

At the Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown, County of Washington, and State of Rhode Island, held in and for said Town, County, and State this 18th day of December, 2023 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 80 Boston Neck Road, at 8:00 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President
Katherine K. Anderson
Lawrence C. Mandel
Matthew B. McCoy
Dr. Kimberly Ann Page

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk
Susan A. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk
James M. Callaghan, Town Solicitor

An audio recording and video recording of this meeting was made to supplement the written record.

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on December 18, 2023 was called to order by President Mancini.

2. Notice of Meeting being posted

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

3. Salute to Flag

President Mancini led those in attendance in a salute to the flag.

President Mancini stated that tonight we have one agenda item to appoint a new school committee member to fill the unexpired term of Jennifer Hoskins who submitted her resignation effective December 1st. By Charter, the Council has 30 days to fill this position. He understands it is a challenging time of the year for everyone and appreciates everyone being here tonight.

He further stated that he would like to thank Jenni Hoskins for her 7 years of service on the School Committee. Public service in this day and age is very challenging. We wish her nothing but the best.

The Town has advertised this position to the public and asked interested parties to file letters of interest with the Town Clerk by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15th. We did not receive any applicants after that deadline. He further stated that he sent all those who filed letters of interest an email to inform them of tonight's meeting and asked them to speak if they so choose. Initially we received letters from 11 candidates, two have since rescinded their candidacy.

Tonight, we have two sign-up sheets, one for candidates and one for members of the public. We would like to hear from the candidates first and we will dispense with our traditional 3-minute time frame; however, we would ask that they be concise as there are a number of candidates as well as many people have signed up to also speak.

Councilor McCoy sent a questionnaire to the candidates which was helpful that he shared with the Council. We have also received many emails supporting various candidates and asked Councilor McCoy to announce those communications:

On behalf of Megan Reilly:

Courtney Chandler	Ryan Smith	Karen Forbes
Teresa Hirsh	Peter Lucier	Suzanna Tingley
Vicky Bennett	Robert & Carol	Saborin George Longquist
Joyce Cushman	Sue Alexander	Jason Bergenstock
Joan Pucino	Brian O'Dell	Dan & Madeline O'Leary
Mike Reposa	Frank Sullivan	Renee Charlton
Gregory Wallace	Janet Sheehan	Karen Salvatore

Gregory Snow	Christina Frye	Cindy Booth
Katy Feraldi	Jennifer Rollin	Mary McComba
Ed Rennehan	Karen Kuzminsky	Richard Kinnes
Eric Miller	Kalin Areola	

On behalf of Debra Lukacsko:
Kahlai Schmerer

On behalf of Robert Jones:
Kara Martone

Peter Lucier

Suzanna Tingley

On behalf of Jim Sheehan:

Lori Nold	John Machata	Meg Kerr
Melissa Devine	Kay Ho	Peter Cornillon
Katherine Pastore	Seth Mellor	Izzy Montini
Kevin Deignan	Kelly Ryan	Melissa Jones
Nancy Sherman	Lisa Garcia	Anthony Taro
Maryann Hackett	Mike Donohue	Chris Graham
Toni Silveria	Rob Zimmer	Kathleen Layton
Serena Mason	Julie Maguire	Pamela Rollin
Jordan Albernaz	Susan Ericson	Robert Silveria
Tim Warren	Mary Marcia	Mathew Ericson
Kathleen Guarino	Ann Marie Winsor-Zilly	George Brennan
Michael Anderson	Jonathan Gale	Shana & Ray Marzilli
Nicholas Fede, Jr.	Shannon Gale	Shelly Bigelli

On behalf of Sarah Palmer-Kelly:

Kimberly Haskins	Kelly Ryan	Serena Mason
Jordan Albernaz	Chris Graham	Lisa Garcia
Kathleen Layton		

Other Correspondence received not endorsing a specific candidate:

Mary Worobec	Diane Harold	Taylor Balser
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4. Public Comment

Donna Lico, 62 Edgewood Drive, read the following:

“I am asking to be considered for appointment to the vacancy on the School Committee because I want to make sure the town council has the opportunity to choose a person with the best qualifications to balance the committee so that it may serve the community well.

