall. The recession in Rhode Island will make this much worse. It’s a very difficult and scary time to live in Rhode Island. While state leaders are dealing with the state’s financial mess; North Kingstown must reduce our budget and anticipate fewer dollars in state aid. At some point, virtually every business goes through a reorganization of some kind for the purpose of increasing operational efficiency and reducing cost. Our town needs to implement these basic concepts. Town government and the school departments should no longer be looked as independent of each other. There are many areas that the town can combine these two operations and maintain legal requirements. We the taxpayers fund them both. Let’s revitalize our town departments by reorganizing them into more cost efficient service that treats every citizen like a precious individual. This concept is drastically different than the current “consolidate” effort that is underway within North Kingstown. Consolidate is looking at ways to combine similar functions between the school department and town services. We must reorganize our town into the most cost efficient method to deliver services not just move work between departments. I want to expand the current consolidation efforts with East Greenwich (Kent County) to include all communities within Washington County. We need to implement (not talk about) consolidating services that will provide real savings to our communities ASAP.”</p>	<p>Curtis V. Givan: "A. Reductions in State aid to cites and towns. We will receive less dollars during the next fiscal year and we will have to make due with less and not raise taxes. B. Tax reform . . . our Legislature needs to look at the method we use to tax our residents on their real estate property. Carol H. Hueston: “Unfunded Mandates..Budgetary Issues” Liz Dolan: “1. Given difficult economic times nationally and on the state level, we will need to be prepared to work with less state funding; we will need to explore alternate ways of generating revenue without negatively impacting the residential property taxpayers. This includes re-examining the split tax rate issue where businesses over a certain size and employment of a certain number of employees may be levied at a higher rate than small businesses and residential taxpayers. 2. Maintaining and improving the relationship between the town and the Quonset Business Park as it continues to be developed to its highest and best capacity.” Michael Bestwick: “It is incumbent that the Council work with our state senators and representatives to maintain current funding levels for the Town, especially in education. Second, Quonset Point and its further development are vital to our tax base and its growth. We must continue to seek a presence on any commission that oversees Quonset’s future development. It is most important that our local interest be heard.” Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “Again, our high unemployment rate, housing foreclosures and problems in the financial sector at the Federal and State level are bound to affect our town’s ability to function effectively. Unfortunately, our state’s inability to control effectively alcohol abuse, tobacco abuse, illicit drug abuse and to provide a good recycling or agricultural land use preservation program is a part of this problem. This candidate would support ordinances prohibiting the sale and use of alcohol beverages and tobacco products in North Kingstown.”</p>	<p>Steven R. DeToy: “ 1, Education and General aid funding, 2, The willingness or not of the General Assembly and Governor to enact changes in state laws to help cities and towns meet the challenges that we all face.” Jim Berson: “State funding for education and local aid. The challenges of the national and state economy could create funding reductions (without reduction of State mandates) that could cause increased budgetary pressures on local governments across the state. The future of both the legislation that established the Caruolo Act as well as Senate Bill 3050 that established limitations on the amount by which local towns can increase property taxes. There is a dynamic tension, felt in many communities around the state, where school committees and town councils enter in to disputes (and sometimes legal action) when the school committee feels that it requires more money than is available and the municipal government is either unwilling or unable to provide the requested level of funding. Until there are clear legal determinations, it is not clear which legislation “trumps” the other and this ambiguity can result in significant challenges for local governments.” Charles H. Stamm: “State funding and state mandates are two critical issues. With the prospect of state support for education falling on the one hand, and the legal requirement to perform state mandated services and programs on the other hand, our town faces a potentially significant financial squeeze.” Tracey A. McCue: “State Funding: With the state budget in crisis mode. Every city and town faces less money. This is one of the reasons we need to tighten our budget and make sure taxpayers are getting the most for their buck. QDC Board Appointments: The Governors appointments to this board can not ignore the wishes and needs of our town.”</p>
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6. Can you name two decisions of the previous Town Council that you do not agree with and why?

