

# 2019 Election Guide

Updated: 10/10/19



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Lowell Votes is a nonpartisan community group dedicated to increasing the number of people who vote in Lowell through education.  
[www.lowellvotes.org](http://www.lowellvotes.org)

This guide is presented without guarantee of accuracy. Answers are presented verbatim with minor editing for grammar/spelling. Answers were held to a strict 300-character limit.

If you notice any errors in this guide, please contact us immediately and we will issue a correction over our website.

Candidates appear in incumbent alphabetical order & then nonincumbant alphabetical order.

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**General Election Nov. 5 | 7am-8pm**

# City Council Survey Answers

**18 candidates.  
6 incumbents.  
12 challengers.  
2 past councilors.  
2 election systems.**

**LOWELL  
VOTES**

# Lowell's Election Systems, Explained.

The City's current election system is an "at-large" system in which each voter has as many votes as there are candidates (nine), and all votes are tallied equally.

It is "at-large" because each of the nine councilors and six school committee members is elected by the City as a whole, as opposed to being elected by districts or wards. "At-large" is sometimes known as "City-wide."

At the August 27 City Council meeting, the council voted to narrow the election systems to the two options at right. These are the two systems that will appear on the nonbinding ballot in November.

Portions of this text were pulled from the official City of Lowell Website on the voting system change.

For more info go to:  
<https://yourlowellyourvote.org>



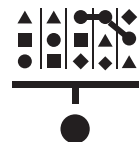
## Option 2B – Mixed District & At Large (8/3)

Under this system, there would be eight districts, each of which would elect one of the 11 members of the City Council. At least two of the districts would be "majority-minority" (defined as a district where Asian-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos comprise a majority of the citizen voting age population).

Three City Councilors would be elected at-large.

For School Committee elections, there would be four districts (the eight districts would be combined into groups of two), each of which would elect one of the six School Committee members. At least one of these districts would be majority-minority. Two School Committee members would be elected at large.

At-Large & Ward councilors appear as separate races on the ballot.



## Option 3 – At-Large Ranked Choice Voting

Under the Ranked Choice option, each councilor would still be elected at-large. The difference between the current system and ranked choice voting is the way votes are weighted and counted. Under the current system, every voter can vote for up to nine candidates for council and six candidates for school committee. Votes are weighted equally and tallied overall, and those candidates with the highest number of votes overall are elected.

Under Ranked Choice, instead of voting for up to nine or six candidates without indicating any preference between candidates, each voter ranks their choices in order of preference (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). When votes are counted, all "Number One" votes are counted first. If a candidate hits a certain threshold of Number One votes, that person is elected.

If any candidate has more Number One votes than necessary, their "excess" votes are reallocated to their voters' "Number Two" choice. Also, the votes for candidates with the fewest Number One votes may be reallocated to those voters' Number Two choice.

After any reallocations, the result is "proportional representation" – for example, if Group A comprises 70% of the electorate and members of Group A vote similarly to one another, and Group B comprises 30% of the electorate and members of Group B vote similarly to one another, then Group A can expect that approximately 70% of persons ultimately elected will reflect their preferences, and Group B can expect that approximately 30% of persons ultimately elected will reflect their preferences.

Other voting jurisdictions that use Ranked Choice Voting are Cambridge, MA and Minneapolis, MN.

# City Council

## What of the two new systems for our local elections do you support most?

In 2017, we asked candidates "Do you support changing Lowell's at-large system, in view of the pending lawsuit against it?" – we have indicated the candidates who ran in that election's preference at that time.

To read full answers go to: [lowellvotes.org/2017guide](http://lowellvotes.org/2017guide)

- Supported charter change in 2017
- Did not support charter change in 2017
- ▲ Undecided on charter change support in 2017



### Option 2B Mixed District & At Large (8/3)

<b>Dave Conway</b> <span style="color: blue;">●</span> A fair system for the city.	<b>Rodney Elliott</b> <span style="color: blue;">●</span> I have advocated for a mixed system of district and at large representatives from the onset. All neighborhoods in the City deserve to be represented.	<b>Rita Mercier</b> <span style="color: blue; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">○</span> I believe this option is more representative of the community as a whole and a fairer more easier way for voters to understand while giving everyone a fair chance to be involved.	<b>Vesna Nuon</b> <span style="color: blue;">●</span> Because it ensures every neighborhood gets represented. It is also easier and less expensive to campaign in a district rather than citywide, making it possible for people who might not otherwise run or are new to the city to bring their ideas to the people.	<b>Alexandra Amparo Del Villar</b> Being that the demand for change was requested I believe that this option will expand for more opportunities for individuals to run for city council.
<b>Corey Belanger</b> <span style="color: blue; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">○</span> While I do have concerns with increasing the number of Councilors to 11 that could negatively affect decision making and stalling progress it seems to be the best option to achieve diversity. I do believe that candidates should reside in district they run. Either way I will support the voters.	<b>Juan Castañeda</b> I think this system makes the voting process more fair for new candidates to get elected.	<b>Sokhary Chau</b> <span style="color: blue;">●</span> I am in favor of the 8-3 option as it is easier to understand for most residents and provides the most equitable and best representation for the neighborhoods.	<b>Ty Chum</b> More ideas equal more possibility and quicker result.	<b>John Drinkwater</b> The "8-3" system will lead to a more diverse city government with more Lowell residents seeing themselves represented. It will also create more geographic equity through neighborhood representation, lower the financial barrier to run, and allow residents to get to know their Councilors better.
<b>Marty Hogan</b> <span style="color: blue;">●</span> I am proponent of Option 2b, a hybrid of both district and at-large members, representation that fosters a greater openness and ability for the council to address the issues of the city, both specific and general. The ranked choice voting option does not achieve this and only adds complexity	<b>Harry Kortikere</b> I have chosen the hybrid option marginally over the at large RCV option. Both these options have drawbacks. With the hybrid option there is risk of incumbents not being challenged. Also how will the majority minority districts be carved out? At large RCV is a complex system & needs voter education!	<b>Marty Lorrey</b> I believe there is a consensus across the city to elect neighborhood representation.	<b>Dave Ouellette</b> I like the idea of district representation and also adding 2 new councilors making it 11. I don't like ranked choice voting because every vote should be counted.	<b>Jeff Thomas</b> I believe the neighborhoods need their own independent voice. I believe they will strive and have there issues taken care of promptly. As a district representative I will be able to achieve these goal for my district and the constituents of the district as well as helping out the at large councilors.
<b>Daniel Rourke</b> <span style="color: blue;">▲</span> The mixed district/hybrid is the most fair way of giving every neighborhood fair representation.				



### Option 3 - Citywide Ranked Choice Voting

<b>John Leahy</b> <span style="color: blue;">▲</span> I think it may be the fairest way to represent the city as a whole.
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### Unknown - Declined to Answer

<b>William Samaras</b> <span style="color: blue;">▲</span> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">           Declined to answer.            Other answers in guide submitted via email.         </div> <p>At this point, I feel it is very important that we have the input from the citizens of Lowell as to which system they would prefer.</p>
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# City Council



**Dave Conway**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Rodney Elliott**  
Pawtucketville

INCUMBENT



**John Leahy**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Rita Mercier**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

N/A  
 dave.conway.313  
 N/A  
 No Website

Rodney\_Elliott1  
 rodneyelliottforcitycouncil  
 rodneye\_1960  
 voterodneyelliott.com

Jleahy62John  
 LeahyforLowell  
 N/A  
 councilorjohnleahy.com

N/A  
 N/A  
 N/A  
 No Website

**When opinions are divided on a tough issue, what will you use to make your decision?**

I consult with individuals and seek their opinions, then I make my decision.

