**MEET CASTLETON’S CANDIDATES**

Questions developed by local members of the League of Women Voters**\*** of Vermont were sent to every candidate on the Castleton Ballot. These pages are their responses transcribed exactly as the candidates wrote them.

Remember to vote at the Castleton Fire hall on Tuesday March 2. The polls will open at 8A and close at 7P. You may also vote before then by Absentee Ballot.

Thank-you to all the candidates who took this opportunity to let us know them better.

**\***The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization dedicated to creating an informed electorate.

 League of Women Voters of Vermont in Castleton

 P.O. Box 208

 Castleton, VT 05735

**1st Constable**: **Silas R. Loomis** (one 2-year term)

**Question:** As First Constable, what do you see as your rôle in helping

 Castleton residents who are suffering due to the pandemic?

**NO RESPONSE**

**Library Board**: **Nancy Mark** (one 5-year term)

**Question:** Physical access for all people to the Library is being addressed

 and will become a reality eventually. Other than physical

 access, what other improvements to the Library would you like

 to see in the future?

**RESPONSE:** The Castleton Free Library is a special institution, but its attractive building is almost 100 years old and needs ongoing attention. Much has already been done to improve the structure, including by weatherizing windows and adding energy-efficient heat pumps. But work still remains. The chimneys require repair, and the front door needs refurbishing.

Given that the library is brick, most of the exterior doesn’t need attention, however wooden trim, the clock tower and the windows should be repainted.

Much of what makes a library attractive are the books inside and the programs offered. We need a systematic process for ensuring that the library acquires the books and materials and provides the services that Town residents want. I recommend that librarians periodically reach out to community groups to hear ideas both for their suggestions for the collection as well as services.

**Town Clerk**: **Nedra Boutwell** (one 3-year term)

**Question:** What have you found to be the most challenging aspect of being

 Town Clerk during the pandemic?

**RESPONSE:** As Town Clerk I face the same challenges an everyone that continues to work during the pandemic.  Taking precautions to protect co-workers and the public that come into the office is priority.  For example; issuing marriage licenses and providing notary services in the parking lot if necessary, making adjustments so people can still receive the services they need.  Land recordings have increased, many properties have sold and people are taking advantage of the lower rates to refinance.  I am glad I am able to accommodate the people that needed to access the Town records to allow these transactions to happen.

The most challenging tasks have probably been the elections we have had during the pandemic.  Protecting my election workers and voters is essential.  My goal is that everyone feels safe voting, however they chose to vote.

I enjoy working for the citizens of Castleton. Thank you for your support.

**Town Moderator**: **Michael Finnegan** (one 1-year term)

**Question:**  What have you found to be the most challenging aspect of

 being Town Moderator?

**NO RESPONSE**

**Select Board**: **Michael R. Holden** (one 1-year term)

**Question:** There are many Castleton residents and businesses who are

 suffering from the economic effects of the pandemic. What are

 the most important steps you would take as a Select Board

 member to help them?

**RESPONSE:** As being a Select board member I would keep an open mind and try to see all sides of the issues at hand.

I will work with local businesses and Castleton residents to let them know what is aviable through State and local goverment agencies.

I would like to bring revenue into Castleton and find ways to cut the pinch that residents are feeling.

I want to be valueable to my community, which I have lived in my whole life, and listen to their concerns and try to help resolve them.

We all need to work together to get through this pandemic and keep Castleton flurishing.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve my community.

**Select Board: Jim Leamy** (one 1-year term)

**RESPONSE:** The Federal government’s partial answer to this problem is to write stimulus checks to individuals & businesses who are impacted by the pandemic. However, municipalities do not have printing presses or “rainy day” funds set aside for this purpose. Therefore, what do we do to try to address this problem which the Town Manager and Select Board are keenly aware of? The Answer is to try to control spending for fiscal year 2021-2022. The Town Manager, with cooperation from department heads, has developed a proposed budget which should not increase property taxes with a net increase of $10,552.00 or 0.3%

At the same time, the Select Board supports encouraging existing business to remain in Castleton & expand as well as attracting new businesses to locate here. The Town offers tax stabilization as an incentive for these projects. The more economic development we have, the less each individual homeowner will pay in property taxes.

**Select Board: Joe Mark** (one 3-year term)

**Question:** There are many Castleton residents and businesses who are

 suffering from the economic effects of the pandemic. What are

 the most important steps you would take as a Select Board

 member to help them?

**RESPONSE:** My schedule allows me to listen to the press conferences Governor Scott holds each week. Through those, I’ve learned a lot about special State programs designed to support businesses and individuals struggling because of the pandemic. As a Select Board member, I would reach out to those whom I learn are facing challenges and let them know about available services.

I’m grateful for the informative posts Mike Jones regularly puts on Front Porch Forum. If I were on the board, I would encourage him to continue this practice and, as appropriate, include information about resources that could benefit Town residents suffering due to COVID-19 and its implications.

Let me take this opportunity to give a shoutout to our Police Department. Over the past year they have made numerous food deliveries to individuals and families in need.

Finally, as a private citizen I have submitted input to the Select Committee charged with recommending changes in the Vermont State Colleges System. The decision that group is contemplating could have profound implications for Castleton University and, if that is the case, could greatly affect local businesses. If I am elected to the Select Board, I would continue to advocate for the University.

**Town Treasurer: Nancy Trudo** (one 3-year term)

**Question:** How have your responsibilities as Town Treasurer been impacted by the

 COVID pandemic?

**RESPONSE:** The position of the Treasurer fortunately has not been effected by the pandemic.  I am still able to perform my duties as the treasurer in the same manner as before. However, safe protocols have been followed in the town office including mask wearing at all times and sanitizing all areas frequently.

I do hope going forward when the pandemic is over that we continue safe practices when we are sick and be kind to those around us.

I look forward to the next 3 years as treasurer with you support.

**School Board**: **Toni Lobdell** (one 3-year term)

**Question:** It appears that in the past, the voices of our local school district

 board have represented the wants and opinions of a vocal

 minority. How will you seek out and represent the opinions of

 the majority?

**NO RESPONSE**

**Slate Valley School District Clerk: Liz MacKay**

**Question:** How would you describe the responsibilities of the School

 District Clerk?

**RESPONSE:** Our school district is a union district made up of six towns. According to Vermont Statutes we may elect a school district clerk. The Slate Valley School District Clerk is responsible for signing the warning of our district's Annual Meeting; keeping a true record of all proceedings at the Annual Meeting; organizing the counting of votes for the district budget and school board directors; making sure that the ballots from the six towns are commingled prior to being counted; and certifying the results from the ballots that are obtained at such elections.

If I am elected as your Slate Valley School District Clerk, I will do my best to perform these duties happily and responsibly. Thank you!