

VOTER GUIDE questions for all candidates:

1. What motivates you to run for this office?
2. What qualifications and skills do you bring to the table?
3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities?

Common Council At-Large

- **Greg Burnett* (D/WFP)**

1. Serving on the Common Council is one of the most rewarding leadership positions by allowing me to make a positive contribution to our community almost each week while in office. I am running for reelection to continue to advocate for Norwalk residents. I am committed to serve and not simply stand on the sidelines. I will advocate for appropriate spending based on data-driven information while maintaining the city's top tier AAA rating. I will continue to focus on spending what is necessary and finding ways to keep taxes down which is an ongoing challenge. I will also continue to support the strategic plan of improvement for the Board of Education and improving the school infrastructure while concentrating on providing the best student learning experience to enable us to close the achievement gap. I will continue to promote and implement solutions to improve safe accessibility throughout the city.

2. I have worked in business for over thirty-five years in various managerial and technical positions which have allowed me to develop an extensive tool kit of skills and expertise. I am currently on the Common Council and serves as the Chairman of the Finance and Claims Committee. I am also on the Personnel and Land Use and Building Management Committees. Each has allotted the opportunities to discuss and implement strategies to control spending, reorganize leadership talent, and enhance the Norwalk footprint. Past experience includes elected offices and boards such as the Board of Education, Board of Estimate and Taxation, Board of Health, and Norwalk Facilities Construction Commission. Involvement with community groups includes the Norwalk Mentor Advisory Board, Norwalk Salvation Army Advisory Board, and mentor in the IBM P-Tech Early College Academy at Norwalk High School. Each of these experiences have prepared me to listen, access information, and make value-add decisions.

3. Maintaining strong fiscal management; continuing to invest in our school system; generating economic develop; and providing our police and fire departments with the tools and resources necessary to continue to be proactive in order to maintain safe neighborhoods reside at the top of the priority listing. One of the challenges we face is addressing the needs of our diverse community. We need to embrace and value our diversity by ensuring responsible growth and economic development that addresses the needs of all people in our community. We must provide a community that enables young people the affordability to live here as well as supporting our senior citizens with the ability to stay in their homes that they have invested in their whole lives. We have a great opportunity to enhance our intergenerational capacity and make Norwalk a welcoming and attractive city for all.

- **Manny Langella (D/WFP)**

1. I've had a passion for community service and politics my entire life. I am a son of union workers and understand the value of hard work and strong family values. I have a BA in Political Science and a Minor in Criminal Justice. It is easy to get caught up in politics from the Federal level, but the reality is that change starts

and happens at the local level. That is what motivates me to run for office. Additionally, I have had the pleasure to work alongside many of our State & Local leaders from both sides of the aisle on various commissions, boards, and projects throughout the years. Locally, I sit on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Lottery as well as the Fair Rent Commission. This has put me in a position where I feel that I can contribute at a higher level. As such, I'd like to take my professional and political experience and serve our Town further on the Council.

2. I believe my career in enterprise-level business leadership as a Global Strategist at Indeed.com will add a valuable perspective to an already diverse portfolio on the Council. I live and breathe data analytics, strategy, complex cross-functional cooperation, project management. Driving efficiency and identifying go to market and turnaround strategies in business has many parallels to governance. Whether we like to admit it or not, we are running a business, a 330 million dollar one that impacts 90,000 residents of all races, ages, genders, and incomes from all communities. I believe in transparency, communication, accountability, and planning for change. What has defined my success has been questioning the status quo and taking a step back while using data and feedback to drive my decisions. I am an independent thinker, I'm not a "yes" man, and I will always ensure to do my due diligence before acting should you put your support in me.

3. • Promote innovation by embracing technology and environmental thinking.

o We need to keep Norwalk relevant to its peers. This includes improving our energy efficiency and sustainable practices as well as exploring renewable resources.

• Improving infrastructure that drives impact for Norwalk.

o A strong Urban Core, fully funded schools and healthy & robust transportation hubs focused on infrastructure that improves mobility will keep Norwalk moving forward.

• Smart economic growth that increases our tax base and fosters job growth.

o We want to recruit and attract new businesses and residents while retaining current ones from leaving by strengthening relationships between community & government. Regarding retention, affordable housing for all of Norwalk and fully funded schools that keep graduates in Norwalk are key cogs in the gears that will drive ROI here.