I would rely on the experience I have been fortunate enough to have gained in the course of my service on the City Council. I will listen to my constituents, do extensive research, and make a decision based on facts and information.

I like to listen to both sides and then trust my instincts. I always try to be fair across the board.

When this or anything goes to the voters, I firmly believe that despite my opinion.....The majority rules and the people have spoken.

**Education, harm reduction, and treatment are three parts of a strategy to reduce opioid addiction. How would you prioritize these elements in a strategic response in the city?**

I would bring the appropriate partnerships together so we can maximize our resources.

Education on this issue has to start at a young age. I feel the most impactful learning tool is to hear from people in your age group that have personal experience with this epidemic. Treatment is critical. The state and federal government must dedicate additional resources to the fight.

I think that education of young adults is always the key to success. In Lowell we and the task force are doing an outstanding job on combating this crisis.

Education in the lower grades should be mandated. It is a little too late in High School. We much teach children when they are young of the dangers of opioids. We need people in the school system who have been in a drug situation and have come full cycle on staying clean. We need treatment beds.

**What are your plans to clean up Lowell public spaces, and make them more accessible for use?**

Reach out to our neighborhood groups and get their input. Also, reach out to our delegation for additional monies. And explore grants that would target this issue.

Certainly people need to be responsible for their actions. As someone who has sat on the Disability Commission I understand the challenges we face. We need to ensure that each time we replace a sidewalk or develop a public space we make it accessible to all.

I continually work with the parks department and the managers office to make sure we are doing what we can. Its always a work in progress.

No one will use these spaces if they are full of needles. We hired a person to do that. I will bring light to this issue to make Lowell cleaner.

**What new ideas do you have to make (or keep) housing affordable in Lowell for both renters and homeowners?**

Affordable housing is an issue not only with Lowell but also with the state. We need to bring the different levels of government to the table to create a plan that will help solve this very real problem.

Lowell is more affordable than any of the surrounding communities. Keeping taxes as low as possible makes the dream of owning your own home feasible. I would advocate to keep taxes down.




I think that well paying jobs are the way to go. If we continually work to keep people employed, with good paying jobs the rest takes care of itself.

It is not everyone who could afford the prices of rents today. It is possible to support developers whose goal is to build low income housing for those in need.

# City Council

## Continued

 <p><b>vesnanuon</b> FOR CITY COUNCIL</p>	 <p><b>WILLIAM "BILL" SAMARAS</b> CITY COUNCIL</p>	 <p><b>ALEXANDRA AMPARO-DEL VILLAR</b> FOR CITY COUNCIL</p>	 <p><b>COREY BELANGER</b> CITY COUNCIL</p>
<p><b>Vesna Nuon</b> Highlands INCUMBENT</p>	<p><b>Bill Samaras</b> Belvidere INCUMBENT</p>	<p><b>Alexandra Amparo – Del Villar</b> South Lowell</p>	<p><b>Corey Belanger</b> Belvidere PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR</p>

<p><b>Where can voters find you on the web?</b></p>	<p>  N/A   vesnaforlowell   N/A            vesnaforlowell.com         </p>	<p>  N/A   samarasforlowell   N/A            No Website         </p>	<p>  N/A   delvillarforlowell   N/A            No Website         </p>	<p>  N/A   BelangerForLowell   N/A            No Website         </p>
<p><b>When opinions are divided on a tough issue, what will you use to make your decision?</b></p>	<p>I will reach out to all parts of the community and listen to diverse voices. I'll also use my experience and Lowell's history in making decisions.</p>	<p>The council is asked to serve as the voice of the people, but we also are asked to use our best judgment. I try to get as much factual input and the best possible information from all perspectives I can to make a well-informed decision and the best decision for the community as a whole.</p>	<p>I will focus on community and lean on the majority input.</p>	<p>I learned a valuable lesson from the election two years ago. The issue as to where to build a new high school divided the city. I was the first to propose a ballot referendum and was not well received at the time. It ended up on the ballot anyway. Next time I will insist on letting the voters decide.</p>
<p><b>Education, harm reduction, and treatment are three parts of a strategy to reduce opioid addiction. How would you prioritize these elements in a strategic response in the city?</b></p>	<p>All three of these strategies go together. We need a collective effort that incorporates treatment, housing, and employment while starting education at an early age. We still need to work to break the stigma of addiction.</p>	<p>Truthfully, we need an approach that is all of the above, but as a former educator, I believe in the power of a well-designed and effective education program to give children and adults the ability to make well-informed decisions.</p>	<p>My strategy to reduce the opioid crisis would start with adding one on one physical outreach and risk reduction are far as the education is concerned to prevent individuals from even needing treatment. And if treatment is needed implementing more facilities with longer term care is a demand.</p>	<p>I was integral in implementing opioid education in the Lowell public schools that is in place to this day. I worked hard to increase outreach and services to children that are exposed to substance abuse at home. Education is vital to stopping the cycle of addiction but much more needs to be done!!</p>
<p><b>What are your plans to clean up Lowell public spaces, and make them more accessible for use?</b></p>	<p>I believe in supporting community groups such as Lowell Canal Cleaners &amp; Coalition for a Better Acre that organize groups to clean-up our public areas. I will work to ensure Lowell's Department of Public Works coordinates &amp; cooperates with these organizations and make their clean-ups more effective.</p>	<p>One thing I learned from the high school, getting our students and our community as a whole involved in the cleanup of public spaces helps give them a sense of ownership and pride. Our parks belong to all of us and we should all take pride in them.</p>	<p>First identify if funds are available and ensure that they are allocated to that concern/projects.</p>	<p>I will propose corporate sponsors for parks and open spaces to increase funds for maintenance and lighting upgrades to make more accessible to all. I will promote frequent special events for families to enjoy and to attract tourism to our city. It is important we increase youth sports and activities</p>
<p><b>What new ideas do you have to make (or keep) housing affordable in Lowell for both renters and homeowners?</b></p>	<p>I submitted a motion for Lowell to benefit from the Community Preservation Act. If we become a CPA community we will have additional resources for the construction &amp; preservation of affordable housing.</p>	<p>We have to expand opportunities for first-time homebuyers at the same time, working with the state on tax credits and other financing to encourage private developers to include more affordable units in mixed-income housing settings.</p>	<p>Revisit the current plan in place with Umass Lowell and the city of Lowell that have negatively impacted home owners real estate property taxes and that have driven up rental market values.</p>	<p>We need to be more active in pursuing federal funds to subsidize the cost of housing by working with developers to pursue grants. The more new tax growth by developing the Hamilton Canal Innovation district will offer relief to the homeowners. It is important to partner with UML for job creation.</p>

# City Council Continued



**Juan Castañeda**  
The Acre



**Sokhary Chau**  
Highlands



**Ty Chum**  
Highlands



**John Drinkwater**  
Belvidere

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

N/A  
 Juan-Castaneda-for-Lowell-City-Council-104447780899287  
 N/A  
[juancastaneda.org](http://juancastaneda.org)

N/A  
 sokharychau  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 chumforlowell  
 N/A  
[chumforlowell.com](http://chumforlowell.com)

jm\_drinkwater  
 j.m.drinkwater  
 drinkwaterforlowell  
[drinkwaterforlowell.com](http://drinkwaterforlowell.com)

**When opinions are divided on a tough issue, what will you use to make your decision?**

The best interest of the people.

