



Voter's Guide  
for the  
Town of Guilford  
General Election

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

Prepared by the GuilfordPACT Steering Committee  
October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Dear GuilfordPACT members,

One of the most powerful ways to advance the cause of GuilfordPACT is to ensure that individuals who support our mission are elected to key town leadership roles. In order to identify such individuals in the upcoming November 3, 2009 town election, we sent a questionnaire to all 17 candidates for public office (2 First Selectman candidates, 4 Board of Selectmen candidates, 6 Board of Education candidates, and 5 Board of Finance candidates) soliciting answers to the following three questions:

1. Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008?
2. What will you do in your role on the B.O.E./B.O.S./B.O.F. to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?
3. As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the B.O.E./B.O.S./B.O.F., what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?

The candidates' responses are reproduced in their entirety in the attached GuilfordPACT voter's guide, and also available online at [guilfordpact.org](http://guilfordpact.org).

The GuilfordPACT steering committee carefully reviewed all responses (with particular attention to Question 1) and identified three candidates who provided strong written support for the construction of a new Guilford High School. They are: Alan Meyers (Board of Education), Chris Moore (Board of Education), and Mike Sessine (Board of Selectmen).

We believe that based on the responses to the questions in the voter's guide, electing Alan, Chris and Mike will provide significant momentum for the construction of a new high school, and we plan an extensive get out the vote effort (e-mail, phone banking, social networking) in support of their campaigns over the next week and a half.


More information on the get out the vote effort will follow. Please direct any comments concerning this email to [http://guilfordpact.org/voters\\_guide](http://guilfordpact.org/voters_guide).

Sincerely,

GuilfordPACT Steering Committee

# Sample Ballot

The actual ballot for the November 3rd election (less the Board of Assessment Appeals) is displayed below. For the First Selectman (column 1), one must choose either the Republican or Democratic candidate. For the offices of Selectmen, a voter may choose up to two candidates from either party. For the offices of Board of Finance and Board of Education, a voter may choose up to four candidates from either party. The candidates mentioned in the cover letter are in positions 3B, 8B and 9B.

		Guilford, Connecticut					Municipal Election			Date of Election November 3,		
		Be sure to read the instructions on the reverse side of this ballot.										
OFFICE →		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
PARTY ↓		First Selectman	Selectmen Vote for Any Two		Board of Finance Vote for Any Four				Board of Education Vote for Any Four			
REPUBLICAN		<input type="radio"/> 1A Joseph S Mazza	<input type="radio"/> 2A Charles L Havrda	<input type="radio"/> 3A Cynthia M Cartier	<input type="radio"/> 4A Kimberly Brockett	<input type="radio"/> 5A David Egan	<input type="radio"/> 6A Santella A DiLieto	7A	<input type="radio"/> 8A Keith B Bishop	<input type="radio"/> 9A Emelinda A Sanacora	<input type="radio"/> 10A Susan Koch Renner	<input type="radio"/> 11A John M Ireland
DEMOCRATIC		<input type="radio"/> 1B Gary M MacElhiney	<input type="radio"/> 2B Veronica C Wallace	<input type="radio"/> 3B Michael E Sessine	<input type="radio"/> 4B Louis M Federici, Jr	<input type="radio"/> 5B Kenneth Gameran	6B	7B	<input type="radio"/> 8B Alan Mayers	<input type="radio"/> 9B Christopher L Moore	10B	11B
WRITE-IN VOTES →		<input type="radio"/> 1C	<input type="radio"/> 2C	<input type="radio"/> 3C	<input type="radio"/> 4C	<input type="radio"/> 5C	<input type="radio"/> 6C	<input type="radio"/> 7C	<input type="radio"/> 8C	<input type="radio"/> 9C	<input type="radio"/> 10C	<input type="radio"/> 11C

# Contents

(ordered alphabetically by party, grouped by board, ordered alphabetically by last name)

## Democratic Responses

### First Selectman

Gary MacElhiney

### Board of Selectmen

Mike Sessine

Veronica Wallace

### Board of Finance

Lou Federici

Ken Gamerman

### Board of Education

Alan Meyers

Chris Moore

## Republican Responses

(Note: the Republican Town Committee submitted a response for all of the undersigned candidates in lieu of individual responses.)