I have lived in my home since 2002 and my two adult children completed their entire education in North Kingstown schools. I believe their education prepared them well for adult life. Both the quality of their education and the social emotional environment of the schools they were in helped them learn and grow. The quality of the schools is what brought me to North Kingstown, and it is a driving factor in our property values.

Since 1990 I have been a middle school science teacher in Exeter West Greenwich. 33 years of experience provides me with a deep understanding of educational policies and best practices. Education has changed significantly over the last 10-20 years, a fact I believe few people fully understand. The student population learns differently; they are being prepared for a very different future than in the past and the tools educators need to do that job have changed significantly as well. I believe that the education professionals we hire are the experts in regard to what our diverse community of students need to be successful. The role of the School Committee is to enact policies and develop a budget that will support the work the educators are doing while also considering the needs and preferences of the community to assure that all students have access to an appropriate education.

The School Committee also has a fiscal responsibility to the community. As a single income homeowner, I understand the economic pressures facing many in our town. I have worked a second job for the last 15 years to make sure I could pay all of my bills, but I also believe in the need for a vision of the future. Building a better future requires a plan that best suits our vision, then finding a way to bring that vision into reality.

Other than the three years I served on the Conservation Commission my experience with Town government has been to follow what is happening and weigh in when I feel it's necessary. Now that my children have moved into careers and lives of their own, I have more free time and am willing to commit my full attention to this important task. If appointed, I will make my most sincere effort to serve the community well. Thank you for your time and service to our Town.:

Sarah Kelly-Palmer read the following:

My name is Sarah Kelly-Palmer, 272 Laurel Ridge Lane, North Kingstown.

I would like to start by thanking the Town Council for carefully considering all of the potential appointees who have stepped forward to serve. I am proud of our community having 9 individuals willing to step forward to fill the vacant seat is quite impressive and I feel honored to be among them. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of our current school committee members.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about my background and motivation for wanting to serve on our School Committee.

I am a mother of a freshman who attends North Kingstown High School and a licensed clinical social worker. I have a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in special education and a master's degree in social work. I work as an administrator at a large non-profit where I have worked for the last 20 years. I have dedicated my career to responding to the behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and families and have developed an expertise in child traumatic stress. While I work locally in Rhode Island, I have had the opportunity to provide training and consultation to agencies and schools throughout our country, particularly in regard to trauma-informed care and trauma-responsive schools. I have worked with local schools when critical incidents occur to support students as well as teachers and staff. I have overseen the implementation of many large-scale projects. Part of my current job also involves managing large budgets that include many funding sources including federal grant dollars, foundations and third-party payors. In addition to my day job, I also have over ten years of experience teaching at the graduate level. I believe that all of these experiences have helped to equip me to be able to make effective decisions within the context of the School Committee.

As I mentioned in my letter, I am a strong advocate for public education. My mother was a public-school teacher who imparted to me the value of access to high quality public education as well as the importance of service. I have a great deal of respect for our teachers, staff, and administrators in our school district who have dedicated their lives to educate our kids. Growing up I saw first-hand how much work teachers put into their day-to-day jobs to make sure their students are successful. If chosen for the vacant seat, I would work collaboratively with the current school committee members to make sure that our teachers and staff are supported to do just that. Part of that to me, means finding a solution to the current conditions at our middle schools, as well as addressing the capital needs at all of our schools. While the recent bond for a new consolidated middle school did not pass, the school committee needs to continue to work to find a solution, and I would like to be part of that. I have a great deal of experience in my professional life having to make difficult decisions that require critical thinking. I would bring these skills to the school committee and work hard to have an open-mind and get feedback from all stakeholders.

I am also a strong believer that our students need to be supported socially and emotionally. The current school committee has made efforts to respond to this by supporting the addition of more support staff such as psychologists and social workers. We know that students today are dealing with the on-going impacts of the pandemic, the impact that social media is having on their emotional well-being, and the reality of gun violence and school shootings that all of our kids must contemplate every day when they get to school. Our teachers are also having to navigate the social and emotional needs of their students while trying to educate. I believe that the emotional health of our students and teachers needs to be a priority in order for students to be successful academically. My expertise in behavioral health care would bring a great deal of knowledge to the school committee during a time when our students and teachers need it most.