Consensus may not be possible but transparency and thoroughness for getting clear facts will be my basis for decision making. In addition, it is important that a Councilor reach out to non-traditional residents and businesses to collect alternative viewpoints and the actions that are needed.

My Community Organizer skill and My Business Management mindset.

I will always listen to and learn from what constituents are thinking, on both sides of an issue. Often though, there will be good faith arguments on either side, and I will always do what I believe is right for the city based on data, analysis, and my own values - not what is politically expedient.

**Education, harm reduction, and treatment are three parts of a strategy to reduce opioid addiction. How would you prioritize these elements in a strategic response in the city?**

We need to educate the community on the dangers of substance abuse with proper resources to assist them.

People who are addicted are in need of medical care. Many times, in addition, they need mental health services. I am in favor of coordinating the emergency services, hospitals, community health center, mental health counselors, and other non-routine "caregivers".

I believe in prevention tools. My first go to would be utilizing the school education system to educate our community on ways to prevent opioid and other dangerous addiction.

Each of these strategies is critical for addressing the opioid crisis and I would add aftercare, such as counseling, to this list as well. While we must provide every possible support for those committed to treatment and a life of sobriety, harm reduction medications and programs will save lives.

**What are your plans to clean up Lowell public spaces, and make them more accessible for use?**

I want to provide more resources for the community with additional funding.

Our public spaces are not only littered with trash but also syringes and human waste. This is dangerous as a safety and public health issue. I am in favor of more public drinking fountains, bathroom facilities and vigilance by city personnel to keep it managed.

I would start by bringing the right people (those who have a passion to help other). Assessing the want and needs of every community. It's about assessing, planning (brainstorming), and implementing (actions).

I believe that for a public space to be accessible, it must have the look and feel of a place where people are encouraged to come and spend time: seating, plants, signage, art, and easy pedestrian access. As a dense city, these spaces may be small (ie "parklets"), but contribute to quality of life.

**What new ideas do you have to make (or keep) housing affordable in Lowell for both renters and homeowners?**

We want to provide more subsidized programs.

Gentrification is always a problem in Gateway Cities. As a city improves its facilities and schools, it becomes attractive to those who make investments and build high end housing. We can never forget that we need to keep housing affordable for residents who make public employee level salaries.

Building a better relationship and communication with affordable housing agency, renters, and homeowners. I feel once we start talking the same language, know what we want and needs, plus the challenge, only will then we can start planning new ideas.

Right now, housing units are not keeping up with job and population growth, driving up cost. We must encourage housing growth, with an emphasis on multi-family. Additionally, as developers seek to build new housing in Lowell, I plan to advocate strongly for the inclusion of affordable units.

# City Council Continued



**Marty Hogan**  
Centralville



**Harry Kortikere**  
Belvidere



**Marty Lorrey**  
Belvidere

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR



**Dave Ouellette**  
The Acre

## Where can voters find you on the web?

Hogan4Lowell  
 FriendsOfHogan4Lowell  
 hogan4lowell  
 MartyHogan4Lowell.com

harry\_kortikere  
 harryforlowell  
 N/A  
 harryforlowell.com

N/A  
 martylorrey  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 daveforyoulowell  
 N/A  
 daveforyou.com

## When opinions are divided on a tough issue, what will you use to make your decision?

Opinions are often divided in the simplest of scenarios, my experience has taught me that I need to consult with those in the know. I will make use of every opportunity to acquire a greater sense of the issue, and I promise that I will always make the best decision for you, the people of Lowell.

I will abide by the decision of the voters on this issue. That is the democratic process. So whichever option ends up having a majority in the November election will be the option I will vote for if elected to the City Council.

I always have made difficult decisions based on the facts on the issue.

The will of the people, the budget, and common sense.

## Education, harm reduction, and treatment are three parts of a strategy to reduce opioid addiction. How would you prioritize these elements in a strategic response in the city?

We must continue programs such as Team COOP (Community Opioid Out-reach). We must be new and innovative to treat the afflicted. We must make every effort to have drug and addiction education in our schools. Most importantly, we must support our police in the duty of removing these poison suppliers.

We need more funding to fight opioid addiction. Create an effective partnership between first responders, hospitals, addiction treatment centers and social workers for a seamless management & treatment of addiction. Physicians & Pharma Industry must be held responsible for any over-prescribing!

Due to the current situation in our society I don't believe the you can prioritize one strategic response over the other. I believe you need to target the treatment to the individual. Education for those presently not using drugs, and a combination of harm reduction and treatment for current users.

Education get the word out about addiction try to educate so people understand the causes and the problems of addiction. Harm Reduction to help the person with an addiction understand what's going on, how do we manage their addiction find the underlying reason till they are ready to accept treatment.

## What are your plans to clean up Lowell public spaces, and make them more accessible for use?

I would work to assure that the funds and resources needed for our DPW and Parks departments are continued and expanded as needed. As a city, we must make it a priority to see that a quality level of maintenance is afforded to all of our city public spaces.

I support Community Preservation Act which would bring in funds for maintenance & clean up of public spaces, parks, monuments etc. Volunteer clean up days organized by neighborhood associations have helped clean parks and should continue. I also support funding non profits like Clean River project.

To maintain public spaces you need to plan, prioritize and invest to maintain the spaces. I also believe you need to encourage public use with programs and activities to make the spaces viable and safe. We also need to reexamine and diversify the use of our public spaces to attract more people.

I have been doing that for over 10 years. The renovation of the North Common Amphitheater, the Basketball Court, the Handball Court, Levasseur Park, Decatur Way Machares Comer, Poet Pedestals

## What new ideas do you have to make (or keep) housing affordable in Lowell for both renters and homeowners?

I believe what we need in Lowell is several levels of affordable housing, spread throughout Lowell making sure that we continue to build on the positive increase of property value without impeding on Lowell residents, pricing them out of our city.

Modify zoning to allow more apartments to be built, modify building codes to allow rehab of older buildings, create affordable housing loan fund to support affordable housing projects, implement rent control measures.

A partnership with organizations such as the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership to utilize properties that the city acquires through tax liens. I believe in the past these properties have been sold through auction. I would consider a plan to make these available to qualified home buyers.

Adding more housing by starting a program that will make it possible for developers to transform unused 2nd and 3rd floor units downtown into apartments



# City Council

## Continued



**Daniel Rourke**  
Pawtucketville

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR



**Jeff Thomas**  
South Lowell

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

N/A  
 N/A  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 Jeff4CityCouncil  
 N/A  
 No Website

**When opinions are divided on a tough issue, what will you use to make your decision?**

Careful review of all the information presented along with public input to make the best decision possible not just for one group of people within the city, but for the city as a whole.

I will use the voice of my constituents, as well as my beliefs on the issue whether good or bad to make a positive decision on the issues in front of me.

**How would you prioritize education, harm reduction, and treatment in a strategic response to reduce opioid addiction?**

I would prioritize education and treatment. The local government needs to continue to be a partner with community agencies to provide education & assistance. Treatment protocols, long-term in/out patient programming as well support systems are proven methods to help with the battle of addiction.

Education will be a top priority because the children are the future of this city. The kids will need an environment to grow the learning abilities of their young minds to next level. Opioids is also a mental health issue that I plan on dealing with because a person's mental health should is key.

**What are your plans to clean up Lowell public spaces, and make them more accessible for use?**

Providing additional resources to the Department of Public Works through such things as grant opportunities to provide for rehab and maintenance. Work with community partners and neighbors to create coalitions for up keep and programming.

Parks and open green space is also needed for the future of our development. With all the development that is happening I plan on making sure they provide space and keep our parks safe from any development.