<p>Michael Bestwick: “I believe in looking to the future and not dwelling on the past. It is very easy to second guess and be a Monday morning quarterback to the decisions of others. Therefore, I shall not comment negatively on the last Council.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: “I am running as a candidate to help our town, not as a critic of the past Town Council.”</p> <p>Liz Dolan: “Candidly, the outgoing five members of the Town Council have served us well, and I would rather thank them all for their years of service rather than criticize decisions that have been made in the past. The new Council will move forward, not backward, and should not dwell on past decisions by the Council that the newly elected Council members may have disagreed with.”</p> <p>Steven R. DeToy: “ Since I have not been privy to all the details that the Council has considered during its deliberations on many issues, I would be offering a half-baked answer to this question, so I will simply not answer.”</p> <p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “Not specifically, no.”</p>	<p>Tracey A. McCue: “Gateway Project: The council vote for this project without an impact study on traffic and surrounding neighborhoods as well as local businesses. They should have negotiated for more town and citizen input. QDC meeting should allow for town wide input. School Committee Budget: I think that the TC should have sent the budget back and require a clear line item budget. The TC oversees the total budget and must require accountability from the SC”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “I believe we should thank the current council members for their dedicated volunteer service. They have given generously of their time and talent to the governance of our town. Rather than dwell on the past, I prefer to look to the future and to addressing the problems that we now face. Let’s look at the road ahead, not in the rear view mirror.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "I can name one . . . I think the Town Council should have commented on the Gateway Center project. By not commenting, it was assumed that the Town Council approved of the project. I am not in favor of Big Box stores in North Kingstown . . . and certainly not in the Gateway Center.”</p>	<p>Matthew H. Leonard: “The many accomplishments of the previous Town Council should not be ignored and their service to our community should not be tarnished for political gain. It’s far too easy for any candidate to find fault while offering no solutions. I was disappointed that politics delayed the building of a new fire station in Slocum, which will provide more adequate fire protection to residents in the southern end of our town once it is finally built. Common sense should have told everyone that we needed this life-saving resource. I’m confident that my personality and nonpartisan approach to government will overcome others desire to play politics. The town is spending at an escalating and unsustainable rate. I’m prepared and committed to make tough decisions that will reduce spending and stop the relentless tax increases.”</p> <p>Carol H. Hueston: “I would like to thank the Town Council for its service to the community in very tough times. I have no intention of criticizing them.”</p>
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7. What upcoming Town Council issues do you see that will have the greatest impact on the taxpayers of North Kingstown and why?

