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# THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

*Submitted by Edward Pierce, Caucus Nominee and incumbent candidate for School Committee*



*Ed Pierce*

*Ed invites voters to contact him via email at [empierce@verizon.net](mailto:empierce@verizon.net)*

## **TWO BEDFORD CITIZEN QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE 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?

*A few years ago now, 1998ish, and here I am in my new role as Chairman of the Recreation Commission with my feet up on my desk and I get a call from Frank Bauman, the Recreation Director and in typical Frank fashion he says "Hey Ed, they are telling me that the Kid's Club Program has run out of %\$%# money". I was incredulous, bankrupt, how could that be we had over \$300,000 in the recreation revolving fund. I was soon to learn it was not a monolithic fund but in the eyes of the Town's accountants a segregated fund. More importantly it brought to light that the rates for the program, which had not been changed since the program was taken over by the Town in 1993, needed to be adjusted immediately. The Kid's Club Program is self-supporting. So we launched into action, developing a model to determine the rates needed to cover all the costs for programs being run, morning drop off, after school care, daily rate, vacation days, half-day kindergarten. We knew there would be a significant bump in rates, which as I recall turned out to be a 50% increase, and we were also hearing from the Director of the program that there was a high level of concern from the parents. With this in mind we decided we would have a public forum and explain in detail what happened and how we developed the new rates. At the meeting we laid it out there with facts and figures and even though we were proposing a significant rate increase the audience understood. As I have*

*learned countless times since, people react well when you provide them with the information and will be very helpful in providing solutions.*

**Q2:** What are your suggestions to reduce the School Department FY '15 budget so that it is consistent with Finance Committee guidelines?

*The Finance Committee guidelines for department budgets, including the Schools, are developed in the fall based on a series of assumptions. These assumptions are critical in determining the amount the Finance Committee believes it can allocate to the Schools. Often times, as you would anticipate, these initial assumptions may tilt to the conservative side. For instance, when setting the budget guideline this fall the finance committee assumed State Aid would be the same amount we received last year. In the Governor's recently proposed budget, Bedford would receive an additional \$424,000 in Aid. With this new information the Finance Committee can decide whether or not to adjust their guidelines. Other examples of assumptions involve how much free cash should be left in the till, whether to put funds into the stabilization fund, how much of the special pension fund will be used to offset the budget, how much of an overlay reserve is appropriate, what amount to set for new growth, how much should we fund in other post-employment benefits, OPEB, and how much untaxed levy capacity to leave.*

*The schools on the other hand, have to develop a budget that is responsive to the changing faces and needs of the students that we serve. We are bound by our general class size guidelines, state required hours and number of days of instruction, support of a balanced educational program and other state and federal mandates. Our needs in 2015 are attributable to increases for our existing program, principally salaries, increases in staff for the enrollment spikes at Davis and the High School, and increases in staff for mandated programs such as ELL and special education.*

*Our collective goal, School Committee and Finance Committee, is to agree on an amount that meets the needs of the students and the taxpayers.*

### **ED'S CAUCUS STATEMENT**

It has been a privilege to represent the Community of Bedford for the past 19 years, 12 as a member of the School Committee, and 7 years split between the Finance Committee and Recreation Commission.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my wife Zoe, whose support has allowed me to pursue my interests in serving the community.

Why do I want to run again?

The answer for me is that Bedford is home to us. This is a great place to live and raise a family and we have benefited greatly by the thoughtful actions of those who have gone before us, and I would like to continue to be a part of those volunteers who help chart the course for the Community for those who will eventually succeed us.

More specifically we are in the midst of a transformation in how education is delivered. Critical thinking is replacing the rote recital of facts and figures. The sage on stage is becoming the guide on the side. We are moving to a more individualized learning model largely as a result of changes taking place all around us in the education technology marketplace. Applications are being written that can help our young students acquire and develop their skills through the interactive use of technology. One of the applications in use in Math at the High School is allowing the teacher to see where students struggled doing their homework before they even show up in class. It is a multimedia world of opportunity that our kid's are living in and our delivery models must meet where our kid's are learning. I am excited about the opportunity to influence and shape our approach to this dramatic change in the delivery of education.

We are also experiencing a spike in enrollments at Davis and the High School. We are seeing a more diverse population with a rise in ELL learners. Budgets continue to be tight. Property taxes continue their tilt towards the residential sector. Housing prices are driven by families who desire communities with good schools. We, as a Community need to continue to meet our promise of providing a quality well rounded balanced education for all of our students and to understand the fiscal realities of what we can afford.

I have spent my career making evaluations like these for the businesses that I have been involved with. I would like to continue to use these experiences and help the Schools and the Town chart the course for the future of the Community.

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