### First Selectman

Joseph S. Mazza

### Board of Selectmen

Cynthia M. Cartier

Charles L. Havrda

### Board of Finance

Kimberly Brockett

Santella A. DiLieto

David F. Egan

### Board of Education

Keith B. Bishop

John M. Ireland

Susan Koch Renner

Emelinda A. Sanacora

# **Gary MacElhiney**

## **Candidate for 1st Selectman**

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** I support the steps the BOE is currently taking toward a new high school. The BOE is moving toward a site-specific design, with the ability to realistically determine cost of construction and cost of operation, including maintenance. This will permit a decision based on fact.

The current proposal for a \$500,000 - \$750,000 referendum is crucial. I strongly support this approach and will work with the BOE to schedule and pass this referendum in order to continue moving forward.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** I will work diligently to craft as tight a town budget as possible, maintaining necessary services, while communicating frequently with the BOE/BOF to assemble a total budget package which can be approved.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** There are clearly two sides to the equation, raising revenues and controlling costs. As First Selectman, I will support continued Economic Development, find opportunities for additional revenues and work with our legislative representatives and the state to reform the property tax system.

On the expense side, I can provide a fresh look at all expense items, recognizing that many are fixed, contractual and absolutely necessary. I will work to reduce costs where possible, including medical benefits where an ability to participate in state programs can significantly reduce Guilford's cost. There are opportunities to find efficiencies by consolidating town functions, eliminating duplication and changing the way things are now done. Regionalization can spread costs, as well as allow some of these to be paid by government and private grants.

# Mike Sessine

## Candidate for Board of Selectmen

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** Yes, as a long standing PACT member, I am very familiar with the Task Force's work and the Board of Education's decision making process concerning this issue. I fully support the Board of Education's nearly unanimous (8-1) decision to proceed toward a referendum on a newly constructed high school. A new high school represents a wise investment for the Town, especially given the extremely low interest rates and construction costs that are presently available. It is also important to note that the Town would not start paying for any bonding until several years after the passage of the referendum. My concern is that if we don't keep moving rapidly toward a referendum, we will miss our opportunity to save significant costs. The High School facility is in very poor condition and requires a significant amount of capital maintenance, and I don't want to continue to waste valuable resources on a facility that has exceeded its useful life.

As a member of the Board of Selectmen, I pledge to not only support the process that the Board of Education has embarked upon, but also to actively participate in that process in order to ensure that the Boards of Selectmen and Finance maintain open lines of communication with the Board of Education. Ultimately, I believe it is the job of the Board of Selectmen to advocate for a referendum proposal that represents the best possible long-term solution to the serious facilities issues facing Guilford High School. As a member of the Board of Selectmen, I want to work collectively with the other Selectmen in an effort to communicate the merits of the ultimate referendum proposal and invite the community to express its concerns and/or support well in advance of the referendum date. This referendum represents a major investment by the Town and I think that we, as a community, need to do what we can to increase community involvement and voter turnout.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** We are living in a very difficult economic environment. As a member of the Board of Selectmen, I will strive to ensure that all town departments understand that they need to look at every line item in their budget and justify every dollar expended. I will also work with the other Selectmen, appointed and elected boards and commissions and department heads to develop creative cost cutting

*(Sessine - continued)*

measures through increasing available efficiencies, determining and eliminating redundancies, exploring regional opportunities and applying proven and effective business practices, where appropriate. It is vitally important that we are able to present an affordable town and education budget that meets the needs of our citizens and maintain our quality of life. With respect to the education budget, we cannot afford to be short sighted in our attempts to trim costs. Historically, when educational staff and programs have been cut, it has taken many years to return these staff and programs to our schools. We need to do everything in our power to maintain and enhance our school programs. Our schools are vital to our community and our budgetary decisions should reflect that.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** In addition to the foregoing cost cutting measures, we need to focus on targeted economic development. We need to work closely with our existing businesses to ensure that their needs are addressed, as well as increase our marketing efforts toward attracting new and appropriate businesses that will increase our tax base without jeopardizing Guilford's unique character and quality of life. As a member of the Board of Selectmen, I will work closely with our Economic Development Commission and economic development specialist to ensure that we are actively marketing Guilford's numerous strengths to the business and tourism communities.

# Veronica Wallace

## Candidate for Board of Selectmen

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** I support the efforts of the BOE and the work of the Community Task Force in identifying the problems at the High School and their research into the options that exist to address those problems. Our obligation as citizens of this community is to ensure our children have access to a quality education, in safe facilities designed to foster learning, and we need to move forward in a smart cost effective way.

I applaud the leadership role Guilford PACT has played in raising awareness of the unacceptable current conditions at the High School and endorse your mission "to advocate for education by increasing community and political involvement in Guilford."