<p>Carol H. Hueston: “ Post Road Corridor Plan..The budget”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “The town budget: Because the budget will determine the revenue and must be generated by the property tax, already too high and a burden on our residents particularly seniors living on a fixed income, we need to get a grip on expenses and taxes. It will not be possible to find the resources to do all we wish. Priorities will have to be established and a careful analysis done of all services to determine which ones can work differently and more efficiently, and which ones can be curtailed or eliminated. We need to aggressively pursue consolidation within the town, with neighboring communities and on a regional scale.”</p> <p>Matthew H. Leonard: “The town and the school budgets will have the greatest direct impact on the taxpayers. If we do not reduce spending by merging departments within our town and consolidate services with other towns our taxes will just continue to rise. Unlike many cities and towns in Rhode Island, North Kingstown has an opportunity to greatly expand our tax base with the potential of significant income with the development of Quonset Business Park. We must seize this opportunity to expand our tax base. Every new development in the park must include a sizeable financial benefit for North Kingstown. This will shift the tax burden from homeowners to new commercial taxpayers. I will not be closed-minded to any suggestions with development at Quonset as long as it does not destroy our neighborhoods, pollute the bay or does not provide our town with fair tax dollars.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "A. Escalating health care costs for Town employees in both the School budget as well as the Municipal budget. We have to cut expenses in these areas. B. Reduction in State aid to North Kingstown . . . we will receive less monies from the State next fiscal year. As a result, we will have to reduce our expenses.”</p>	<p>Michael Bestwick: “Without a doubt, the Rhode Island state budget for fiscal years 2009-2010 will have the greatest impact on our town. If state revenues decrease or remain stagnant every city and town in Rhode Island will have to tighten its belt. Therefore, holding the line on property taxes and becoming innovative in the ways we spend is imperative. Also, our future tax growth rest with the development of Quonset. The Council must be proactive in this area. Decisions about this deep water port will affect our town for decades to come.”</p> <p>Tracey A. McCue: “Budget: I can not stress enough the need for a clear and accountable budget. We must be able to see where our money is being spent in order to look for saving and work for consolidation. Gateway Project: We as a town need to have more of a voice and say as to what is happening there. We need to look at the amount of money the town is getting and whether it reflects the true value. I believe that our town is getting short changed in the deal. We need to take another look and get the best for the town from QDC.”</p> <p>Steven R. DeToy: “All issues either start, end or in other ways deal with money. How it is raised, how it is spent and how we can do both of those in the most equitable and affordable fashion for all taxpayers. We will need innovation and a “can do” attitude to get us through the next several years, a time when we can redefine how we educate our children, provide for the public safety, plow the snow and carry on the business of town government. We need to make sure that we can make these decisions proactively for the benefit of taxpayers, not wait until the state government or some other outside source dictates how we take care of our town and its citizenary.”</p>	<p>Liz Dolan: “Please refer back to my answers to Questions 3 and 5 as the answers explain what I believe are the biggest issues that will impact the taxpayers over the next two years.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: “The Town Council will have to balance a variety of competing interests and needs over the next two years, each of which will impact taxpayers. These challenges include: The overall budget – how to balance the competing desires to spend money with the taxpayers’ concerns that they are being over taxed; A decision to bond for sewers will impact our overall indebtedness while creating opportunities for Post Road development and protecting our water supply and Narragansett Bay; Local police, fire, and municipal employee contracts will be up for renewal and the Town Council will need to balance the cost of these contracts with the need to service that these employees provide to our town. Finally, recent efforts to engage with the School Committee around consolidation and with East Greenwich around regionalization will require a lot of attention by this Town Council and offer great opportunities, if thoughtfully and collaboratively pursued, offer many opportunities for taxpayer savings.”</p> <p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “Whether elected to the Town Council or not, this candidate intends to pursue through the Town Council and, if necessary, through the Initiative and Referendum process ordinances prohibiting the sale and use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products and the use of illicit drugs in North Kingstown. Also an ordinance providing for 100% recycling. In the project where he lives, King’s Grant and it’s sister’s project Essex Village, together over 264 units, nothing gets recycled, and even though we have state laws and a town ordinance requiring recycling. This needs to change.”</p>
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8. To give citizens confidence in their local government, the government needs to be fair, transparent and accountable. How do you specifically see these attributes affecting your tenure on the Town Council?

