



2021
TOWN
ELECTION



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BOARD OF HEALTH

MAUREEN RICHICHI

INITIAL STATEMENT

These uncertain days have led me to adopt this quote, attributed to Squire Bill Widener of Virginia in 1913, as my mantra: “Do what you can, with what you’ve got, where you are.” I am excited to announce my candidacy for election to the Bedford Board of Health. I am honored to use my skills and expertise in this elected position that can have such a beneficial impact on our lives – as individuals, families, and a community.

I have been a Bedford resident for 33 years. My husband, Frank, and I are grateful to have raised and educated our three sons in this wonderful town. My initial town involvement was in 1988 when Ronnie Gould and I were Co-Chairs of the Bedford Community Playground. The success of this multigenerational project gave me a first-hand appreciation of the generosity, value, and power of community volunteers.

In the late 1980s, I represented town residents on the Bedford AIDS Task Force, a collaborative effort of town staff and boards, residents, and community partners. As the Town of Bedford Youth and Family Services’ Prevention Coordinator (1997-2004), I was responsible for town-wide alcohol, drug, and tobacco prevention, outreach, and education. I am awaiting approval of my application to join Bedford’s Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T) as part of its Medical Reserves Corps and look forward to serving in this role.

Community health has been the primary focus of my 45-plus years as a registered nurse with a Master’s degree in Maternal-Child Health. My experience in public health serving the inner cities of both Boston and Denver taught me how culture, race, class, economics, and government regulations all affect a community’s access to health and well-being. As Health Care Coordinator for The New England Home for Little Wanderers, I was responsible for health care delivery in their residences, schools, and foster care program. Before my recent retirement, I was employed for 14 years as the School Nurse and Public Health Nurse in Lincoln, MA. These roles led to my involvement in a town-wide health needs assessment, my leadership of the Lincoln Tick Task Force, and my contribution to the organization of the Middlesex Regional Tick Task Force.

With these experiences in various community health settings, I am confident that I can bring a uniquely relevant combination of expertise and commitment to the task of protecting and promoting our community's health and wellness. My time as a School Nurse has made me a strong and vocal advocate for students, parents, and teachers. I am familiar with the many important legal and ethical responsibilities required of a local Board of Health in its protection of the public. We have a strong local health department with dedicated leadership and staff. I think it equally vital that Bedford has knowledgeable and experienced Board of Health members who are committed to oversight of the department's work and to responsive community assessment, communication, debate, and engagement.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis. All of the stakeholders in our beloved community are looking to the Board of Health to promote adherence to all disease mitigation strategies and provide guidance on changing guidelines and current science-based knowledge and research. There is currently a call and a need for closer communication and collaboration between the elected members of the Board of Health and the School Committee. As a Board of Health member, I will do my best to address this need; partner effectively with Town staff, elected officials, and residents to identify and assess and address other public health needs; and ensure the best decisions and results for Bedford.

I ask for your vote for a seat on the Board of Health. I promise to always listen well and bring your concerns to the table.

QUESTIONS ~ LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

What would you identify as lessons learned in Bedford's response to the current pandemic in relationship to the role of the Board of Health?

These lessons represent my hands-on experience and observations as a resident:

- The better prepared you are, the better you respond. Bedford's emergency preparedness planning, training, and infrastructure need to be maintained for successful crisis response.
- The best decisions result from use of evidenced-based data, public input, and reaching consensus.
- In crisis situations, additional community resources can be marshalled to solve problems, such as establishing a Medical Advisory Team in a pandemic or an ad hoc representative community-wide task force to address an issue.
- The most useful lessons will be learned from reviewing performance and outcomes, e.g., a town-wide post-COVID-19 postmortem.

What resources will you use to inform your decisions as a member of the Board of Health?

As a member of the Board of Health, I will use the following resources to guide my decisions:

- research-based evidence augmented by expert advice;
- practice-based evidence of interventions that have been shown to produce desirable outcomes in improving health in real-life settings (e.g., CDC Database of Interventions);
- public health guidance and directives from federal and state levels;
- knowledge about public health issues based on my 40+ years as a health professional in community health and school settings; and
- local context and community input.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- [Christine Rabinowitz](#)
- [Joe Piantedosi](#)