**What new ideas do you have to make (or keep) housing affordable in Lowell for both renters and homeowners?**

I commit to continuing to work with our Fed & state partners, local banks, community partners & non profits to develop new funding pools or incentives for things such as green living affordable housing developments & explore a lease-to-purchase program.

I am a homeowner and know the value of rents. Most renters are people who can not afford to buy and I want to make home buying easier for the lower income people because they are the backbone of this city and we need to keep them here.

# ...but what is their favorite pizza place in Lowell?

# Keep reading!

# City Council

## What is your favorite pizza place in Lowell?






Order is alphabetical by pizza place name, and then by incumbency & alphabetical order from left-right where necessary in the case of shared love of a certain pizza place.

220 Central St. 	 <b>Dave Conway</b>	 <b>Rodney Elliott</b>	 <b>John Leahy</b>
	 <b>Rita Mercier</b>	 <b>John Drinkwater</b>	 <b>Marty Lorrey</b>
	 <b>Dave Ouellette</b>	 <b>Jeff Thomas</b>	
127 Merrimack St. 	 <b>Ty Chum</b>		
480 Chelmsford St. 	 <b>Juan Castañeda</b>		
283 School St. 	 <b>Sokhary Chau</b>		
688 Rogers St. 	 <b>Marty Hogan</b>		
863 Varnum Ave. 	 <b>Danny Rourke</b>		
44 Palmer St. 	 <b>Vesna Nuon</b>	 <b>Corey Belanger</b>	 <b>Harry Kortikere</b>
984 Gorham St. 	 <b>Alexandra Amparo-Del Villar</b>		
<b>N/A</b>	 <b>Bill Samaras</b> <i>Declined to Answer</i>		

# City Council

## What is your favorite coffee shop in Lowell?

Order is alphabetical by coffee shop name, and then and then by incumbency & alphabetical order from left-right where necessary in the case of shared love of a certain coffee place.

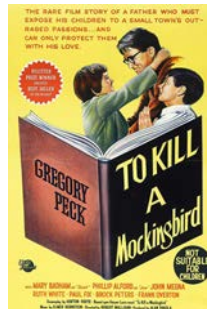
<p>61 Market St.</p> 	 <p><b>Vesna Nuon</b></p>  <p><b>Danny Rourke</b></p>	 <p><b>Corey Belanger</b></p>	 <p><b>Dave Ouellette</b></p>
<p>250 Jackson St.</p> 	 <p><b>Harry Kortikere</b></p>		
<p>23 Palmer St.</p> 	 <p><b>Marty Lorrey</b></p>		
<p>15+ Lowell Locations</p> 	 <p><b>Dave Conway</b></p>	 <p><b>Juan Castañeda</b></p>	 <p><b>Jeff Thomas</b></p>
<p>244 Appleton</p> 	 <p><b>Alexandra Amparo-Del Villar</b></p>		
<p>155 Middlesex St.</p> 	 <p><b>Ty Chum</b></p>		
<p>2 Lowell Locations</p> 	 <p><b>Rodney Elliott</b></p>	 <p><b>John Leahy</b></p>	 <p><b>Rita Mercier</b></p>
 <p><b>Sokhary Chau</b></p>  <p><b>John Drinkwater</b></p>  <p><b>Marty Hogan</b></p>			
<p>N/A</p>	 <p><b>Bill Samaras</b> <i>Declined to Answer</i></p>		

# City Council

## What is your favorite movie?

Candidates appear in incumbency & alphabetical order. Rotten Tomatoes score is as of 9/16/19.

Conway



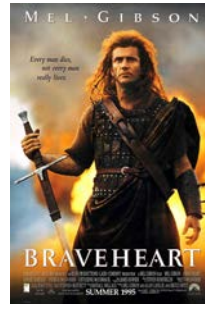
91% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Elliott



76% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Leahy



77% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Mercier



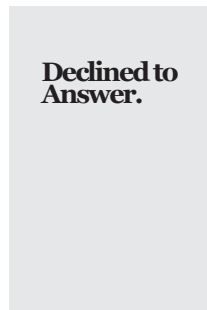
97% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Nuon



89% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Samaras



Amparo-Del Villar Belanger



62% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Belanger



98% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Castañeda



49% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Chau



97% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Chum



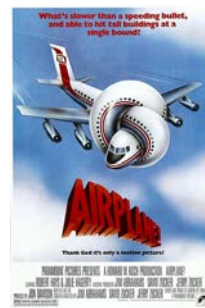
94% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Drinkwater



98% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Hogan



97% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Kortikere



95% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Lorrey



96% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Ouellette



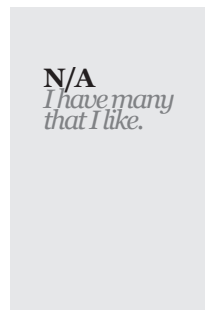
22% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Rourke



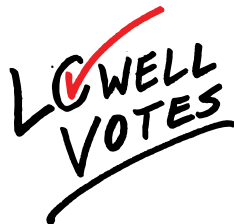
73% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Thomas



# School Committee Survey Answers

**11 candidates.  
6 incumbents.  
5 challengers.**



# School Committee



**Andy Descoteaux**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Jackie Doherty**  
Highlands

INCUMBENT



**Bob Hoey**  
South Lowell

INCUMBENT



**Dominik Lay**  
Highlands

INCUMBENT

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

N/A  
 avoiceforthekids  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 electjackiedoherty  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 N/A  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 LayforSchoolCommittee  
 N/A  
 No Website

**What's the number one issue that made you want to run for School Committee?**

After being a teacher and working with kids for nearly 40 years, I figured the School Committee made sense for me, so that I could continue to work for the kids.

In the beginning it was to fight for more funds, but through the years my focus expanded to make sure parents have a seat at the table, and to hold leadership accountable to do what's best for kids.

Special education.

I would like to help making Lowell Public Schools (LPS) a good and safe learning environment for all families and students. Students getting the best education that they can get. Families feeling good about having their children going to LPS. Teachers and staffs get adequate supports & materials.

**How can we balance main maintenance and infrastructure while overseeing and funding the new High School construction?**

This will NOT be easy and will require a significant amount of coordination on the part of the Construction Company and the City Public Works Department. It is my understanding that our Operating Project Manager (OPM) has had a great deal of success with minimizing negative impacts on everyone.

By hiring two new facility managers, we have taken steps to ensure the schools hold up their end re maintenance, including better communication and a stronger partnership with the city. The new high school construction also demands improved communication and collaboration from both sides.

It's the first time in Lowell's History to have a female city manager and she already created a plan to address maintenance and infrastructure. At this time we all have to circle the wagons and throw all our support behind her plan.

There's never enough money for the City. City has already secured funding for HS construction with MSBA and a 30-year bond. Current City Manager cares about Schools and I am confident that funding for maintenance of all schools will be available from the City's budget and it will be spent effectively.

**Has enough changed since the 1980s lawsuit decision ordered Lowell to bus students to reconsider neighborhood schools? Could we ensure that neighborhood schools are integrated and receive equal funding and resources?**

John Descoteaux has done a remarkable job at figuring out how to accomplish this. In order to achieve the neighborhood schools, we would need to acquire more middle school classroom space. Not easy but we're working on it.

We should have as many children as possible attending neighborhood schools while still maintaining diversity. In addition to making sure our schools are integrated, we must do a better job of distributing funds equitably based on the needs of the student population at each school.

I believe enough has changed to reconsider neighborhood schools. But to do it right we need to build a large middle school in the Centerville section of Lowell.

