

THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

Submitted by Zoe Pierce, Caucus Nominee and candidate for Assessor



Zoe Pierce

Zoe invites voters to contact her via email

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TWO BEDFORD CITIZEN QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSOR CANDIDATES

Q1: Give an example of a situation in which you played a role in helping people of different opinions or perspective develop a mutually agreeable solution to a problem. This could be an example from work, volunteer commitments or a previous experience in a public role. How was this accomplished? What did you learn?

For the past 6 ½ years I have worked for the Treasurer/Collector's Office for the Town of Concord. A primary role that I have played in the last few years has been to resolve delinquent account issues and try to keep taxpayers out of a tax title position. This often entails disputes among family members with regards to inherited properties. Often the family is at odds with each other as to how to handle things and my role was to make sure that they were fully aware of the rules and regulations regarding their choices. What I have learned is that you can never have enough information, and that when you are dealing with issues like family, home, school systems, etc. people are very passionate. Empathetic ears and knowledge are your primary resources and the best way to resolve these heartfelt differences of opinion.

Q2: Do you think the Assessors need to do more to explain taxes to the residents, and what would you do?

For the most part, I feel that the Bedford Assessors do a good job with providing the public with tax information. They reach out to organizations such as the COA and make presentations via mediums such as BCAT. I have been assured that they reach out to people who qualified for exemptions in previous years, just to remind them to re-file. I do however think that a

commentary explaining the tax bill, why values went up or down, in the simplest of forms, should be sent to the taxpayers. With the format of our tax bill, there is no allowance for inserts or more detailed information other than what is legally required by the Department of Revenue, printed on the bill. I would like to see something in print, other than on the tax bill, explaining to taxpayers the abatement process, for both Real Estate and Excise taxes. This process is very time sensitive and not understood by many. Finally, I hope that the Assessing Department in town continues to serve the town in a "User Friendly" manner.

ZOE'S CAUCUS STATEMENT

Thank you, Bridget, for nominating me and for your kind words.

Good evening, I am Zoe Pierce and I am seeking to be the caucus nominee for the Board of Assessors.

My husband and I have lived in Bedford just shy of twenty- one years. Like many parents of young children, I initially volunteered in the schools and for their sports teams. As they got a little older, I turned my attention toward community related committees and organizations. In September of 2002, I was appointed to the Public Ceremonies Committee, serving for 4 years , the highlight of which was being appointed to the 275th Bedford Birthday Celebration Task Force. In 2008 I was appointed to the Bedford Affordable Housing Partnership and served until June of 2012The organization that is closest to my heart that I belong to is the Bedford Garden Club. I have been a member since February 2002 and have served the club in various capacities , from taking care of traffic islands, to fund raising, to serving as the club auditor for the past four years. While I thoroughly enjoyed my time on these committees, I am at a point in my life where I am able and desire to do more.

Why the Board of Assessors? For the past six and a half years I have worked for the Treasurer/Collector in Concord, MA. In this role I have had significant interaction with the resident's and taxpayers of the Town of Concord. In my earlier career I worked as a senior accountant for a commercial enterprise where one of my responsibilities was to prepare the 50 or so annual state and federal returns for the company. My work experience in Concord has given me a bird's eye view of the process that towns and cities go through to set and apportion the tax levy to its citizens. Two things are very clear to me. It is a process that must be beyond reproach in how fair and equitable it is and how little it is truly understood by many people. The Board of Assessors role is guided by state statutes and is a position that I feel with the combination of my educational background and work experience I will be able to serve well. I am committed to serving the town in this capacity.

Bedford is our home. We have raised our three kids here and I would truly like the opportunity to contribute more to Bedford. .

I ask for your support in voting for me as a caucus nominee and in the election on March 8th.