As a parent, I have had the experience of navigating the IEP process to advocate for my child's educational needs. I have experienced firsthand how complicated the process can be for a parent and I believe this can bring value to my role as a potential school committee member.

As a community member, I feel that the individual who is appointed to this seat must put the needs of our students at the forefront, they must be open-minded taking into consideration all sides of an issue, they must be able to think critically, and make decisions based on data and the best interests of our students, all doing so within the context of collaboration. I believe that I can be that person.

My family and I chose North Kingstown for its exceptional public schools, and if afforded the opportunity to become a member of the school committee I would work hard to ensure that our students are always the center of every decision made. Thank you for considering my candidacy.”

Debra Lukacsko, 344 Shore Acres Avenue, read the following:

“I am a recent resident of North Kingstown. I purchased a beautiful older home in the Sauga Point area of town in 2022. Although I recently moved here from New Jersey, I have been visiting this town at least 2-3 times a year for the past 50 years as my sister, a graduate of URI, married here and raised her family here. Both of my nephews graduated from the North Kingstown school system and are both very successful young men today.

I was raised in Paterson, New Jersey in an inner-city environment. I am the daughter of a father who had an 8th grade education and then went into the military. My mother also had an 8th grade education and was an immigrant to this country in 1956. Both of my parents stressed education for myself and my siblings. I am the product of a public school system which has over 25,000 students enrolled. My public education allowed me to become the person I am today, a retired Adult & Critical Care Nurse Practitioner.

As I noted in my letter of intent to apply for this position, I was the medical director for the student health department of Ramapo College of NJ which has close to 7,000 enrolled students. I retired in 2022 after 25 years of service. In this role, I provided primary medical care to the college community and was responsible for not just the staffing and the level of medical care provided but also the State budget. I am experienced in working with various State departments to meet the needs of students, including the state budget department and their processes.

When I resided in New Jersey, I was on the Board of Education for the Wallkill Valley Regional High School which served 4 communities. I was elected twice to this position and only resigned due to my relocation to Rhode Island. I was also elected as the Vice President of the Sussex County New Jersey Board of Education Association for 4 years. The function of this organization ensured consistent levels of academic programs and policies throughout the county.

As a member of the BOE, my responsibilities included establishing goals for the students’ educational needs, meeting with parents and community members regarding their goals for successful student education, meeting state and federal standards and requirements, as well as district financial goals.

To do my job as an effective member of the Board of Education, I have taken courses on school law, school policy making, school ethics accountability, ways to improve student achievement, school finance, BOE & Superintendent responsibilities and relations, labor relations, as well as school advocacy. I also attended yearly programs provided by the NJ State Department of Education on legal issues updates. As a member of the BOE, I chaired the school’s IT committee and am proud to say that during my tenure, each student is now provided with a Dell Notebook for their use while enrolled in the school. I was also a member of the Labor Relations/Negotiations Committee as well as the Policy & Procedure Committee. I have also chaired the Diversity Committee, the Health & Safety Committee, and the Pandemic Committee at the college.

My reason for wanting to be on the North Kingstown School Committee is really because I know that a good public-school education builds the steps to being a well-rounded adult who is employable and has civic responsibility. I have many years of attending a public school from elementary school through my medical training at the University of Medicine, as well as teaching at a Community College for many years.