It is difficult to say explicitly that I support the construction of a new high school. I support something being done to adequately address the shortcomings of the current building. It does not meet today's educational standards by a long shot. As a member of the BOS, my responsibility is to put forth a project that has been completely vetted and have a full understanding of the fiscal impacts on the municipal budget. We need to understand the specifics of the project, such as the site plan, what is the cost, what is the state reimbursement going to be, what are the operational costs and what impact will a new facility have on the operating budget of the BOE, will the athletic fields be impacted, will the science wing and gyms be utilized?

Once this specific information is known, I think it is incumbent for the members of the BOS, BOE, and BOF to decide on an approach and to educate the people in Guilford on why that approach is best for the education of our children and is fiscally realistic.

From a personal standpoint, I went to the present school and both of my daughters have attended the school. Guilford has great teachers, great students and committed parents. Our educational facilities should measure up to that talent level.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** As a member of the BOS, it is my role and responsibility to present a budget to the taxpayers of Guilford that adequately addresses the operation of

*(Wallace - continued)*

the Town and ensures the safety and well being of its citizens. A lot of due diligence goes into crafting a budget. By the time it is presented to the public, there have been multiple meetings with department heads, Board of Selectmen workshops, public hearings etc. It is through this process that we assemble the facts, determine the priorities of our departments and Guilford residents and put forth a budget that we believe contributes to the quality of life that we enjoy and does so in a fiscally prudent way.

As a member of the BOS I have no input in the Board of Education budget. This is dictated by State of Connecticut statute. The BOE budget is for the delivery of the educational system for the children of Guilford.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** In my role as a member of the BOS I pledge to continue to do whatever I can to support the businesses currently located in Guilford. I will also continue to work with the Economic Development Specialist and the Economic Development Commission to market Guilford to businesses. Stimulating our local economy with development that contributes positively to our quality of life, has a positive fiscal impact on our infrastructure and services, protects our natural resources and is sensitive to neighboring residential areas will continue to be a high priority. We need this to have quality education, healthy schools, paved roads, the best trained men and women in our police and fire departments, playing fields for our children, programs for our seniors and other basic services. These are difficult times, priorities will have to be made, but the economy will rebound and I pledge to present a budget that protects our citizens and addresses the long term goals of our community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Veronica C. Wallace  
Candidate for the Board of Selectmen

# **Lou Federici**

## **Candidate for Board of Finance**

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** Personally, I believe that a High School is the most important municipal building in a community and that Guilford needs to act decisively now to create a new school that completely meets the educational needs of our students and is available to the community as well. The initial proposals put forth in 2008 have been modified by the Board of Ed -- incorporating the science wing into the project and saving the newly installed turf field, both of which I strongly encouraged and support. Moreover, as I understand it, the existing proposal is under further review, as to site location and as to final detailed plans. I am encouraged by the continued hard work of the Board of Ed. As far as supporting this project, I can sincerely say that in the past once I have cast a yes vote on an issue I have enthusiastically supported the same, whether it has been a budget, bond issue or referendum.

As for our role at this time, as a sitting member of the Board of Finance, I believe that it would be inappropriate to make a commitment with regard to on-going deliberations of another Board. Our role is to evaluate the financial impact on the town of a project such as this, once it has been sent by the Board of Education to the Board of Selectmen for their deliberation and only then on to our board. I am encouraged by the progress that has been made toward achieving a New High School of which the entire community could be proud.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** I see our role on the board of finance as continuing to balance the needs of the entire community against the fiscal impact on taxpayers. Since the Board of Finance is not charged with day to day policy decisions and planning, we are removed from the special interest needs/pressures of particular groups. This is the our local "separation of powers" and it is, I believe, an effective way to maximize services while ensuring that the interests of the taxpayers are consistently taken into consideration. I further believe that the long-term interests of the town should not be sacrificed to short-term crisis. We need to stay focused on those things that make our community unique and special. Our obligation as members of the board of finance is to ensure that the financial health of the town, for the long-term, is protected.

*(Federici - continued)*

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** Our role on the Board of Finance is to make sure that only those taxes are levied that are necessary to deliver the services required by the town. In a growing town, such as Guilford, that likely means modest increases year to year. At times, the Grand List and other revenue sources will cover a significant portion of those increases. At times, there will be the need to increase taxes to pay for such essential services. Part of our job, is to continually scrutinize each and every proposal for spending to make sure that only those that are truly essential and that advance the needs of the community are approved. Also, such commercial development that is consistent with the character of our town should be encouraged to help spread the tax base.