• **Nick Sacchinelli* (D/WFP)** [no responses received]

• **Barbara Smyth* (D/WFP)**

1. I grew up in Western Pennsylvania where I learned the values of hard work, family, grass roots organizing, and giving back to my community. I first ran for office two years ago because of my desire to serve Norwalk and because I believed then, as I still do, that we need more women's voices at every level of government. As a mother of three Norwalk Public School graduates, grandmother of two, teacher, resident and taxpayer for the past twenty years, I offer a unique and balanced perspective to serve the city I love. I've learned a lot during my first term, but I've realized the more I learn, the more I need to learn to be the most effective and productive I can be, so I'm seeking a second term as an At-Large Common Council member.

2. I'm proud to have served our children and families as a teacher in our public school system, first at Ponus Ridge Middle School and now at Norwalk High School. My experience working with our kids has given me a

unique perspective and compassion for Norwalk's diverse population. Just as I believe every child has a gift, I believe each person has a voice that deserves to be heard and respected. I approach my position on the council like I do a classroom of students. We base our opinions and decisions on facts, we listen to and respect different opinions, and we treat each other with kindness. When we work together, we all benefit. As chair of the Common Council's Personnel Committee, I've gained the experience of leading meetings, listening to all perspectives, and helping to guide informed votes for the benefit of our valued city employees and residents.

3. My top three priorities if reelected would be to balance responsible growth with the historic nature and culture of our city, while taking care of our neediest citizens, and supporting projects that increase the grand list to lessen the burden on taxpayers. There has been a lot of exciting growth in Norwalk that will prepare our city for our children and grandchildren, but it's important to make sure our longtime residents can afford to stay in their homes and that we have an organized effort to coordinate services for the elderly and disadvantaged. I will continue to work toward this vision if I am elected. We can accomplish this by working together to support responsible development and small businesses with smart zoning laws and economic incentives that ultimately help our city to prosper and by showing compassion and respect for all of our citizens.

- **Colin Hosten* (D/WFP)**

1. Nothing has made me prouder in the past nine months than being a public servant for the people of Norwalk. I love advocating for issues like economic fairness, quality public education, and environmental awareness at the local level. I am seeking reelection so that I can continue to serve our community for a full term. Norwalk has made many improvements in the last few years. Serious crime is way down in every single neighborhood. We've tried to keep residential taxes manageable, while our commercial properties have become more fairly valued. And we're building a stronger future by investing heavily in our young people, with a public school system now rated the best among urban districts in Connecticut, and getting better each year. I am asking to earn your vote in November because I am excited about the progress we can continue to make.

2. My current experience as a Council Member is all about tackling tough problems and finding reasonable resolutions. It's about working together to find common ground and seek the greater good. Norwalk is a wonderfully diverse city in every way, which makes it extra crucial to be able to understand multiple perspectives, something that, as a minority immigrant who identifies as LGBT, I am familiar with. My decade of experience in the private sector has also helped me appreciate the importance of using cutting-edge technology to improve workflow. And as an educator, I embrace a collaborative approach to problem-solving, and am always looking for opportunities to learn and improve. I am a strong communicator who values honesty, perseverance, and mutual respect, especially when we may disagree. And I am fortunate to have a work schedule that affords me enough flexibility to meet the many obligations of serving on the Council.

3. To me, the issues of economic stability and environmental sustainability are intricately linked. As we think about economic growth that makes a real difference in people's lives, it is imperative that we continue to reduce our local carbon footprint and prepare for changing climate patterns and rising sea levels. Can't grow our economy if the city floods every high tide. This approach also helps us think about development in a holistic way that factors in long-term environmental impacts, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods. Norwalk must remain a safe and healthy place that people can call home even if they are not wealthy. And all of this, of course, starts with a strong educational foundation. On the Council, I will continue support initiatives that seek to enhance opportunities for our students, teachers, and families, while also addressing legacy discrepancies in access to education based on race and socio-economic class.

- **Patrick Murphy (R)**

1. I am at a time in my career that I am able to give back to the community as a representative making use of my long career in financial controllership and stewardship. And a sincere desire to help people.

2. Over 35 years as a professional financial controller in the fields of commercial real estate , educational institutions and hospitality gives me the skill set to provide a sound fiduciary role on the common council.