<p>Matthew H. Leonard: “I would aggressively honor every taxpayer’s expectation and right to good, responsive and accountable government. We need to improve the budgetary process and accountability with the town and school budgets. The town and school department should be required to use Zero Based Budgets: The whole cost of a program including all employee expenditures, material, equipment along with any outside revenue received for the program must be included. In order to make programmatic cost publicly assessable, I suggest that programmatic spending be accompanied by documents, each listing the goals of the program and how achievement of those goals will be measured. All these documents should be published and posted on the town website for public review; All departments should be required to develop 5-year strategic plans containing strategic issues, mission statement, description, goals, strategies and resource assumptions; All departments would be required to determine lifecycles for all equipment and assets. Example; Roofs on buildings & heating systems would be evaluated to determine their lifecycles. All assets would be evaluated to determine if Preventive Maintenance Programs would extend their lifecycles and provide long-term savings. I will take this kind of partnership one step further and advocate for a BRC (Budgetary Review Committee) to review and provide suggestions throughout the budgetary process. I would invite the heads of the municipal unions to join the Council, prior to budget time, in finding innovative solutions to the challenges facing North Kingstown. Pensions cost are ballooning, departmental structures are outdated, and town practices are in need of revision. Something must be done and all of the stakeholders should be involved in the proposed solution. I will “Apply Sunshine to Town Government Spending” by requiring each department to publish on the town’s website the details on expenditures over \$500.00 in a searchable format. Citizens will not be in the dark on how each department spends our hard earned tax dollar. I am proposing to strengthen the Whistleblower Policy to encourage and reward town employees to come forward with information about improper or inefficient operations without fear of retaliation. The new policy would be renamed to the “Open Door Policy.” Valuable town employees will be able to make suggestions on improving their departments and reducing cost. All town employees would be trained on the “OPEN DOOR POLICY” by a professional trainer, without department heads or supervisors present. Department heads & supervisors would be trained separately on the benefits and their responsibilities with the policy.”</p> <p>Steven R. DeToy: “as guiding principles”</p>	<p>Dorman J. Hayes Jr: “This candidate firmly believes in governmental oversight. This means providing the oversight that in many cases is not being provided by either or federal, state or local government. This means setting up local review processes to improve the quality of life and services in our community. We need more community involvement, especially in our multi-family projects, and neighborhoods. This candidate, if elected, would be a hands-on counselor, going where problems are, that are brought to his attention and getting first-hand information to deal with then.”</p> <p>Tracey A. McCue: “These are attributes that I share with my fellow taxpayers. If elected, I would work with fellow council members as well as School Committee members to make this a continual practice. I believe that this should be the back bone for all aspects of local government.”</p> <p>Jim Berson: “I think the best way to ensure that these attributes are carried out is for strong citizen input throughout the Council’s decision making process. I believe that the Council should not only receive input, but actively solicit input from its residents to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability of its elected officials and representative bodies.”</p> <p>Carol H. Hueston: “I intend to be fair, transparent and accountable.”</p> <p>Liz Dolan: “If elected, I fully intend to work with the other Council members as a knowledgeable, collegiate and responsive "team" that will provide a fair, transparent and accountable Town Council.”</p> <p>Michael Bestwick: “The Town Council must be like Caesar’s wife, above reproach in all of its dealings. Our deliberations have to be open to access by the public and attempt to obtain as much tax payer input as possible. Difficult issues and difficult decisions need proper thoughtfulness and public awareness of what is at stake. Therefore, the Council must welcome the closest scrutiny of its actions. Partisan rancor must be eliminated; the common good should motivate our decisions making process.”</p> <p>Charles H. Stamm: “I intend to communicate honestly and openly with all of our citizens and will encourage the other council members to do so as well. I believe our government should be accessible to all and information should be made readily available to encourage public participation and debate.”</p> <p>Curtis V. Givan: "I pledge to the citizens of North Kingstown that I will be fair, transparent and accountable to all citizens during my tenure as a Town Council member.”</p>
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1. Why have you chosen to run for a seat on the School Committee?

<p>Lynda Avanzato (Democrat) “I am running for School Committee because I truly believe that I can make a positive difference in the schools and the educational system of North Kingstown. I’ve been involved in school issues for about seven years, when I learned that Superintendent Halley was proposing to close Wickford Elementary School and pair the other Elementary schools. At that time I and other parents came forward with educational research that a paired school system was not the best environment for learning for Elementary students. Since then I’ve attended many School Committee meetings and learned much about education and the North Kingstown school system. I am vested in the community having attended the same schools my son now attends and having spent many hours volunteering in those schools. I plan to stay in North Kingstown in the future. I feel that my familiarity with the issues and history faced by the taxpayers and parents in North Kingstown will benefit the NK school system. In order to be successful, I believe that it is imperative for elected officials, school administrators and members of the community to work together on the challenges that lie ahead. I feel that I possess the collaborative skills necessary to achieve this goal.”</p>	<p>Mel Benson: (Democrat) “ I was brought up that, “To whom much is given, much is expected.” And I feel that it is my duty, as someone with the fortitude and time, combined with my educational experience, that I should run again in the coming elections for School Committee. I am someone who tells it like it is”</p> <p>Richard Welch: (Democrat) “I have lived in North Kingstown for over twenty years and during this time our school committee has been in the news constantly and not in a positive way. This does not benefit our children and it has not enhanced our community’s reputation. The committee needs to stop its fighting and get down to the business of educating our children and maintaining our schools.”</p> <p>Note: Two candidates did not return the questionnaire.</p>
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2. What unique abilities do you bring with you that make you more qualified than the other candidates?