When Lowell bused students in '80's it has a priceless positive effect. It gives students, families, staff, teachers, to share some of the resources, knowledge and friendship across the neighborhoods. Neighborhood schools cannot ensure integration or equal funding. Knowledge & friendship diminished.

**What would you do to improve parent services and increase parent engagement in schools, especially among parents who do not speak English?**

We have several systems set in place currently. We strongly encourage our parents to avail themselves of these services either through the individual schools or the Family Resource Center.

Parent engagement improves when it is valued from the top down. Parents need to feel welcomed and empowered. I expect the Supt to model that value, track it, and hold his team accountable. More bilingual staff and translation services will help give access to those who do not speak English.

The parent information center has improved greatly in the past two years under the leadership of Miss Duda. With more resources I believe Miss Duda's ideas would increase parent engagement. Also more block party ideas like volunteers to give Salsa and Merengue lessons.

I have been working with Superintendent to increase parents participation by providing correct information and making parents feel that they belong. Superintendent is working on getting proper translation as well as parent liaisons who are bilingual. Adult Ed has important role to educate parents.

**What systems would you support, or create, to ensure that diversity is represented in all levels of the public school system, not just through teachers?**

I firmly believe that we are making strides with our new Superintendent and that people of all walks of life will be pleased with the choices and people he is hiring for key positions that Dr. Boyd has and will continue to make.

Recently, we hired some highly qualified, diverse school leaders and I support continuing that effort. I have also supported developing our own talent pipeline by providing educational paths for current employees, such as paras, and encouraging LHS graduates and locals to consider a career with LPS.

When we hire custodians, kitchen help, paraprofessionals, and many more positions. We need to make sure we hired people from Lowell. That would represent or student body.

Very hard to achieve! And may sounds a bit overwhelming to some. Ideally, to have diversity that reflects population in all levels I support a system that favors having percentage of qualified staffs that reflects percentage of the City's population.

# School Committee

## Continued



**Connie Martin**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Gerry Nutter**  
Centralville

INCUMBENT



**Sherri O'Connor Barboza**  
Highlands



**Hilary Clark**  
Downtown

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

N/A  
[conniemartin.lowellschools](https://www.facebook.com/conniemartin.lowellschools)  
 N/A  
 No Website

[gnutter50](https://twitter.com/gnutter50)  
 N/A  
 N/A  
[thelowellcurmudgeon.com](https://www.thelowellcurmudgeon.com)

N/A  
 Elect-Sherri-OConnor-Barboza-Lowell-School-Committee-3948615711709342  
[votebarbozalowellschools](https://www.instagram.com/votebarbozalowellschools)  
 No Website

N/A  
[clarkforprogress](https://www.facebook.com/clarkforprogress)  
[clarkforprogress](https://www.instagram.com/clarkforprogress)  
[clarkforprogress.com](https://www.clarkforprogress.com)

**What's the number one issue that made you want to run for School Committee?**

Recognizing that an innovative and high quality public school system is the key to ensuring the economic and social success of our entire community.

Financial stability for the district

Special Education, Mental Health.

The financial crisis and inability of the current committee to work cooperatively with the superintendent and city council is what drove me. We need accountability, collaboration and relationship building which are skills I can offer this city.

**How can we balance main maintenance and infrastructure while overseeing and funding the new High School construction?**

The way to guard against our buildings falling deeper into disrepair is for both the City and the School District to conduct a thorough audit of the current state of our buildings and make a genuine commitment to invest the necessary resources to ensure building safety and efficiency.

A 8%-10% tax increase rolled out over a 3-5 year period will fund the HS project The Cities Capital Plan should include funding for roofs-boilers- windows with MSBA funding paying 80% and the yearly city budget should include money for standard maintenance

Checks and Balances, Safety for our children will always be the priority while ensuring our students are learning in an environment that nurtures and fosters the growth needed while in High School. There should be enough funding to maintain and ensure the renovations. Failing not an option!

It is important to come up with a plan to address deferred maintenance at schools around the city and ensure we are applying for the maximum amount of MSBA funding available every year. Strong controls must be in place to ensure the high school project stays on time and on or under budget.

**Has enough changed since the 1980s lawsuit decision ordered Lowell to bus students to reconsider neighborhood schools? Could we ensure that neighborhood schools are integrated and receive equal funding and resources?**

I believe that the district must conduct a thoughtful analysis of student data to determine if we can maintain our diversity priorities if we make the move back to neighborhood schools. Maintaining a desegregated district has to remain our top priority.

Space limitations won't allow us to go back to neighborhood schools but we can change assignments to get students closer to home and neighborhoods have evolved to allow us to do that and stay in compliance. The new Administration is committed to fund schools equally and distribute resources fairly

We are not in a position to consider neighborhood schools. Funding is not evenly distributed, we are not completely integrated now, how could we even begin to do that by neighborhoods. We need to have all our children on even playing fields and we are not close.

Every student in Lowell deserves the best possible education regardless of what school they attend. Therefore, we must focus on improving the quality of our under-performing schools before we consider a change like this. We must also improve communication with families about their choices.

**What would you do to improve parent services and increase parent engagement in schools, especially among parents who do not speak English?**

As a committee, we need to build programs, events and communication platforms that facilitate better connections with our families, especially those who face language challenges. We also need to support school level activities because our school staff are the most trusted by our families.

This School Committee has hired an equity and outreach officer to increase parental participation including extending hours at the Parent Information Center to give parents more opportunities to use it and hired more bilingual parent liaisons.

Building communication at the beginning of school is important. We need to have multi-cultural staff and teachers to understand the culture of the families being served and what communication works best. This, also, is when we can take full advantage of technology, such as apps and social media.

We should share best practices from schools and teachers who are currently doing this well and look to replicate these practices throughout the district. In addition, we should have cultural competency training for all school staff and parent liaisons at each school.

**What systems would you support, or create, to ensure that diversity is represented in all levels of the public school system, not just through teachers?**

The new Chief Equity Officer position has invested high level expertise towards our diversity efforts. We have already seen several positions filled by highly qualified professionals from diverse backgrounds. We need to pay attention to every level of hiring so our staffing reflects our community.

For the first time in my lifetime we see diversity in the Central Office and with the Equity and Outreach Officer and the hiring of new principals and the Special Ed leader I believe the Supt is committed to extending diversity. The School Committee needs to support this.

Definitely, support staff and teachers are very important. Beyond that, communication that goes beyond the flyers and robo-phone calls. Families culturally need to be understood and fear and miscommunication needs to be rectified by culturally sensitive personnel.

Creating mentoring and pathway programs similar to the one that began this past year for paraprofessionals will increase diversity at all levels of the public school system and provide advancement opportunities for interested staff.

# School Committee

## Continued



**Mike Dillon, Jr.**  
Highlands



**Ben Opara**  
Pawtucketville



**Jim Peters**  
Highlands

**Where can voters find you on the web?**

MikeDillonJr2  
 Mike Dillon Jr. for Lowell School Committee  
 mikedillonjrforlsc  
 No Website

N/A  
 benoparaforlowell  
 N/A  
 No Website

N/A  
 N/A  
 N/A  
[jimpetersblog.com](http://jimpetersblog.com)

**What's the number one issue that made you want to run for School Committee?**

I have seen an increasing number of families choose to relocate in search of a better public school system. I believe in the LPS and I believe that I can help this district overcome the challenges in front of it through hard work.

Equity, Justice, Integrity and Inclusion.

Treatment of the past Superintendent

**How can we balance main maintenance and infrastructure while overseeing and funding the new High School construction?**

We are in a maintenance emergency with our city buildings. We need to come together as a community and provide support for our city workers. I am working on creating a Maintenance Relief Initiative in order to help catch up on outstanding work orders. We CAN fix our buildings!