# **Kenneth Gamerman**

## **Candidate for Board of Finance**

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** I fundamentally agree that the current high school facility is woefully inadequate and in need of major renovation or replacement by a new building complex. However, it should be noted that the BOF has not yet received a specific cost and design proposal from the BOE. It is our Board's understanding that such a specific proposal is being prepared by the BOE - and that it will address such core issues as renovation or replacement as well as possible locations for any new high school.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** I'm fully committed to continue doing all that I have tried to accomplish these past seventeen years on the BOF - that is, to continue to provide basic services that assure the safety, health and welfare of all our citizens - and to support the development of an outstanding school system that meets the needs of all our children. I shall continue to weigh this commitment against the ability of our residents to pay the costs involved in maintaining these essential services. My absolute first priority remains my continued sensitivity and responsiveness to the financial needs of all the people of Guilford in meeting the fundamental challenges facing our town government and our schools.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** As a member of the BOF, I'll continue to scrutinize all funding proposals submitted for our approval by the BOS and BOE. Although the Board does not have the responsibility to initiate such proposals, I shall continue to examine the impact of these initiatives in terms of internal revenue projections, declining levels of state support, our contractual salary obligations, the firm commitment to restore our fund balance, and specific proposals for assuring Guilford's economic development.

Best Regards,

Ken Gamerman

Board of Finance Candidate For Re-Election

# Alan Meyers

## Candidate for Board of Education

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** I am in support of the construction of a new Guilford High School. The Task Force on School Facilities evaluated all the school buildings in a thorough and comprehensive fashion, and presented the Board of Education with three options for both GHS and Adams Middle School. They consisted of a "light renovation"; renovate as new; and replace. I studied all the recommendations, and attended all the presentations to the community. My conclusion was that it seemed financially prudent to replace GHS with a new three story building, probably on the same lot. I did attach some caveats in that I felt that we should keep the "science wing", the football field, and make the new building as "green" as possible with the use of alternative energy sources.

In October 2008, I joined 7 out of eight of my fellow Board of Education members and voted for that option. However, I was not pleased with the projected cost calculations, and asked for a second opinion as to cost. That resulted in a wide variance, and I now support the proposal to obtain schematic drawings, which will enable us to have more accurate cost projections. That proposal should go to the voters early in 2010, and if approved we can have a final referendum in the spring of 2010.

In addition to Guilford High School, I offered the motion to the BOE to address the health and safety issues at Adams Middle School, and this was unamously passed, by the Board. The voters also approved this by a wide margin. An Adams planning committee is also addressing long term issues, and I await their recommendations.

If reelected, I pledge to move these proposals forward as timely as possible.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** I currently serve as the Chair of the Finance sub-committee of the Board of Education. Budget preparation is a lengthy process, involving input from all stake holders, and the community at large. We are committed to a process involving zero based projections, which consists of needs and not wishes. The Superintendent then filters all the requests, and the Board adjusts the final budget. Over 80 % of the costs are fixed, e.g. salaries, fuel, heat, energy, and the like. Members of the Board of Finance are included in the preparation of the budget, and this last point is important to insure passage of the budget.

*(Meyers - continued)*

At all times the needs of students are paramount and I feel it is most important to continue to emphasize class size, teacher professionalism and development, and the recent initiatives in technology and world language. During these troubled economic times, I would favor no new initiatives, but feel this is a time for consolidation. I also favor examination of the revenues that the schools collect such as tuition, student athletic fees and the like in order to see whether revenue can be enhanced. A large percentage of our budget goes toward health insurance, and I will work with our State officials to have Guilford become a part of the state health plan. This alone could save about \$300,000, without a decrease in coverage for our employees.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** The Board of Education has no control over tax revenues, but we account for the majority of expenditures. I am very aware of the need to control costs, and this becomes an ongoing concern of mine, as Chair of the Finance committee. I have addressed some of these concerns in the prior questions.

# Chris Moore

## Candidate for Board of Education

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** As a BOE member I would support the prior 8-1 decision to recommend to the BOF, BOS, and community that we finance new construction of the high school. The last year has brought significant financial and budgetary challenges to our town, but it does not change the reasoning behind the BOE decision: that new construction represents the best and most fiscally responsible long term investment for our students and our town. The current GHS facility is a poorly insulated sprawling one story facility with 29 roofs leading to high operating and maintenance costs. As detailed by the findings of the Community Task Force on School Facilities (CTFSF) a "restricted scope" project would not meet our short or long term needs while still being very costly. A complete renovation would be within 20% of the cost of new construction, would be more costly long term in terms of maintenance and operating costs, and would not meet the long term needs of our students or community. New construction at the current site would avoid disruption of the students and teachers and could incorporate the existing science wing and turf field.