<p>Lynda Avanzato “One of the unique qualities that I have that I believe will be helpful on the School Committee is my proven track record of involvement and interest in school issues, and my knowledge of the history of what has been happening in our Town regarding those issues over the past five years. I have been regularly attending School Committee meetings for the past five years. Familiarity with the history of how our schools have been reconfigured repeatedly over the past five years, with some schools being divided and some schools being closed and reopened, helps me to understand that the community wants a long term stable plan for our schools, and that the community prefers a K-5 configuration. Knowledge of our past history is also particularly important because of recent financial issues involving the School Department. I believe my understanding of those specific financial issues will help me to assist the School Department in correcting weaknesses in fiscal policies and in moving forward to operate the school system more efficiently and with transparency. While moving forward is important, knowing the history of past mistakes so we don’t repeat those mistakes is important as well. As an attorney trained in mediation and negotiation, I believe I can think independently while working collaboratively with all other Committee members in a cordial way and perhaps smooth the waters of some of the disagreements between SC members. In order to find solutions during these very difficult economic times we find ourselves in, the SC must collaborate and discuss issues in a civil manner.”</p>	<p>Richard Welch: “I have been on many boards and commissions in North Kingstown including the High School Building Committee, School Facilities Management and Planning Committee and the Asset Management Committee and this experience has given me a broad background about our schools and the school administration. I have also started a program with our high school, working with the former superintendent Dr. Feir and now Dr. Thornton, that will create an educational partnership with Electric Boat, that will give our high school graduates the opportunity to be better prepared to work at Electric Boat after graduation. These jobs will be high paying with good benefits and the opportunity to go to CCRI at no expense. We hope that this is just the beginning of this type of partnership at Quonset and other places in Rhode Island for our students.”</p> <p>Mel Benson: “ My career has been dedicated solely to Education and government. I have spent 30 years in education, and fourteen as a legislator. I have spent my lifetime advocating for individual children as well as the School District. And since my retirement from teaching, in many ways you might say that I’m the busiest unpaid social worker in the state. I work with children, I talk to parents, go to various school related meetings and attend as many school functions as possible.”</p>
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3. What do you believe are the three most important issues facing the upcoming School Committee?

<p>Lynda Avanzato “First, the large deficit in the school budget we will be facing is the most important issue for the upcoming School Committee. When deciding where to make budget cuts, I will support those cuts that preserve the items most valued by our community and that are fair and evenhanded. I can’t support deep cuts in academics without making some cuts to the areas that may have less of an impact on the education of our children. I would also require that the details of the budget be provided to the Committee and the community before voting on them so we are all making informed decisions. Programs or individuals directly impacting children should be the last areas to consider cutting. No one school or area of Town should be unevenly impacted by budget cuts. As we continue to face challenging economic times we must now more than ever prioritize and stretch every tax dollar. Another important issue that may be facing the new Committee if a decision is not made before then, is the configuration of our Elementary schools. It is apparent from the surveys formulated by the configuration Sub-Committee last year, that our community wants a K-5 configuration for our Elementary schools and that this is an important issue for the families of our Town. Maintenance and repair of the school buildings themselves is another important issue facing the new SC. A third very important issue facing the new School Committee is the search for a new Superintendent. Given the history of turmoil under Superintendent Halley and given the short term of Superintendent Fier, it is crucial for the School Committee to find a Superintendent who is a good fit for this community, with strong leadership abilities, a strong sense of integrity and the ability to pull people together to work in unity.”</p>	<p>Mel Benson: “ The first most important issue is the budget crisis. From Wall Street and Washington to North Kingstown, we have to figure out how to do more with less. The second most important issue is preparing every child for life, whether they are advanced placement students going to college, those who want to learn a trade or those who have trouble making a “C” grade. This includes special needs students. They all become citizens, they all become taxpayers, and they all deserve a chance. Finally, we have to restore the confidence that we are accomplishing these things by using the taxpayer’s money wisely.”</p> <p>Richard Welch: “1.) The budget must be clear, the line items must be adhered to, and we must get full value for our tax dollars; 2.) We must control operating cost. With only about .18 cents going to operations and the cost of heat and utilities doubling, we must be very frugal with our money; 3.) Wickford Elementary must be turned over to the community, repaired and re-used for our community, not sold for development into condos.”</p>
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4. What do you believe are the two most important issues facing the Town Council and it’s relationship to the School Committee?