Establishment of sound fiscal oversight mechanisms by the School Committee. Members of the School Committee, should constructively engage individual council members to ensure net school spending is met every year. Things needing maintenance, should be quickly identified and promptly addressed.

Maintenance is at the behest of the City Council. Making sure that the average maintenance man is on top of his game is the best way to balance maintenance. When my father took over, he discovered sleeping cots built into a wall hidden in the closet. They were gone that morning. Infrastructure,

**Has enough changed since the 1980s lawsuit decision ordered Lowell to bus students to reconsider neighborhood schools? Could we ensure that neighborhood schools are integrated and receive equal funding and resources?**

I do believe we can change our school districts and maintain equal opportunity throughout the city. A three district system could save the city hundreds of thousands in busing costs, still provide multiple options to all, and help strengthen pride in our neighborhoods.

Things have changed, for the good. While I recognize the validity of the concerns of parents regarding busing, I worry, however, that the positive gains may be fragile. Some neighborhoods have unique issues that may need to be addressed before reverting to neighborhood schools.

Not unless we move 27,000 Asian Americans around the city.

**What would you do to improve parent services and increase parent engagement in schools, especially among parents who do not speak English?**

Creating more districts and sending kids to school closer to home would have an immediate impact on parent engagement. Parents will have much easier access to the school and would be more likely to engage with the community around them.

School Site Councils is a state mandate. We MUST establish one in each school. We must build from ground up.

I would hire teachers who are fluent in multiple languages.

**What systems would you support, or create, to ensure that diversity is represented in all levels of the public school system, not just through teachers?**

I will strongly support equity in all of our schools to provide equal educational opportunities for every child. I also think an emphasis on peer to peer teaching in the classroom can inspire our students to pursue a career in education.

We must mandate the continuous existence and funding for the office of Equity and Diversity.

















I would support hiring people of diversity in administrative positions.



# School Committee

## What is your favorite pizza place in Lowell?

Order is alphabetical by pizza place name, and then in incumbency and alphabetical order from left-right where necessary in the case of shared love of a certain pizza place.

220 Central St. 	 <b>Jackie Doherty</b>	 <b>Connie Martin</b>	 <b>Gerry Nutter</b>
	 <b>Jim Peters</b>		
480 Chelmsford St. 	 <b>Sherri O'Connor Barboza</b>		
1317 Middlesex St. 	 <b>Bob Hoey</b>		
	 <b>Andy Descoteaux</b>		
494 Westford St. 	 <b>Mike Dillon</b>		
220 Pawtucket St. 	 <b>Ben Opara</b>		
44 Palmer St. 	 <b>Hilary Clark</b>		
N/A	 <b>Dominik Lay</b> <i>No Favorite Pizza Place in Lowell</i>		

## What is your favorite coffee shop in Lowell?

Order is alphabetical by coffee shop name, and then in incumbency and alphabetical order from left-right where necessary in the case of shared love of a certain coffee shop.

61 Market St. 	 <b>Andy Descoteaux</b>	 <b>Jackie Doherty</b>	 <b>Hilary Clark</b>
	 <b>Jim Peters</b>	 <b>Mike Dillon</b>	 <b>Ben Opara</b>
15+ Lowell Locations 	 <b>Connie Martin</b>	 <b>Gerry Nutter</b>	
1317 Middlesex St. 	 <b>Bob Hoey</b>		
N/A	 <b>Dominik Lay</b> <i>No Favorite Coffee Shop in Lowell</i>	 <b>Sherri O'Connor Barboza</b> <i>No Favorite Coffee Shop in Lowell</i>	

# School Committee

## What is your favorite movie?

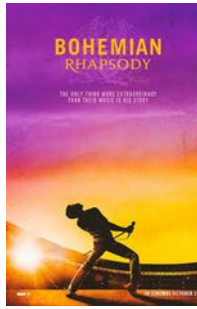
Candidates appear in incumbency and alphabetical order. Rotten Tomatoes score is as of 9/16/19.

Descoteaux



90% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Doherty



61% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Hoey



94% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Lay



81% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Martin



97% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Nutter



98% Rotten Tomatoes Score

O'Connor Barboza



92% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Clark



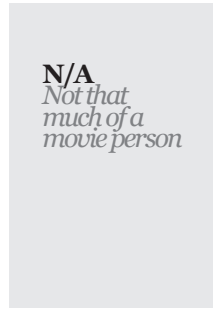
84% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Dillon

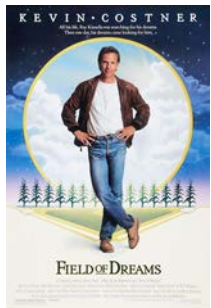


90% Rotten Tomatoes Score

Opara



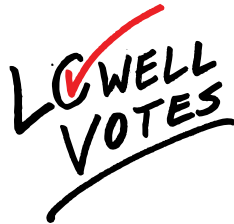
Peters



86% Rotten Tomatoes Score

# Web Bonus Questions

**3 more questions  
answered by  
29 candidates.**



# City Council Web Bonus Questions



**Dave Conway**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Rodney Elliott**  
Pawtucketville

INCUMBENT



**John Leahy**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Rita Mercier**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT

**What systems will you support to build pipelines for the next generation of leaders, especially leaders of color?**

Encourage government participation for all.

All applicants for any positions in the City need to be open and accessible to all. All should be encouraged to apply.

I think that keeping our focus on education is the way to go. The stronger the school system is, the better our citizens will be.

I feel the new voting system option 2 will be the start to make that happen. Hybrid 8.3

**What do you think are the most important infrastructure and capital needs for Lowell to address and how would you pay for it?**

Maintain our buildings using a much needed preventive maintenance program. Grants are available and we need to be aggressive applying for them. We just got grant monies to fix the heating systems in our schools. More of that are needed. We can't keep going back to the taxpayers!

The police station needs to be replaced. It is outdated and has exceeded its useful life by decades. Funding needs to be studied. Possibly a lease back system where a developer finances and builds it and the city leases it back. Similar to the Senior Center is one scenario to consider.

I feel that we are doing this now. We are fixing all the bridges and roads throughout the city. We are doing this with the help of local, State, and federal government.

People are very interested in having their own street repaved. They are concerned about safety in being protected. We as a council have done just that. So we must continue on this path.

**What else can the city do to support local business?**

Develop a campaign to let people know what our business have to offer. Also create our own freedom trail. This will let people know the rich history we have. Ideas like this will bring business into our city.

Offer our assistance in any way necessary. Bring new businesses before the Council to highlight them to the public.

We can always do better, but listening and supporting the local economy is the best direct way to help.

First we should communicate with them in the first place and find out their needs and listen to them and act accordingly.

# City Council Web Bonus Questions

## Continued



**Vesna Nuon**  
Highlands

INCUMBENT



**Bill Samaras**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Alexandra Amparo – Del Villar**  
South Lowell



**Corey Belanger**  
Belvidere

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR

**What systems will you support to build pipelines for the next generation of leaders, especially leaders of color?**

I am a strong advocate for a Mayor's Youth Commission & proposed establishing the Commission to bring younger voices to influence city decisions. I also submitted a motion to expand the number of alternate members on city-wide boards & commissions to encourage more people to be, and stay, involved.

I have long supported the Lowell Plan's Public Matters program. As mayor, I implemented a Mayor's Youth Commission to introduce young people to City Hall, teach them leadership strategies, and implement their voice into the decision-making process.