As a BOE member I view my role to pass the referendum as one of communication: with the community and with other Boards and commissions. Communication that the current state of facilities is unacceptable, by continuing tours and emphasizing the CTFSF report. Communication that there is no solution without significant cost, and that predominantly new construction will represent the best long term investment in our community, resulting in a more compact, energy efficient building, with smaller roof space and lower maintenance costs. I hope to convey a vision of a facility that represents a solid investment and will meet the educational needs of our students through the 21st century, as well serving as a resource for all community members.

While I do support the BOE decision from September 2008, I think it is important for voters to understand some of the discussion that has followed that recommendation. Specifically, it appears that there will be a two-phase referendum including a first phase to finance more detailed plans that would allow better estimates of costs. Whether this first phase is accomplished through referendum or town meeting, I agree that this is important to provide the community with a better and more specific idea of the costs, benefits (including energy efficiency and maintenance), and what the building will include so that they can make a more informed decision at referendum.

*(Moore - continued)*

Currently, there is a consultant investigating the feasibility of other sites for school construction. While I think it is likely that the existing site will remain the best choice for a new HS, I am open to other suggestions.

Additionally, more recent cost estimates have been lower than they were in September 2008, and we are no longer retaining the architectural services of Fletcher Thompson. Some of their estimates included contingency costs of as much as \$20 million. I think it is important that we re-evaluate the costs closely and it is my hope that with more specific plans the contingencies and costs will be lower.

Ultimately the decision to finance any infrastructure project will be in the hands of the voters.

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** As a Board of Education member I will work diligently with the superintendent, other BOE members, other Boards and the town to ensure that the BOE budget represents that most economical budget we can put forward without compromising quality. Efficiencies may be realized by combining some services duplicated on the town and BOE sides. We should also be able to provide quality education for some of our special needs students on the Shoreline, either through regionalization or bringing more students in house. Special needs students comprise 10% of our student population and over 20% of our expenditures, with significant expenditures for transportation out of district. If this is done correctly it will save significant money while providing special needs students and families with quality services closer to home.

Once the budget has been passed on to referendum, I will work to communicate with the community the importance of voting to pass it.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** As a Board of Education member I will have no direct role in revenues, and ultimately the passage of the budget is under control of the voters. Regarding my role on expenditures, as a BOE member I intend to work collaboratively with all boards to economize these as much as possible without compromising quality, using some of the approaches described above.

# Republican Response

**(Note: the Republican Town Committee submitted a response for all of the undersigned candidates in lieu of individual responses.)**

**Q1: Do you support the construction of a new high school as approved by the Board of Education in 2008? If yes, please describe what you would do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to support the passage of the referendum. If no, please describe what modifications need to be made to the current proposal in order for you to support it.**

**A1:** The motion approved by the Board of Education (BOE) at their September 15, 2008 is as follows;

“Upon a motion made and amended by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted eight in favor of requesting that the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman schedule a public referendum on the question of issuing bonds in an amount not to exceed \$112,093,550 to build a new high school on the present high school site. Mr. Zuse opposed the motion”

We, the undersigned Republican candidates, do not presently support this motion due to additional information described below, but do support a referendum question to request funding to proceed with design phase at a site specific location.

Following the BOE action in September, 2008, the Board of Selectman (BOS) called for a Special Joint Meeting of the BOS, Board of Finance (BOF) and BOE to review and discuss the motion as presented. At this meeting and two subsequent Joint Board meetings, numerous questions and concerns were raised with respect to the motion. The questions involved basis for the cost figure, lack of comprehensive cost estimates, lack of detailed cost analysis, lack of design drawings and site plans, lack of a detailed site selection process and lack of detailed educational specification analysis. There was also significant discussion about whether portions of the existing GHS facilities (science wing, gymnasium, stadium field) would or could be incorporated into the new facility.

While many questions have since been adequately answered, several major issues remain. At the most recent Joint Board meeting held in July, 2009, there was virtually unanimous support for a proposal to effectively withdraw the BOE motion made in September, 2008.

