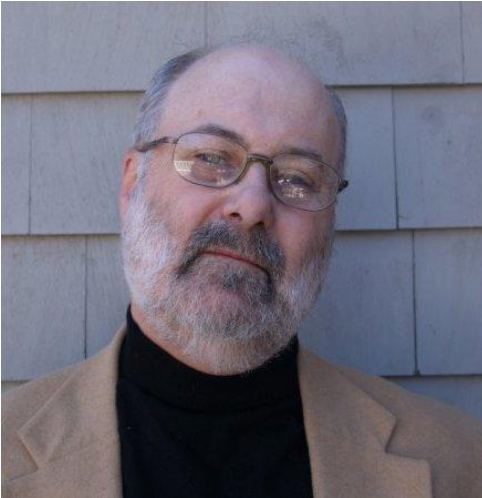


THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

R. Bruce Murphy – Candidate for Assessor

Incumbent and Caucus Nominee



Events:

No events scheduled

Contact information:

rbrucemurphy@comcast.net

[Visit Bruce's Linked in Page](#)

2016 Citizen's Caucus Statement

I would like to start by thanking Mike for his kind words. Given Mike's long and illustrious service to the community I am honored that he agreed to nominate me.

I have been involved with Bedford Town government in one fashion or another since the 1980's and in that time I have come to one conclusion. In the main, Bedford works well. There is, of course, always room for improvement and we have our disagreements at the margin. But in the main, Bedford works well.

A large part of the credit for that goes to our staff and management team. Part of the credit goes to our elected and appointed citizen committees. But the main underlying reason that Bedford works well is that our citizens see the value of the services delivered by our local government. They believe they are receiving quality services at a fair price. And it is in the "fair price" is where the Assessors make their contribution.

As you know, when you vote to approve budget at Town Meeting you are also committing yourselves and your fellow taxpayers to an overall tax obligation. When the Selectmen certify the tax rate, they are determining which portion of that obligation goes to business sector and which will be paid by the residents. Once those two steps are complete the Assessors establish

the individual tax obligations by establishing an opinion of value for every taxable property –in doing so they establish the price each of us pays for the services provided by the Town.

Since I am asking for the job of establishing a fair price I believe it is incumbent upon me to let you know how I define the term “fair” with respect to the job the Assessors are asked to do.

My definition of the term with respect to my role as an Assessor has two components: adherence to the law and adherence to the facts.

Let me speak to the former first.

Compared to many jurisdictions The Commonwealth has a highly centralized and highly regulated process for property valuation. I have to admit that there are times when I feel this system is constrictive and bureaucratic. That is the downside of a highly centralized system.

However, the upside of this system is that it is specifically designed to prevent a bunch of yahoos from getting on your Board of Assessors and working their personal agendas. For me, this upside considerably outweighs the downsides of the system.

With this in mind, I will commit to you to be a strict constructionist when it comes to my duties as an Assessor. I believe that it is my job to understand and administer the law – not to write it. This means I am committing to establish the value of each and every property on a consistent basis according to the laws and best practices of the Commonwealth. You can be assured that you will receive the same treatment as your fellow taxpayers.

My commitment to the adherence to the facts has more to do with who I am and what I have learned. I have spent my entire career working to establish systems of fact based management in the public and private sectors and on a local and global basis. I am currently teaching the next generation of leaders to do the same. I passionately believe that we perform better when we stick to the facts.

So what does that mean for you?

First, it means I understand the importance of high quality data. If you cannot measure it correctly; you cannot manage it correctly. This is fundamentally critical. I will commit to you that I will work with the professional staff in the Assessor’s office to make sure your values are established on highest quality data.

Secondly, it means that I understand that no human organization ever gets it 100% right all the time. If you present me with facts that demonstrate that we have your value wrong, I will be happy to hear them. It is not about who is right; it’s about getting it right.

Finally, it's an unfortunate artifact of human behavior that wherever there is money there will be those who try to generate unfair advantage by gaming the system. Typically they do so by trying to pervert the process or distort the facts. Experience has taught me that the best way to defeat this behavior is to insist on sticking to the facts. I commit to protecting you from this sort of behavior.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to contribute, in my small way, to a Bedford that works well over the last eight years. I would very much like to continue to do so. To do that, I need your vote in our upcoming election.

I want to thank you for your time and attention and for your participation in this important part of our democratic process.