The ones that are currently and actively focusing on our next generation of leaders!

I do believe that district representation will achieve this but more can be done. We must engage with our minority communities and encourage public service and do more to appoint minorities to boards and commissions. I believe elected officials must be more engaged to accomplish this.

**What do you think are the most important infrastructure and capital needs for Lowell to address and how would you pay for it?**

We need to make sure our roads, parks, and public spaces are safe and well maintained. We need to leverage state and federal dollars and think creatively about our projects to fund them. We should continue to seek opportunities to reduce city expenses such as utilities & use cost savings to reinvest.

We must make sure the Lowell High School project is completed and the vision is fully implemented. Next, we must look at the police and fire stations as a need as we expand the tax base through the Hamilton Canal Innovation District.

Schools! Bridges, and roads. Apply for grants on local and federal level.

Besides getting a new high school we have 28 other schools in need of repair. We need to be more active in pursuing MSBA compensation. We also face aging infrastructure for our first responders. We need to include yearly allocations in the capital funds towards this.

**What else can the city do to support local business?**

Lowell should target infrastructure investment in our neighborhood business districts. The city should encourage the formation of neighborhood business groups to coordinate with city initiatives. The city can partner with organizations like the Lowell Plan & EforAll that can provide startup funding.

The City should have constant dialogue with local business leaders in the downtown and neighborhoods to find out their needs and develop grants and training programs to meet those needs.

Giving them local tax breaks. Free promotion on local City of Lowell website.

The commercial tax rate for businesses in double that of residential, with no services. We need more city liaisons to the business community offering our value resources by partnering with quasi agencies like the Lowell Plan and the SBA. These services can be vital in attracting businesses to Lowell.

# City Council Web Bonus Questions

## Continued



**Juan Castañeda**  
The Acre



**Sokhary Chau**  
Highlands



**Ty Chum**  
Highlands



**John Drinkwater**  
Belvidere

**What systems will you support to build pipelines for the next generation of leaders, especially leaders of color?**

More equal opportunities for the community

I am in favor of mentoring students from our local schools. Civic education and how best to understand our forms of government should be incorporated into the Lowell School's curriculum. Working Cities and Public Matters are programs that should be supported.

Exploring city council youth committee in making it more access able to our young people so their voice can truly be heard. Which mean meeting our young folk where they're at. It could be a park (basketball, volleyball, skateboard,etc) or social gathering.

I believe the goal of "diversity & inclusion" should be included in all aspects of city government. From our city workforce, to our contracted workforce, to businesses receiving city grants or incentives, we must be holding them accountable to goals of a diverse workforce and leadership development.

**What do you think are the most important infrastructure and capital needs for Lowell to address and how would you pay for it?**

More alternatives for housing and resources for the young people.

Roadways, bridges, sewer and water are priorities to maintain good quality of life. Bonding and private/public partnerships could be the main source of revenues. We must always keep the impact to the taxpayers as minimal as possible.

Park and recreation, ,public transportation, public building (school, library, hospital, post offices, courthouses, fire and police department, etc). We can pay for it through tax revenue, for example marijuana facility, alcohol, gambling, etc)

Multiple schools and public safety facilities have immediate capital needs. These projects will inevitably require borrowing, but there are funding sources that can ease the burden on taxpayers, including the MA School Building Authority, which we must aggressively explore and advocate for.

**What else can the city do to support local business?**

More incentives.

As a former owner of a small downtown mortgage company, I am well versed in the challenges to small businesses. Parking, customer safety, mitigating traffic jams, ease of entry and exit, and more outreach to the University staff and students would all help the small businesses in the downtown.

Exploring different ways to invite and create a safe space for all local business from every community to the table.

The city should do everything possible to ensure that business owners with good ideas -- especially those located in under-served areas or strategically important ones like Downtown -- are set up to be successful in the long term. This includes technical assistance with permitting, payroll, etc.

# City Council Web Bonus Questions

Continued



**Marty Hogan**  
Centralville



**Harry Kortikere**  
Belvidere



**Marty Lorrey**  
Belvidere

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR



**Dave Ouellette**  
The Acre

**What systems will you support to build pipelines for the next generation of leaders, especially leaders of color?**

I want the young minds aware of how City Hall affects every single and how they can be an active citizen. I will work to bring more civic participation between the classroom and the council chambers. I will work to create a Youth Council, to address the issues and challenges they face.

Provide minorities and women more opportunities for civic engagement including serving on municipal boards. Set tangible targets for the city to achieve in hiring more minorities and women within the city government. Need organizing coalition to support minority candidates running for office!

I would certainly support any outreach into the community that would enhance the opportunity for future leadership. The programs could include educational support at Lowell High or the local colleges. I would also reach out to various local organizations to participate.

I am on the the Working Cities Challenge board with representatives from all our local agencies and leaders working on this now. We are all looking for future leaders and actively welcoming them to join our boards to gain the experience at a young age.

**What do you think are the most important infrastructure and capital needs for Lowell to address and how would you pay for it?**

Data/Communications upgrade, the New Lowell High School project, and repairs and improvements to our city streets, sidewalks and lighting. As your elected official, I will be accountable to you the people of Lowell. I promise that I will not spend one dollar that I feel is not used properly.

Fix infrastructure issues within Lowell Public Schools. Address infrastructure issues of the Firehouses and aging fleet and equipment. Improve roads, sidewalks & parking. Work with State/Federal Govt for funding for bridges/roads/mass transit & increase commercial revenue coming into the city!

Presently the city has a long list of important projects that needs to be addressed, schools, public buildings, roads etc. What the city needs is a long term capitol investment plan with an increased budget. Committed money from new sources such as The Hamilton Canal Innovation area will help.

Maintaining our Schools and city buildings be proactive not reactive use our cities resources (inspection Dept make a list of each building and prioritize the repairs). Make a team that will address and repair the issues. Totally complete one building at a time. Well maintained buildings cost less to run.

**What else can the city do to support local business?**

In order for local business to truly flourish here in Lowell, we need to make sure that three things are at the forefront of our City Council. Safe streets, clean accessible neighborhoods, and affordable properties. I will work to make sure that these items are properly addressed.

City needs a long term economic development plan to bring in new businesses, work with landlords and developers to develop downtown. City needs to create free trade zones, offer right tax incentives and lower lease rates to make it attractive for new businesses to start and sustain growth.

The city can begin by investing in the infrastructure and maintaining a clean and safe environment. This may encourage a steady flow of consumers. It can and should look at local taxes and charges that may strain the profit margins that allow the businesses to grow.

Streamline the process of inspections, more organized and pro business agenda, working with the new business owners as partners in our community. Use our code department as a source of encouragement not as a hindrance. Work closely with the new owners to find where problems might arise and correct.

# City Council Web Bonus Questions

## Continued



**Daniel Rourke**  
Pawtucketville

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCILOR



**Jeff Thomas**  
South Lowell

**What systems will you support to build pipelines for the next generation of leaders, especially leaders of color?**

I would expand my initiative to bring city hall to all neighborhoods by requesting Council committee meetings be held in the community on a rotating basis to provide a welcoming opportunity to participate in the process. For youth I would support expanded school to career & career pathways programs.

I grew up in a neighborhood of many different ethnicities. I will always push for the leaders of the city to connect with and build working relationships that will make them want to become a bigger and better leader.

**What do you think are the most important infrastructure and capital needs for Lowell to address and how would you pay for it?**

Our public safety facilities, i.e. fire stations, school maintenance & continued development of Hamilton Canal. I would propose to dedicate a percentage of the budget every year to the capital plan portion & continue to work with our Federal and State partners.