The value of public education, in my opinion, is priceless. Every student is entitled to the best education possible and North Kingstown certainly provides an excellent education as noted by being ranked #3 out of 36 districts.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

If I am appointed to the School Committee, my goals would be to:

- Increase community participation with the School Committee.
- Increase transparency and open communication between the students, teachers, administration, Town Council, and community.
- Work with the administration, teachers, and students to increase the proficiency percentages. Currently North Kingstown has a 63% proficiency in reading and 47% in math. Much lower than I believe they should be.
- Work with the teachers, students, administrators, and community to increase the high school graduation rate from 89%. Over 10% of the students do not graduate and that needs to be addressed.
- I would want to work with the teachers to provide the resources needed so that they can focus on the job of teaching.
- Work with the Town Council, the School Department, the School Committee, the students and the community to present fully vetted plan with cost analysis in regard to a consolidated middle school as well as a plan if we as a community, decide to repair and upgrade the current middle schools.
- And finally, I would like to make sure that all our schools are fully handicapped accessible, provide a safe and healthy environment, and that any student who requires a reasonable accommodation is provided it and does not leave our school system for either a private school or home schooling.

I know this appears as a hefty amount of work to do. I am now retired so I am able and willing to do as much as needed to meet these goals. I know that being a member of the School Committee will require many hours outside of meetings and I am able to provide that time. I do not have any outside responsibilities. My time is my own and I am willing to use my time for the School Committee. I do understand that the operations of the School Committee may be different from what was in NJ, but I am more than willing to learn this system and to take whatever courses I can to learn more about the educational system in Rhode Island although, I believe that I will not have any problems acclimating to this committee.

I believe my experience, my understanding of education, my experience of working with state entities as well as local authorities, my experience with working with students, staff and administrators makes me an ideal candidate for this position.

Thank you for considering me as a candidate for this position and for allowing me this time & opportunity to speak.”

Lee Domaszowec, 334 School Street, congratulated those who spoke before him. He stated that we agree on more than we don't, so he will not repeat what has already been stated tonight. He would like to help as many tonight that have indicated that they do as well. He asked how many feels that we were not really invited or allowed to participate on a high level. That is not the best situation for our town or school district to be in and he doesn't believe that we should accept the condition of Wickford Middle School as it is in disrepair. No one believes that building is acceptable. He attended the last School Building Subcommittee and saw a room of smart people trying to figure out the best way forward. However, when the meeting concluded, he didn't see anyone who was happy with the plan forward. When we spend \$850,000 or more and the time and effort that has been put into this project, we cannot just walk away from this and not move forward with a plan. That meeting should have ended with a consensus of a plan that everyone would be happy with. Our success can only be achieved by finding the best solution for our kids, police, and firefighters that can actually win at the polls and do the right thing for our taxpayers. The responsibility to achieve this falls on the people in this room, including the audience. Whoever is appointed to fill this seat must be able to help the school district leadership find best the solution for our kids, so everyone feels confident and excited to move forward.

He further stated that he feels that he could help achieve this and provide experience to the School Committee by providing fresh insights, gathering and analyzing data to form strategic plans that translate to actionable steps, and maintaining an open dialogue.

He thanked the Council for their consideration.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

Megan Reilly, 15 Eden Court, read the following:

Like many, we moved here 11 years ago from out of state and chose NK primarily for the schools. That year, our oldest started kindergarten at Stony Lane. All 4 of our children attend or attended district schools, 1 is at DMS while my youngest 2 are at Stony. I hold a masters in secondary education and taught middle and high school Spanish for 11 years. I am now a district substitute.

Each candidate has an excellent professional background, some have or have had children attend NK schools and all are committed to our community.

But filling this vacancy poses some unique challenges. There is no learning curve. The appointee must jump into a district still dealing with administrative turnover, fallout from learning loss, chronic absenteeism, deferred maintenance issues and figuring out a path forward, post-bond vote.

My consistent involvement in school and town affairs is my resume. I do my homework and speak based on facts and information I have garnered. I email, APRA & speak at public meetings. I work hard to get answers to learn how things operate. I share that information with anyone who might be interested. I encourage being questioned, and if ever proven incorrect, I am not too proud to admit it. I use social media to disseminate well-documented information and after over 2 years of personal attacks as a private citizen, have learned to ignore the noise and continue to work. With me, you know exactly who you are getting. I say what I mean and mean what I say.