<p>Lynda Avanzato “The most important task that the Town Council performs as related to the School Committee is the approval of the budget of the Town, including the school budget. I believe it is the responsibility of the Town Council to ensure that the School Committee submits a school budget to the Town Council that clearly delineates prior year budget changes by program, so that information is also provided to the public. I also believe the Town Council must ensure that the budget is fully compliant with all applicable State laws and with the Town Charter. Another important issue facing the Town Council is how to fund the CIP or Capital Improvement plan, which is the fund used to pay for major improvements to the school buildings and to finance other major projects for the benefit of the schools. Since the fund currently is not fully funded, we may be forced to go out for bonds for capital improvements or repairs, which is not a desirable method of paying for such projects, and may be rejected by the voters, leaving the Town in a vulnerable position. In order to serve the best interests of our community, it will be crucial for both elected bodies work together in a positive and productive manner on the joint issues they will face.”</p>	<p>Richard Welch: “1.) There continues to be a lack of good communication between these two groups and this must change. The tax payer is tired of reading about the problems between the two and it does not set a good example for our students about how our government should work; 2.) The town Council needs to recognize that the schools need money to take care of deferred maintenance and fund the capital reserve account so that this work can to accomplished.”</p> <p>Mel Benson: “ I believe that one of the most important issues facing the relationship between these two public bodies is that we need to have regular, quarterly, meetings so as to not drift too far apart in our directions. Both the Town Council and the School Committee were elected to not only take care of the particular business at hand but to work together, between the two. We need to keep these two groups informed on each other’s goings-on. The other issue that I feel is most important is the two elected bodies need to focus on the reason why we all were elected, to work to maintain and improve the town of North Kingstown.”</p>
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5. What do you believe are the two most important issues on the State level that will affect your time on the School Committee?

<p>Richard Welch: “1.) State budgeting that will give all communities the amount of state aid early enough to be able to create a budget knowing exactly how much money they will need from the town tax payers; 2.) State support for regionalization and consolidation of school departments that would help eliminate the duplication of departments and make purchasing a state wide issue to save tax dollars; 3.) Hiring an Education Commissioner that understands the needs of the business community and how important it is to co-ordinate education with the needs of business. Our graduates must be better prepared to go into the work place.”</p> <p>Mel Benson: “ I believe that the two things that we have to watch on the State level, that will affect us, are the state deficit and enabling legislation that will help communities work together to resolve unfunded mandates and promote consolidation.”</p>	<p>Lynda Avanzato “The amount of State and Federal aid received by North Kingstown is always an important issue in determining the amount of money we have in our school budget in a given year. Having no increase in State aid over the past two years has certainly added to an already difficult budget process. In looking ahead at the economic climate at the State level, the prospect of receiving additional State aid are not very promising. Therefore we must embrace the concept of doing more with less and prioritizing our expenditures. Unfunded mandates are another important issue at the state level that have impacted our schools in the past and may well impact our schools again in the next few years. For example if the State directs that Towns must provide full day kindergarten by law, but does not commensurately increase funding to the Towns to pay for full day K, it is considered an unfunded mandate. A possible solution to this is to have our North Kingstown State Representatives and Senators advocate for no more unfunded State mandates that the Towns must pay for. When state and federal mandates are passed down to the local communities, the funding to implement these mandates should come along with them. State officials must once and for all come up with a long-term sustainable state aid funding plan for local communities. The plan must be fair and equitable for all cities and towns. The past and present uncertainty of the level of state aid that a town will receive has and will continue to make the budget process even more daunting.”</p>
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6. Can you name two decisions of the previous School Committee that you do not agree with and why?