Police and Fire are the 2 biggest capital needs for this city now. The high school was before but now the PD/FD need their own space and new headquarters is the first step. As for other capital needs I will take all plans into consideration and prioritize those plans so things get done efficiently.

**What else can the city do to support local business?**

Streamline the local government small business experience to ensure there are no obstacles to entrepreneurship. In addition, expand the small business neighborhood office hours program to evenings & weekends.

Meetings with all local business men and women to help them in anyway I can and also get their support and thoughts of how to help them grow and also bring more local business to the city. Especially downtown.

**Keep going  
for School  
Committee!**



# School Committee Web Bonus Questions



**Andy Descoteaux**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Jackie Doherty**  
Highlands

INCUMBENT



**Bob Hoey**  
South Lowell

INCUMBENT



**Dominik Lay**  
Highlands

INCUMBENT

**How can the schools work with other agencies to address the challenges students and teachers face with behavioral issues, family trauma, and mental health?**

These issues cannot be solved by simply throwing more money at them. We need to have ALL who are directly and indirectly affected by the mentioned concerns. Removing the "stigma" often assigned to many issues would help immensely.

We need to do a better job at collaborating, but the biggest challenge is not enough staff to service students with behavioral or mental health concerns. Along with more staff who have the expertise, we need high-quality training programs, so our teachers learn helpful skills and strategies.

Open up some schools at night so parents can use them as safe places to go. Most parents are afraid to let their children outside. We also need to communicate better with agencies like the boys club, and the ymca to help out. Safe places to play after school would help.

In an ideal situation school is a place where students should feel safe and free of problems. LPS is very good in dealing with students having such issues by working with Lowell General & Health Ctr etc. Staffing enough administrators who specialized in this field at each school location is important.

**What is the vision for improving our Special Education program?**

We have recently hired Mr. Lovato, to be our new Special ed Director. He comes to us from New Mexico, where he was the State of New Mexico Special education Coordinator. He should be able to provide us with many useful and worthwhile initiatives going forward.

My vision is to meet the educational needs of the student from a positive framework rather than one focused on deficits. We must continue to develop our homegrown programs to keep more students in district and we need better collaboration and resource sharing between special and regular education.

I believe we need to now look at dyslexia. I believe at least one in five children have a problem reading. More early reading classes should be part of our vision for improving our Special education program.

Mr. Michael Lavato is our SPED Dir. I support SPED program fully staffed. I like the direction that we took to bring Adie Day School close to home. I support expanding the program and offer services to outside the district. At this point, I would like to work w Mr. Lavato to find ways to improve.

**What are the top priorities for education funding this year?**

We need to make sure that what funding we have is maximized to benefit our students. We should be concerned with serving ALL of our students; from Special education to English Language Learners and College bound preparation. Every effort by our new administrative staff will be toward that goal.

After living with a funding formula that is 25 years old and wholly inadequate, we need major and sustained funding to replenish staff in key, front-line roles, such as social workers, paras, and librarians.

My top priority for education funding is simple. Have as many of my family members and supporters call Congresswoman Laurie Trahan and State Senator Ed Kennedy. To demand more support. They are the two people who can help.

Schools have been underfunded by the State of MA for years and Lowell Public School has been hurt by it. I support The Promise Act for education funding. State Senator Ed Kennedy has been fighting to pass this bill and I am optimistic that it will properly fund Public School.

# School Committee Web Bonus Questions

## Continued



**Connie Martin**  
Belvidere

INCUMBENT



**Gerry Nutter**  
Centralville

INCUMBENT



**Sherri O'Connor Barboza**  
Highlands



**Hilary Clark**  
Downtown

**How can the schools work with other agencies to address the challenges students and teachers face with behavioral issues, family trauma, and mental health?**

There is no question that LPS needs to expand our cadre of social workers and school counselors. The work being done at the state house to address the failing Education Formula will hopefully provide for these critically needed staffing resources to help support our students and families.

We need to extend our partnerships with CTI - Lowell Health and other existing organizations and expand those partnerships with Mental Health and the Center for Hope and Healing among others.

Our children's anxiety rate and depression has increased drastically through MCAS prep. We need to involve outside agencies in our schools and refer families to the services that are needed and not wait until the damage is unbearable. Ex: Collaborating with LCHC, pet therapy, support groups.

There are a number of agencies doing great work in this space throughout the city. It is important to partner with organizations like the Lowell Community Health Center to provide these critical services to our students in the most effective way possible and provide support for our teachers.

**What is the vision for improving our Special Education program?**

In terms of vision, I believe we must recognize that SPED programming isn't a kindness or an "extra" service provided. It is a fundamental, constitutionally protected right, for all students to receive a quality education in the least restrictive environment possible.

We need to look at the program with a new view offered by our new Special Ed leaders and work with the state on needed funding and services to allow us to expand offerings for our range of students from the most gifted to those with the greatest needs.

Transparency, a strong supportive Special Education Director, ETC that realize they are part of a team and all participants have a voice, parent support throughout the IEP process, we should be working together, all children deserve to be thriving and have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Strong leadership to advocate on behalf of the teachers and paraprofessionals providing services, and looking to these professional for input on quality assessment tools and materials to be used. Increasing awareness of the programs that currently exist at particular schools.

**What are the top priorities for education funding this year?**

Our current budget reflects some critical deficiencies in the areas of library staffing, mental health/guidance supports and increasing class sizes. These are the primary areas where I am hoping any increased funding can be directed.

In my view the State keeps increasing Chapt 70 and are committed to keep adjusting the formula while the city sits at funding only 33% of their mandatory net school spending in cash. I'd like to have a written agreement to increase that to 35% by the 2020/2021 school year

Our children of course are our top priority, to ensure this our schools have to be safe in structure and in staff. Repairs have to be made and expansion has to be looked out for overcrowded and substandard classrooms. This would seem to point to more teachers and paraprofessionals needed.

Since the budget is already set for this year, it will be important to evaluate the effectiveness of the building based budgeting strategy in order to increase equity and provide resources to the schools that need it most in the coming year.

# School Committee Web Bonus Questions

## Continued

Lowell Votes  
partners are...



**Mike Dillon, Jr.**  
Highlands



**Ben Opara**  
Pawtucketville



**Jim Peters**  
Highlands

**How can the schools work with other agencies to address the challenges students and teachers face with behavioral issues, family trauma, and mental health?**

Mental health support is crucial for our school system. Every kid should have the chance to talk to someone regularly.

We are blessed to live in a city with two tertiary institutions of learning, numerous non-profit and for-profit businesses, as well as two hospitals. Robust public-private partnership initiatives must be explored. Such has been done before which yielded an outfit like Project Learn. Expansion.

First, we need to focus on mental health. Family trauma would closely follow. Behavioral issues must be addressed by the proper echelon in school site administration.

**What is the vision for improving our Special Education program?**

The Day School is doing amazing things since it opened. We need to continue to support their efforts. We should always be looking to increase our special ed capabilities and work toward being able to provide support for every child within our district.

Hiring of a Special Ed. officer and casting our net wide to learn from what other cities and towns have done.

Recognize that Special Education exists. Keep it on the burner, even if it upsets some of our teachers.

**What are the top priorities for education funding this year?**

My top priority is ensuring good communication between all levels of government. We need more from the state, but we can also make some changes to be more efficient with our spending. We are on the same team.

We must seek out professional means of reducing the student-teacher ratio and ensure they provide state-of-the-art learning tools in our schools.

Work with the state on funding. Most of our budget comes from the state.

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