I have no political aspirations, nor do I plan to run. I'm here, now, to offer my help, for my own children and all NK students. I am familiar with the inner working of the district, policies, RIDE regulations, RI law, the budget, the acronyms, and who to contact depending on one's questions. I have subbed in every school (except DA) and have gotten to know many of your kids and grandkids. My children are their classmates, teammates, and friends. I work alongside good teachers and staff. I have advocated for victims of Aaron Thomas and sexual abuse, right up to the State House, where I helped to get a law passed to protect children from sexual abuse. I have advocated publicly for more funding for school supplies and worked tirelessly to inform the public about the bond vote. I have held citizen-run meetings open to all. I have put in countless hours to educate myself and others on what was going on and why. Most importantly, I believe I have earned the support and trust of many in town because I'm an independent thinker who will not shy away from the truth.

The principle of subsidiarity holds that decision-making authority is best placed where responsibility for outcomes will occur; and in the closest appropriate proximity to where the actions will be taken that will produce the outcomes. As a member of this community, I am here tonight to say Put me in coach and thank you for your consideration of my appointment."

James Sheehan, 40 Blueberry Lane, read the following statement:

"I respectfully request your consideration of my candidacy to fill the vacant seat on the North Kingstown School Committee. I was raised here in North Kingstown, my wife and I have two children, both are in our school system as well as I am a former Senator for North Kingstown. It has been said that education is in my blood. With my father and stepmother both dedicating their professional lives to teaching, it was natural for me to proudly follow in their footsteps and become a teacher. I have been teaching in the Warwick Public Schools for 28 years and know the value of a good education. During my tenure, I have developed a strong, multifaceted knowledge of education at the ground level. From this vantage point, I have mastered my content area knowledge and have learned much about various pedagogic strategies, adolescent psychology, best teaching practices, networking platforms, teacher to teacher collaboration, presentation skills, new technologies and various methods of assessment and analysis. Along the way, I also have become very familiar with curricular development and revision, standardized testing, district and school policies, state and federal laws (e.g. 504s and IEPs), and effective

school governance models. Most importantly, I have always been open to new ideas and approaches as to how to best reach and support my students in the classroom. If chosen to fill this vacancy, I will bring a wealth of practical educational experience to my position as a member of the school committee.

It has been stated that the General Assembly is the “school committee” for the State of Rhode Island. While serving in the Senate for twenty years, I found a good deal of truth in this notion. At the heart of education policy is the education committees where I served as a member for 8 years. During that time, I was vocal on a number of important educational issues.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

Most notably, I successfully advocated for universal all-day kindergarten as well as the RI Promise program, that provides high school graduates with two years of free tuition at CCRI.

During my twenty-year tenure in office, I gained invaluable interpersonal and political skills needed to build consensus and shape public policy. Indeed, I took a keen interest in shaping long-term policies that improved government functionality, integrity and effectiveness. For example, I led the charge to restore the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission over the members of the General Assembly. Further, my in-depth knowledge of the legislative process, rules and procedures may prove an asset to the school committee. For instance, if the General Assembly could be persuaded to extend the RIDE school construction credits, our town could save millions of dollars if voters

were to approve a new bond for a new middle school. I would be happy to participate in such an endeavor.

In 2021, I stepped down from the Senate to spend more time with my family. But the recent debate over the middle school bond drew my attention back to the public square. As an educator, I supported the construction of a new middle school, knowing the positive impact that a new facility would have on the education of our town’s children. (as North Kingstown High School did). Even though this proposal fell short of the votes needed to pass, I am confident that common ground can be found, allowing us as a community to move forward on building a new middle school. I enthusiastically support this goal. As a benefactor of the North Kingstown school system, with two children currently attending our schools, I would relish the opportunity to offer my skills, knowledge and experience to provide all of our children with the highest quality of education possible.

In short, my qualifications and what I can contribute are:

- Passion and practical educational experience of 28 years
- Governance experience of 20 years and how public bodies work
- Statewide educational policy experience of 8 years
- 12 years on Senate Government Oversight Committee, later: Senate Rules, Ethics and Government Oversight Committee (including as Chair), Quasi-Public Accountability and Transparency Act
- Proven leadership, collaborative interpersonal skills with respect to people, organizations and projects big and small
- Problem solver, creative solutions to complex problems in the interest of common ground

Short term Goals:

- Re-imagine a new middle school that would enjoy the support of the residents of our community. Successfully guide the process to secure bond funding and implementation plans for the new school.
- Make much needed repairs and capital investments in our schools.
- Improve communication, cooperation, and a free exchange of ideas to enhance confidence in School Committee governance.
- Continue to improve the success of our students.
- Maintain and secure highly qualified administrators such as the current superintendent and hire a new Finance Director.

