



2021
TOWN
ELECTION



CONTACT LINKS

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ASSESSOR

JOSEPH ALAN GILBERT

INITIAL STATEMENT ~ MARCH 8, 2021

No final response received

INITIAL STATEMENT

Hello everyone, my name is Joseph Gilbert, and it would be an honor to represent you on Bedford's Board of Assessors. I am a husband and father of two young children. I'm also a Marine Corps veteran, a graduate of UMass Boston with a Bachelor's in Finance, and a former realtor. After the military, I continued my service as a government civilian with the Navy and a defense contractor. While my family is relatively new to Bedford, I believe my experience and education provide me with both the necessary skills and a unique perspective to execute the duties required by the Board.

I recently became aware of the proposal to remove selection of the Assessors from the public and place the decision solely in the hands of the Select Board. I adamantly agree with outgoing Board Chair, Ron Cordes, that independence is integral to the Assessors. While the Select Board is always aligned with our town's greater interests, they may not always directly align with those of the *individual* taxpayers in our town. It's important that all interests are heard, represented, and balanced. This balancing of interests – an important role of the Board of Assessors – is an important check on the Select Board and is the primary reason the Assessors should remain independently elected. The feeling of paying our tax bill should be weighed against Bedford's great services – both perspectives are important, and both should be considered, especially given the changes to Bedford in these unprecedented times.

QUESTIONS ~ LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

What is your understanding of what an Assessor does?

The Board of Assessors is responsible for making sure assessed property values are determined fairly and accurately. They do this by overseeing and certifying that the

determination of assessed value of property in Bedford is fair, accurate, and in accordance with state-approved methods; relevant information should be collected and recorded in a transparent and systematic way. Additionally, after assessments are made, the Board of Assessors hear and make determinations on applications from individual taxpayers, who believe that the value of their property has been incorrectly assessed.

What is your position on the proposed change from having taxpayers elect the Assessors to having the Selectmen or Town Manager appoint them?

I adamantly agree with outgoing Board Chair, Ron Cordes, that independence is integral to the Assessors. While the Select Board is always aligned with our town's greater interests, they may not always directly align with those of the *individual* taxpayers, and all interests should be heard, represented, and balanced. This balancing of interests is an important check on the Select Board and is the primary reason the Assessors should remain independently elected *by the people*. The feeling of paying our tax bill should be weighed against Bedford's great services - both perspectives are important, and both should be considered.