<p>Richard Welch: “ 1.) Dr. Haley’s decision to not have our high school classified a regional high school cost this town approximately \$8 million in state aid plus interest. When I was on the high school building committee I asked him to make the change so that the state aid would increase from 30% to 50% and there by increase our state aid by well over \$8 million; 2.) When we were planning the high school we had approximately 1100 high school students from North Kingstown attending the school. At this time a high school of 900 students was considered an ideal size to justify a well rounded educational program. We did not need Jamestown students to support a well rounded program. We built our school that would allow for growth in both populations and planned that Jamestown would have about 225-250 students at our school. Knowing this I asked Dr. Haley to ask Jamestown to sign on the bond issue for that portion of the school bond issue that would be directly related to the Jamestown student enrollment. He said that he would not ask them to do this, but it is okay for the North Kingstown tax payers to be responsible for all of the cost of operating the school, including the fact that their tuition is based on actual costs that are 12 months old. We could have built a smaller school and saved money without the Jamestown students. Jamestown has a tuition agreement that by state law can only be a maximum length of three (3) years, we have a bond issue that will last much longer.”</p>	<p>Mel Benson: “I believe that the previous School Committee failed to hold people accountable in regards to contracts they had with the district. It sends a terrible message when executives are not held accountable and bought out on Wall Street but it’s sends a worse message when the School Committee didn’t hold school district employees accountable and decided to give them Taxpayers money that they did not earn.”</p>	<p>Lynda Avanzato “One decision of the previous School Committee I do not agree with was the decision to buy out the contract of former Superintendent James Halley. I believe there was more than enough reason to fire the Superintendent for cause, given the finding of the Department of Education that he had misappropriated a quarter of a million dollars in special education funds, in addition to numerous other findings and concerns regarding financial practices within the Administration. It is especially disturbing that the Superintendent was given immunity for all but intentional acts in the buy-out agreement, thereby ensuring that the taxpayers be responsible for any subsequent fall-out from his actions. I also believe rewarding misdeeds sets a very bad precedent and does not provide accountability for bad acts. It would have been less expensive to fire the Superintendent, and if he then chose to file suit, to litigate what for him would have been a losing claim. I also disagreed with the 4-3 vote passing last year’s school budget, a budget that did not contain sufficient clarity and transparency. I would have voted with the minority to reject the budget because it failed to identify precisely what positions were being cut (among other things), and therefore, the School Committee could not assess the impact of the cuts on the school system and could not practice oversight over the decisions of the Superintendent as required by Rhode Island law.”</p>
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7. What upcoming School Committee issues do you see that will have the greatest impact on the taxpayers of North Kingstown and why?

<p>Mel Benson: “ I believe that the two issues that will have the greatest impact on the taxpayers will be the consolidation and returning to K-5 configuration. Consolidation with the Town and consolidation with other districts will help us to do more for children with less money. I agree with the report that the Reconfiguration Committee worked on. K-5 configuration will save money in transportation and will improve learning by giving better stability for children and their families. There will be fewer behavioral problems and better performance at the high school level through maintaining a core parental support system for each K-5 school.”</p> <p>Richard Welch: “I see that there will be a request for a bond issue that will be used if passed to take care of the deferred maintenance on the school buildings and some construction on the two middle schools. Maintenance should be done with the budget moneys not with a bond. Maintenance is not a capital expense and the school department has not used their money wisely.”</p>	<p>Lynda Avanzato “The single School Committee issue that will have the greatest impact on the taxpayers of North Kingstown is the School budget, not just this year but for every upcoming year. The balance that must be maintained is how to manage and spend our money efficiently to preserve the quality of education and services and at the same time, not to unduly burden taxpayers already facing a heavy burden. In order to achieve this, we must look to consolidation, and other unique ways of delivering services more efficiently, as well as new solutions to less expensive energy alternatives. We must take better care of our buildings, particularly our school buildings both to preserve our assets and for the safety and comfort of our children. Another School Committee issue that will have great impact on North Kingstown taxpayers is negotiation of contracts between the Teacher and Paraprofessionals associations and the School Department. Contracts need to strike a balance of fairness and equity for the services provided by those professionals in which the contract covers, while protecting the taxpayers who are funding these services provided. All too often across the state we have read about school committees who have tied the hands of taxpayers in an irresponsible manner by entering into contracts that the taxpayers and town simply can’t afford.”</p>
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8. To give citizens confidence in their local government, the government needs to be fair, transparent and accountable. How do you specifically see these attributes affecting your tenure on the School Committee?