Thank you for your consideration.”

Robert Jones, 63 Pheasant Run, thanked Council President Mancini for recognizing Jennifer Hoskins. He had the pleasure of serving four years with her. She was an amazing advocate for all the students, especially those with disabilities. Public Service is not easy and those who step up should get appropriate recognition. He further stated that he appreciates everyone who has stepped up to serve. Everyone brings unique qualifications and common qualifications. His

children went through the North Kingstown school system, his profession is in higher education as an administration involving data and analysis. He is also an adjunct instructor, which he enjoys. However, it is final exam week, and he needs to leave after his comments to do tutoring at 9:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

He spent 8 years on the school committee, which means he has more experience doing budgets than all of the current school committee members combined. North Kingstown is one of three districts in the last three years whose tax levy increases have been above the state average. Financial management and oversight in the district are needed due to the current economic conditions. We need to be fiscally responsible and support the type of things we need to educate and have our students succeed. Having someone who can hit the ground running with the upcoming budget is something he is confident he can do. He further stated that he has also sat on the Audit Committee and the Veteran's Memorial Scholarship Committee. With his experience, he feels he would be an asset to the School Committee and thanked the Council for their consideration.

President Mancini opened the floor for public comment.

Kathleen Guarino, 139 Summit View Lane, stated that she has no particular candidate for the School Committee in mind and she would support whoever is the best person for the position, and whoever has the best interest for every student who attends our schools and help the community to heal.

Brian O'Dell, 152 Salisbury Avenue, stated that on the November 7, 2023 election, everyone denied the bond questions. He asked the Council to do something that goes against every fiber of their being, select someone that doesn't represent the same thinking that got us in the position we are in, be bold and send a signal to all the voters. He believes a courageous choice would be Megan Reilly.

Lori Duffy, 88 Haverhill Avenue, stated that the schoolteachers and the staff do their jobs. The School Committee needs someone to support the staff and be a positive role model for the children.

Paul McDonald, 619 Church Avenue, Warwick, stated that he represents the North Kingstown teachers and feels that James Sheehan seems to have the right qualifications and experience. He also stated that North Kingstown has a great school system. Please endorse James Sheehan.

Pam Pinheiro, 710 Slocum Road, stated that we don't need the same people, we need diversity. Please support Bob Jones as he has more diversity of ideas and more balance. Ms. Hoskins recommended him, and she thinks her wishes should be respected.

Dick Kinnes, 45 Yellowstone Drive, stated that he supports Megan Reilly as she has been involved in the community and knows what is going on.

President Mancini thanked everyone for their comments.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Appointment of a School Committee Member

President Mancini stated that we have a number of fine candidates for consideration to fill this position.

Councilor Page stated that she read through Councilor McCoy's responses to the questions as well as she called each one of the candidates and asked them all the same question which was; "you will only be serving 11 months and what do you hope to achieve in those 11 months"? Everyone answered her question and she felt like she got great answers from everyone.

However, she was very impressed with Jim Sheehan's response. She wants our School Committee to be able to move forward with someone that not only has the teaching experience but legislative experience as well. She further stated that she would like to make a motion to nominate James Sheehan to fill the School Committee vacancy. Councilor Anderson seconded the motion.

Councilor McCoy stated that we are very lucky to have 11 people who have submitted their names for consideration for this appointment. He thanked everyone who came this evening. As was mentioned, with public service comes a lot of hard work and scrutiny, and these candidates were willing to do so. He is also glad we had recognition of Jennifer Hoskin's service to the Town and thinks most people should note that she served during a time period where we had a lot going on.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

He further stated that normally people find themselves on school committees because they have put in their paperwork, campaigned, and run for election. He would like to share some information that is relevant to our decision we will be making this evening.