To help guide Norwalk at a time of great pressure on tax revenues from a shrinking tax roll , increasing budgets and to control the pushes to increase the permitting for large scale rental complexes while maintaining top city services to our residents.

3. 1. Provide the checks and balances on spending so that our tax dollars are only put to effective use and purpose.

2. Increase tax revenue via a vision and plan that I have to attract businesses to Norwalk for the long haul; with incentives so that we all have a stake in the city .

3. The approval and number for permits for mega-large scale rental complexes (luxury, affordable, mix-use) must be controlled. I will show how these projects can have a negative impact on the city in the long run and whether on a case by case basis if it fits in with Norwalk's master plans and if it is in the best interest for all of Norwalk.

- **Richard Bonenfant (R)**

1. What motivates me to run for a Common Council At-Large position is the desire to serve the community and help make Norwalk a better city, to keep it livable for today's residents and our future generations. Many individual people and various groups in Norwalk have encouraged me to continue with public service.

2. Having been elected seven times to the Common Council, I understand what it takes to move forward with good ideas, and sometimes stop the proposals that aren't so great. As a former Majority Leader and also having been in the minority on the Council, I've learned how to work with all parties and while respecting different points of view. Being elected as a representative comes with the responsibility to understand the wishes of the community before voting on items that will affect the quality of people's lives.

3. We need to keep the taxes as low as possible while supporting a good educational system that will sustain property values and prevent our equity from eroding which will happen if we aren't careful. Second, we will need to step up our Zoning enforcement because there are many complaints from neighbors about illegal apartments which lead to street parking issues and pressures on the school budget. Third, I would like to evaluate the impact of the new and planned developments before approving any new major projects. Traffic has become a major problem, and cutting out automobile lanes for bicycle paths and reverse angle parking are experiments that don't always work for greater mobility through the urban core.

- **Artie Kassimis (R)**

1. As a 35-year resident of Norwalk, I have seen many changes in our city. Some of these changes have been good, like the program improvements in our schools. Other changes, as told to me by many Norwalk residents, have impacted their quality of life and their enjoyment of all our city has to offer. I know this city and I know how to bring people together to find solutions that are financially sound and actually work. The road ahead will

not be an easy one. It will require leaders in city government to make tough decisions. However, I am excited for what the future holds and I know we can accomplish a lot when we work together and stay focused on our goals.

2. My qualifications include a background in corporate as an IT director, various positions in our city government, community service, and for the past 24 years, I've been the pastor of Word Alive Church in Norwalk. These unique experiences have provided me with both hard and soft skills that include leadership, budgeting, communications, team management, problem solving, and consensus building.

Below are the specifics of my city government experience:

- I was elected to the Board of Education for multiple terms, where I served for six and a half years, four years as Vice Chairman. During my first term, we were faced with a \$4 million deficit that had accumulated over the previous years. We hired a CFO who helped us navigate through the shortfalls and implement controls to prevent this from happening again. Within two years, we transformed a \$4 million deficit into a \$1.5 million surplus.

- As a member of

3. According to many Norwalk residents that I have spoken to, the biggest challenge facing Norwalk residents is quality of life, such as overdevelopment, traffic congestion and high rents. While we cannot go back in time and undo what's been done, we can move forward and make positive changes that will benefit all of our residents. For example, ensuring our grand list is as healthy as possible by securing the appropriate tax revenues from commercial properties, obtaining the most rebate revenue from Hartford as possible, and ensuring our education system is top notch. Challenges are simply opportunities in disguise. I'm looking forward to working together to meet these challenges head on and find solutions that will make our city even better.

- **Glenn Iannacone (R)**

1. I believe in balanced government. One party rule is not good for the city. When I was on the Council from 2013 to 2015 the make up was 8 to 7 and there was discussion between the two parties and solutions were made to problems.

2. I served the city as a Common Council member and also as a Board of Education Member, Chairman for a year. I have a Masters in Public Administration from the University of New Haven. As the city's Fire Marshal, I would seek to solve problems with architects and contractors when they arose. I am a Norwalk native and I love our city.

3. (1.) I would support every department in the city having a strategic plan in place to be able to give the people of Norwalk a more efficient government for their tax dollars.

(2.) Push to help eliminate illegal apartments in the city.

(3.) Support a 90 day delay of the Walk Bridge project that the Governor mentioned he would consider.

- **Darnell Crosland (R)** [no responses received]