<p>Mel Benson: “ Confidence is gained, not overnight, but by working long and hard to earn it. But it can be lost in a minute. Regarding fairness, what is good on Monday must be good on Tuesday and everyday. Fairness must include everyone. Transparency, as a school committee and administration, we shouldn’t try to hide things under a blanket. We should be putting everything on the table. As a teacher, I stressed accountability and expected more and more as children grew. We as a school committee and members of the administration are examples to the students and the community. We can’t tell children and taxpayers to ” do as we say, not as we do.” We need to stop engaging attorneys to use the laws to shield the public body from accountability. Only after we prove our accountability that we “do as we say,” will we again gain the confidence of the students, teachers, and taxpayers.”</p>	<p>Lynda Avanzato “I think it is critical to restore trust in NK government by working to correct some the areas that were identified by the attorney general and auditor general as lacking in transparency and accountability at the School Department. One way to achieve this is by tightening weak fiscal School Committee policies that were cited by the Rhode Island Auditor General as subjecting North Kingstown to possible fraud. I have identified policy areas which need to be strengthened and if elected, would like to work on drafting new policies in those areas. We also need to provide transparency in the School budget, an area that has been sadly lacking such clarity in the past. While we have made significant progress under the new leadership in the School Department, we still have some work to do in these areas. It’s also critical to include the public in important decisions that impact our community, unlike the way that the decisions to close Wickford Elementary School and to pair the other Elementary schools were made . Lastly, I would be committed as a School Committee member to see that individuals (students, parents and employees) are all treated fairly, and are not targeted for bringing up concerns regarding government practices. It’s your government, your town and your money that is being spent and you have a right to question it and be part of the process.”</p>	<p>Richard Welch: “I have always presented the facts to my customer’s when faced with and problem. Many times it would be easier to say what someone wants to hear rather than tell the truth; however the truth will always rear its head in the future. For too many years the town and school committee kidded themselves and the tax payers that everything was alright. The former council president stood up at the town’s financial meeting and told the audience that we needed to spend \$47 million on our schools, NOW! He had spent the past 12-14 years on the school committee and then on to the town council and finally as president of the council and all of a sudden when he was no longer in office we needed to spend all this money like the problems happened over night. This is the same person that led the Building Committee for the high school and spent \$40 million for a school that the voters only approved a \$33 million bond for. We can’t continue to run our town’s affairs this way.”</p>
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North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization

Private Citizens Seeking Confidence in Our Local Government

NK taxpayers see the "value" in educating our children and giving them extracurricular opportunities, along with maintaining roads and dams, providing services for senior citizens, and providing public safety.

Keeping those priorities in mind, we cannot afford to "waste" taxpayers' dollars, particularly during this period of budget crisis at both the state and local level and while people are being taxed out of their homes.

NK taxpayers are looking for accountability, transparency and fairness.

About Us

The North Kingstown Taxpayers Organization (NKTO) was originally founded in the 1970's. With the substantial rise in property taxes in the late 1990's and after 5 years of local budget increases that averaged over 8% per year and more recently the financial irregularities involving school funds, the group has become more active.

The NKTO works constantly to insure that all taxpayers' money is spent wisely and we additionally seek to prevent waste and insure open, clear and readable budgets. We hold regular candidate forums to make all voters aware of candidate positions and beliefs that ultimately affect the quality of life in North Kingstown.

Officers:

President: Jim McGwin

Vice-President: Vic Fasolino

Vice-President: Dick Bee

Secretary: Kenneth Young

Treasurer: Steve Nordquist

Chairman of the Board: Muriel Camarra

**LOCATIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 2008
GENERAL ELECTION**

DISTRICT 1 (31-1-35) DAVISVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 50 EAST COURT

DISTRICT 2 (31-2-35) STONY LANE SCHOOL, 825 STONY LANE

DISTRICT 3 (31-3-35) STONY LANE SCHOOL, 825 STONY LANE

DISTRICT 4 (31-4-35) DAVISVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL, 200 SCHOOL STREET

DISTRICT 5 (31-5-36) FOREST PARK SCHOOL, 50 WOODLAWN DRIVE

DISTRICT 6 (32-6-35) QUIDNESSETT ELEM. SCHOOL, 166 MARK DRIVE

DISTRICT 7 (32-7-35) N.K. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, 150 FAIRWAY DRIVE

DISTRICT 8 (32-8-35) WICKFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL, 250 TOWER HILL ROAD

DISTRICT 9 (32-9-36) QUIDNESSETT ELEM. SCHOOL, 166 MARK DRIVE

DISTRICT 10 (32-10-36) COLD SPRING COMMUNITY CENTER, 36 BEACH ST

DISTRICT 11 (32-11-36) HAMILTON ELEM. SCHOOL, 25 SALISBURY AVENUE

DISTRICT 12 (32-12-36) FISHING COVE SCHOOL, 110 WICKFORD POINT ROAD

DISTRICT 13 (33-13-35) SLOCUM GRANGE HALL, 86 SLOCUM ROAD

DISTRICT 14 (33-14-36) HAMILTON ELEM. SCHOOL, 25 SALISBURY AVENUE

VOTING HOURS ARE BETWEEN 7:00 A.M. AND 9:00 P.M. *