- Mr. Jones has run for School Committee four times, November 2012 and received 7,941 votes (25.3% of the vote) and was elected.
- He ran for re-election in 2016 and received 9,085 votes (32.2% of vote) and was re-elected.
- He was selected by his fellow school committee members to serve as Vice-Chair of the Committee.
- Mr. Jones ran for re-election in 2020 and received 6,437 votes (16.1% of the vote). He came in 5th and was not elected.
- Mr. Jones ran for election in 2022 and received 4,106 votes (16.7% of the vote). He came in 4th and was not elected.
- Krystle Simmas who was unable to be here tonight due to a sick child ran in 2022 and received 1,976 votes (8% votes) and came in 5th and was not elected.
- Mr. James Sheehan ran in 2002 for Senate (District 36) and received 6,002 votes and was elected to office. He ran for re-election in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 and was re-elected each time. During his time in the Senate, Mr. Sheehan sponsored legislation directly effecting education and additionally played a viable role in reviewing and approving the State of Rhode Island annual budgets.

Our choices tonight only need to meet one set of qualifications and that is contained in Sec. 902 of the Charter, and it is his understanding that all the candidates meet those qualifications. Based on the responses to the questionnaire he sent to each candidate and tonight's testimony, he would also second Councilor Page's motion nominating Mr. Sheehan.

Councilor Anderson stated that she would echo what others have said in that we have quality and quantity of real and qualified talented people who have come forward which reflects well on our town. It is an honor and privilege to live and serve North Kingstown. What she has heard tonight and through the many correspondences the Council has received is that we don't need more of the same. She believes that extends beyond political parties and there is no one who has applied or sits on the school committee who understands the overlap between policy and government the way Jim Sheehan can. He has experience in building consensus and passing legislation. Another thing she heard tonight was respecting wishes, and she is of the mind that the wishes we need to respect are those of the voters. She appreciates the data that Councilor McCoy has provided and feels it speaks volumes. Senator Sheehan has had the trust of the public time and time again. She has also heard tonight how important community involvement is and she feels Mr. Sheehan has been involved in this community in a real and tangible way for years with a record of achievement. This is about so much more than defeating something. Mr. Sheehan has achieved much, and his resume is impeccable, and it is her opinion that he is the best choice to fill this vacancy.

Councilor Mandel stated that he too echoes his colleagues' comments regarding the quality of applicants, and we are fortunate to have so many strong candidates who have expressed interest, commitment, and motivation to serve the children of our community. He has served on school boards three times in his career, and he knows what makes a good school board are people who have divergent views, who don't echo each other, who collaborate, and who are interested in

public service and commitment. He also understands that divergent views don't come from political parties that are different but are of independent minds. We have heard from several people tonight who meet that qualification, and he is sorry we don't have more opportunities to appoint to the school committee. He appreciates what those people who have kids in the schools or have served on school committees in other places have to offer. One of the big things for the school committee is getting things and he concurs with his colleagues that Mr. Sheehan is the best choice to fill this vacancy.

President Mancini stated that he would like to share an email he received from a constituent which stated that "I was impressed with the number and quality of applicants you have received for the School Committee vacancy. You have been through this process before, and you know that no matter who is selected there will be supporter and objectors. He further stated that he hopes that those who are not selected will further stay involved." He feels government experience and being an advocate for public education are two qualities that he puts a premium on and there were two candidates that had that experience and excelled at that experience.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

BOOK 110 PAGE

Having experience in government is good as it makes you practical and realistic. Sometimes the line between practicality and idealistic views crosses and when you have been involved with government for a while, you know that practicality is the way to go. Mr. Sheehan has had 20 years in government, 8 years on the education committee, 28 years a teacher and advocate for the children. He has shown he is collaborative. He will support Jim Sheehan to fill this vacancy.

President Mancini called the question, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint James C. Sheehan, 40 Blueberry Lane, to the School Committee to December 4, 2024 to fill the unexpired term of Jennifer Hoskins.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:20 P.M.

Jeannette Alyward
Town Clerk