The BOE is now in the process of completing a site feasibility study to determine whether the current GHS site is the most suitable site for construction of a new GHS. or perhaps at another location. Once that process is completed, an RFQ will be developed seeking bids for the preparation of detailed design specifications and plans for the proposed new High School at a site specific location. It is expected that the cost of this phase of the development (design and specification plans) will be approximately \$1.0M.

There is unanimous agreement that funding for this phase will not be

undertaken without seeking voter approval through a referendum. The date of the referendum has yet to be established. Republicans have recommended that this question be presented along with the Annual Budget in April, 2010.

We, the undersigned Republican candidates, will unanimously support a motion to submit a referendum question to Guilford taxpayers requesting funding of up to \$1.0M for the purposes of proceeding with the site specific design phase of this project

**Q2: What will you do in your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.] to ensure drafting of a town & education budget which meets the needs of the town and schools of Guilford AND is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum?**

**A2:** We, the undersigned Republican candidates, will continue to act responsibly and prudently in working closely with all Board members to present budgets that truly meet the needs of our community. We can and we will present budgets that provide for excellence in education, assure public safety and maintain services that enhance the quality of life for all of our citizens.

We are committed to the development of a combined town and school-wide Long Term Fiscal Plan that address and prioritize needs both long term and short term. We believe we can work collectively with our dedicated administrators, staff and citizens to develop and implement cost saving efficiencies that improve our overall capacity to deliver required services. We have identified many expenses that can be reduced through the use of technology and innovative problem solving solutions.

Collectively, we represent a diverse group with specific and critical skill sets perfectly aligned with Guilford's current needs. We have the experience necessary to take on the fiscal challenges ahead and the common sense to do what is required to assure fiscal stability.

We pledge to keep tax increases to a minimum, while balancing the needs of our community against its ability to fund those needs. We pledge to present fair and responsible budgets to the citizens of Guilford.

**Q3: As things currently stand, the town and education budgets are growing at a rate which exceeds the growth of the grand list. In your role on the [B.O.E., B.O.S., B.O.F.], what steps will you take to address this growing gap between budget expenditures and tax revenues?**

**A3:** We, the undersigned Republican candidates, agree that operating budgets are out pacing the growth of our Grand List, and if not properly addressed, residential property taxes will continue to out pace inflation rates.

This problem has three basic solutions: reduce expenses, increase revenues, or a combination of both. We prefer the combination approach.

With respect to increasing the revenue side of the equation, we can and we will pursue increased economic development of our commercial tax base. Currently, residential property taxes account for over 90% of our local tax revenue. We

believe it is the duty of every elected official to do their part to enhance and grow our commercial tax base, keeping in mind the need to maintain the charm and character of our community. We need to work with our current business owners, not against them to assure they continue to grow and prosper. We can and we must attract cleaner commercial development that fits in with the historic nature of our community. Guilford's Plan for Comprehensive Development has identified those areas of town best suited for commercial development. It is a well thought out plan and one that needs to be adhered to. We are committed to working closely with our regulatory Boards and Commissions to make certain prospective business ventures are taken thought the process in a fair and congenial manner. We need to be very mindful of new or proposed regulations that serve as an impediment to that process.

Expense reductions can be accomplished in a myriad of ways. We are proposing the appointment of a Task Force, comprised of citizen volunteers, to do a comprehensive, top to bottom review of day to day activities and expenditures. A review of day to day activities may uncover processes that are antiquated, unnecessary or simply of no useful benefit in today's society. We have identified many activities already that fit this profile and believe there are likely more. The review may identify labor intensive functions that can often be eliminated or completed more efficiently through the use of technology. Savings achieved in this process may be in small increments, however they aggregate to significant sums. There are also expenditures that may have one day been acceptable, but can no longer be justified during these austere times. We plan to eliminate these non-essential expenses. These savings are not likely to fully close the gap created by diminishing Grand List growth, but they will certainly be part of the solution.

Guilford has long history of working together to solve our problems. The gap between increased operating expenses and static Grand List growth is not an insurmountable problem. It's a problem in need of a solution and we believe we are the most experienced and knowledgeable group to get that accomplished. We invite you to visit our web site at [www.mazza09.com](http://www.mazza09.com) to learn more about us and what we plan to do if elected on November 3rd. Please vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph S. Mazza  
Charles L. Havrda  
Cynthia M. Cartier  
David F. Egan  
Kimberly Brockett  
Santella A. DiLieto  
Keith B. Bishop  
Emelinda A. Sanacora  
John M. Ireland  
Susan Koch Renner