

MEET CASTLETON'S 2020 CANDIDATES

Questions developed by local members of the League of Women Voters* of Vermont were sent to every candidate on the Castleton Ballot for 2020. These pages are their responses.

Remember to vote at the Castleton Fire Station (a.k.a. Public Safety Building) on Tuesday March 3. The polls will open at 8A and close at 7P. You may also vote 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 of men and women dedicated to creating an informed electorate.

League of Women Voters of Vermont in Castleton
P.O. Box 208
Castleton, VT 05735

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

TOWN SELECTMAN: Question: Why do you want to be on the Select Board?

Jim Leamy (one-year term)

I have served on the Select Board on and off for many years. My top priority has always been: "To provide the taxpayers with the services they want in a cost-efficient manner." If re-elected to this one-year term I will continue to be focused on this objective

Castleton taxpayers, like most other towns in Vermont, rely on the property tax to fund local government, and without a solid business Commercial base, the homeowner pays most of this cost.

I support expanding our commercial tax base by encouraging local businesses to remain in town and provide opportunities to expand where possible. New desirable commercial enterprises must be discovered and invited to settle in Castleton. "Castleton is business friendly."

Joe Mark (one-year term)

Last year I promised that, if elected, I would serve with "hard work, integrity, fairness, respect, and civility." I believe my conduct demonstrates that I've kept that promise.

Those who have either attended Select Board meetings or watched them on PEG-TV know that they have been orderly and efficient, the tone positive and respectful.

In the same vein, the Town Manager and department heads are competent and responsive. Office staff are friendly, welcoming, and professional when members of the public visit 263 Route 30 North.

Through the collaborative efforts of our Board, the Manager, Town employees, appointed citizen bodies, and numerous wonderful volunteers, this past year has been a good one for Castleton. We accomplished much. I am particularly proud that we were able to resolve two collective bargaining agreements that had expired three and a half years ago.

I want to help keep that going.

Rob Steele (one-year term)

I would like to be on the select board because I feel I can bring a fresh point of view to Castleton. As a lifelong resident, and a small business owner for over 15 years in our town, I feel this is an excellent way for me to serve the community that has supported me.

Thank you for your support.

Joe Bruno (3-year term)

NO RESPONSE

Richard A. Combs (3-year term)

I was first elected to the board six years ago at a time when a very divisive issue was tearing our town apart. My intent at the time was to help resolve those issues and create the infrastructure our town truly needed. Now two terms later those goals have been achieved and we have been working on long-term strategies to maintain what we have and provide for future needs.

I feel that I need to serve another term in order to help maintain the civility that has existed on our select board this past year and assist in preserving the long-term mindset of the board. We are currently creating the tools and strategies that will allow us to improve our infrastructure in order to grow our local economy. A strong local economy will increase our tax base, giving us all a better quality of life with tax neutral budgets.

LIBRARY TRUSTEE: Question: Why are you running for the Library Board?

Patrick Keller (5-year term)

I am running for the library board because of my commitment to community service. The library is an integral part of our community and should therefore be equally accessible to all residents of the town. As a member of the Library Board of Trustees I would support achieving handicap accessibility throughout the library. I am also committed to increasing community involvement with the library and expanding upon its core functions.

2nd CONSTABLE: Question: What are the duties of the 2nd Constable?

Michael A. Jones (2-year term)

NO RESPONSE

TOWN MODERATOR: Question: Why do you want to be Town Moderator?

Michael Finnegan (1-year term)

About 4 years ago, John Burke, the long-standing Town Moderator in Castleton, approached me and asked if I would take over the duties of Town Moderator. He felt he had completed his tenure, and it was time for someone else to take over these duties. I agreed with him, and continue in this position today. My goal as Town Moderator is to facilitate meaningful and civil discussions of important issues.

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Question: How would you use your individual voice to benefit all students?

Tanya Tolchin (3-year term; representing West Haven))

As a mother of two children in the Slate Valley Unified School district and a resident of West Haven, there are few issues more pressing to me than the success of our students and school. I bring my background in environmental education, fundraising, farm and teaching to my role on the school board. I care deeply about ensuring our children get plenty of time outdoors to play, build resiliency and enjoy our beautiful part of the world. I am thrilled that the board is advancing bold changes like the new middle school along with addressing critical maintenance issues. I urge you to support the upcoming school bond vote on town meeting day to help ensure a bright future for our students and schools.

Julie Finnegan (3-year term; representing Castleton)

NO RESPONSE

Rick Wilson (3-year term; representing Fair Haven)

NO RESPONSE

Michael Bache (3-year term; representing Fair Haven)

NO RESPONSE

Patricia Beaumont-Stannard (finishing 1 year of a 3-year term; representing Benson)

QUESTIONNAIRE UNCLAIMED

Rebekah St. Peter (finishing 2 years of a 3-year term; representing Benson)

NO RESPONSE

John Wurzbacher (3-year term; representing Orwell)

NO RESPONSE