



MARK SIEGENTHALER
MODERATOR

Caucus Nominee: Yes

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

I am pleased to be a candidate for Town Moderator. I have lived in Bedford since 1982. My wife, Diana, and I raised three daughters here, sending all of them through the Bedford Public Schools. Diana worked for many years as a counselor and administrator at the John Glenn Middle School. I have worked for state government for more than 30 years and am currently under contract with the state's community development agency.

I have served in appointed or elected roles in Bedford for over 28 years - as a Selectman for 21 years and close to eight years on the Planning Board. Most recently, you elected me Temporary Moderator at the Special Town Meeting in November.

I would like to serve as Moderator to help our town manage our current affairs and face our challenges through the careful and unbiased management of our Town Meeting sessions.

I have the time, interest, and energy to bring my knowledge and experience to the position of Town Moderator on your behalf. I ask for your support in the town election in March.

Thank you

REPLIES TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS QUESTIONS

Q1—Why are you interested in serving the Bedford community as Town Moderator and what do you consider your primary qualifications?

I believe I can use my 28+ years as an elected official, my involvement on appointed boards and committees, and my recent experience as temporary moderator, to perform the duties of Moderator, in positive and constructive ways.

Bedford's Town Moderator has two responsibilities. First, is to preside over our annual town meeting and any other special town meetings called throughout the year.

Many of you, like me, have been to town meetings many times. I think that my experience at the front of the auditorium looking out has given me a perspective on the meetings that may be a little different from yours. It's a unique experience to be up there on an elected board,

listening to questions, trying to coordinate productive responses, taking cues from the Moderator, responding to residents' concerns, and keeping the warrant articles moving. I can use that experience in my role as Moderator.

The second duty of the moderator is participating in the appointment of members of the Finance Committee. I have worked with many Finance Committee members over the years. I believe my experience working with those members, and understanding the role and tasks of the Committee, will help in the appointment process.

Q2—What changes in Town Meeting procedures do you identify you would like to promote?

Town Meeting is both a long-standing, traditional way of legislating in towns like Bedford but also a way to personalize our town and its operating functions for residents who attend or tune in. They are important events where we come together to confirm our choices – through budgets and bylaws – and make changes if we choose. It is direct control for residents when they want it. When we engage each other in that setting – listening to the information that supports proposed warrant articles, comparing ideas and available solutions through civil discourse – we continue to be a successful, well-managed community.

Town Meeting is not a perfect model. I would like to explore better ways to engage people through possibilities such as, improved microphone systems, electronic voting, closed caption displays of questions and even remote questions (without remote voting). Some of these changes may take a little while – proposals need to be discussed with residents, boards, and town departments. Some may require funding at future town meetings for improved communication and accessibility equipment.

I have the interest and energy to apply my knowledge and experience to the position of Town Moderator and to explore improvements to Town Meeting procedures.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

I am running for office to bring my skills and expertise to the position of Town Moderator. I offer a valuable combination of experience and creative thinking.

You've elected me in the past as a Planning Board member, Selectman and Temporary Moderator. During that time, I've worked with many town officials, town staff and residents. I have a good reputation for openness and fairness in pursuing the best approaches to whatever issues we face.

There is always more to do. Town Meeting is a valuable, long-standing way of legislating in Bedford, and it personalizes our town and its operating functions for residents who attend or tune in. We should explore better ways to engage people through improved technology, closed-caption displays, and potentially, remote questions. These changes may take some time and may require funding at future town meetings but are worth exploring going forward.

I have the skills, energy, and experience to help us move forward with our goals. Thank you for your past support and I ask for your vote on March 12th.