

PTA Council

Navigating the Municipal Elections
November 2, 2021



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

- Founded in 1920 as part of the passage of the women's right to vote in the US Constitution.
- Exists to engage the public in the democratic process.
- 501(c)(3) IRS Tax Status – nonpartisan requirement.
- Advocacy is permitted under the tax code, provided we do not spend more than 20% of our annual budget on it.

PTA

- Founded in 1897
- Exists to engage parents and the public in support of public education and the best interests of children.
- 501(c)(3) IRS Tax Status – nonpartisan requirement.
- Advocacy is permitted under the tax code, provided you do not spend more than 20% of your annual budget on it.



The Role of the PTA

- Advocate for the interests of children,
- Share information,
- Encourage parent participation in voting,
- Share what the important issues are that affect the schools and how their vote will make a difference.
- Respect 501(c)(3) nonpartisan status, and
- Respect your very important ADVOCACY role.
- You can and should speak out, loudly and often.

ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

- **Turnout in a Presidential Election Year is virtually 100% in Greenwich.**
 - 79.8% in 2020.
 - 76.94% in 2016.
- **Turnout in a Municipal Election Year is often below 50%.**
 - August 17 election for state senator – turnout was 28%
 - 2019 municipal election turnout was 33%.
 - 2017 municipal election turnout was 30%.
 - Young people and parents under the age of 50 are underrepresented in the voting population.
 - Older residents and Republicans are over-represented in the voting population during municipal election years.
- **Failure to vote has real implications**
- **Town is historically been Republican.**
 - 36% Republican
 - 26% Democrat
 - 38% Unaffiliated
- **Town is now evenly divided between parties.**
 - 30% Republican
 - 30% Democrat
 - 40% Unaffiliated



Important Elections for the Greenwich Public Schools This Year

- **Board of Education**
 - **Composition of Board of Ed**
 - 4 Democrats
 - 4 Republicans
 - 4-year terms
 - 2 Republicans and 2 Democrats elected every two years.
 - **Board Chairman**
 - Elected by the Board of Education
 - Does NOT have a tie-breaking vote
 - Board must work cooperatively to reach decisions
 - Collegiality is important to the functionality of the Board of Education
 - Partisan wrangling can be and has been deeply damaging to the schools.
 - **2 Democratic candidates**
 - Kathleen Stowe and Laura Kostin.
 - Two seats
 - Both will be elected
 - **3 Republican candidates**
 - Megan Galletta, Michael Joseph Mercanti-Anthony, and Cody Kittle
 - Two seats
 - Only two will be elected.



Important Elections for the Greenwich Public Schools This Year

- **Why is the Board of Education important for your child's education?**

- **The Board of Education**

- sets policy,
 - approves annual budgets (subject to BET and RTM approval),
 - sets standards for hiring teachers,
 - negotiates teachers' contracts,
 - hires and oversees the Superintendent of Schools,
 - decides grade organization of schools,
 - approves curricula,
 - manages school property,
 - handles school redistricting, and
 - provides for continuing education.



Important Elections for the Greenwich Public Schools This Year

- **Board of Estimate and Taxation**

- **12 Members**

- 6 Democrats: Leslie Moriarty, Miriam Kreuzer, Laura Erickson, Jeff Ramer, Stephen Selbst, David Weisbrod
 - 6 Republicans: Dan Ozizmir, Karen Fassuliotis, Michael Basham, Nisha Arora, Bill Drake, Leslie Tarkington

- Voters have NO choice on the individuals who serve on the BET.
 - Representatives from the Party with the most votes elects the BET Chairman
 - Chairman has a tie-breaking vote.
 - Voters CONTROL which party elects the Chairman, with its tie-breaking vote.

- **HOW TO VOTE**

- **Vote for ALL of the candidates from the political party you want to control the BET.**
 - **Important to understand the differences between the party platforms.**

Important Elections for the Greenwich Public Schools This Year

- Why is the BET important for your child's education?
 - The BET
 - controls Town spending,
 - sets fiscal policy,
 - **prepares the annual budget based on initial operating and capital budgets prepared by the First Selectman and the Board of Education,**
 - approves interim appropriations,
 - receives funds for the Town,
 - **determines each year's tax rate,** and
 - oversees the Finance Department, the Assessor and the Tax Collector.



HOW TO VOTE FOR THE BET



Important Elections for the Greenwich Public Schools This Year

- The Representative Town Meeting (RTM)
 - 230 Members
 - Representing 12 different districts
 - Candidates run without party designation
- Why is the RTM Important to Your Child's Education?
 - The RTM
 - approves or rejects or reduces the budget;
 - approves or rejects or reduces all interim expenditures over \$5,000;
 - acts as the final authority on municipal improvements;
 - acts on petitions brought to RTM by twenty or more registered voters.



GETTING READY TO VOTE

DO

- Register
- Plan for Absentee voting, if you need it
- Understand what the candidates think.
- Read the Voter's Guide.
- Attend debates.
- Vote for people who will support what you want them to do.
- Spread the word. Individually, your opinion counts to your friends and neighbors.

DON'T

- Sit at home and fail to vote.
- Think others will do the right thing.
- Vote for your friends unless you know they support your values.
- Use your position on the PTA, PTAC, or LWV Greenwich to endorse political candidates.



LEAGUE RESOURCES – HELP US HELP YOU

- Create a buzz about the elections. It's important to vote. It's important to understand what candidates think.
- Here's how:
 - [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Next Door](#) -- Follow us, Share our Posts, Tell Your Friends
 - [Candidate Information](#) on our website
 - [Vote411.org](#)
 - [Voters Guide](#)
 - [Debates](#) – All on Zoom, Attend or see the Video After the Fact
 - To get our emails, join the League or just subscribe on our website, www.lwvgreenwich.org.

