

Dunne, Gibbons, Mascolo running to 'Focus on Education' for Hanover school board

By ANTHONY GABBIANELLI
EDITOR

HANOVER TWP. — Retired teacher Christina Dunne, police officer Brian Gibbons and Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) Karen Mascolo are running together for three available three-year seats on the grades K-8 School District Board of Education under the "Focus on Education" campaign slogan.

All candidates are running for what would be their first terms. Also running are Christopher Mattessich, William McCabe and Michelle Stricchiola under the "Students Matter Most" campaign slogan.

Incumbents Gina Marie Winkler, Lynda Wright and Marcella Wilson did not file to run for re-election.

The district is in litigation with state Attorney General Matt Platkin; the state Superior Court placed a temporary injunction prohibiting the implementation of a parental notification policy Friday, May 19 following Platkin's complaint filed with the state Division of Civil Rights (DCR).

This was in reaction to the board adopting a policy requiring teachers to inform a student's parents about factors including sexual orientation and gender identity or expression Tuesday, May 16.

An Attorney General's Office statement at the time said the policy requires school staff to "out" LGBTQ+ youth to their parents, the statement says, and this exposes LGBTQ+ youth to "severe harm" to their safety and mental health.

Christina Dunne

Dunne is a retired elementary school teacher who taught for 40 years in New York and New Jersey, with 34 years in the grades K-12 Caldwell-West Caldwell School District.

Dunne said she comes with a wealth of knowledge about curriculum and state testing. For 10 years, she worked closely with the state Department of Education on the development of state exams for Language Arts literacy for third through fifth grade. She said she believes her abilities and expertise will help close the academic gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As a senior in Hanover, I will represent the large segment of retired citizens in our town who want the board to stay fiscally responsible while keeping the focus on quality education for our youth," Dunne said.

Dunne also said she is greatly troubled by the Attorney General's litigation. As a board member, Dunne said, one takes an oath to uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the state Board of Education as well as court orders pertaining to schools.

"As a result, legal fees are climbing dramatically," Dunne said. "The legal bill for the month of May was \$19,620.70 which is substantially more than previous months that ranged between \$1,000 to \$4,000. We also could possibly lose state and federal funding. I know our taxpayers do not want to see that happen."

Dunne would drop this appeal, saying the policy is "discriminatory."

It is not fiscally responsible to continue to spend taxpayers' dollars on litigation surrounding this issue," she said. "I am among the 90 percent of our senior community and realize the obligation of board members is to maintain fiscal responsibility."

Board members, Dunne said, are supposed to develop and maintain public schools to meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing. The policy in question targets students with sex and gender issues by requiring staff to notify parents regarding their gender identity or expression, Dunne said.

"The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or expression," Dunne said. "Our policy is not in compliance."



From left, Christina Dunne, Brian Gibbons and Karen Mascolo are running for grades K-8 Hanover Township School District Board of Education under the "Focus on Education" campaign slogan.

RELATED ITEMS

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Dunne said that in her first term, she hopes to work with her fellow board members to help reduce the Covid gap, to encourage a grit and growth mindset in schools, to encourage social memorial learning to support the health of children and staff, and to provide a safe environment for learning and growth.

Brian Gibbons

Gibbons, in his 25th year in law enforcement, is the police chief in Chatham Borough. He is also the commissioner of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police accreditation program, aiding agencies in achieving and maintaining best practices and standards in law enforcement.

Gibbons said that with his law enforcement experience, he is uniquely qualified to represent parents, teachers, staff and students on the board. He said he has extensive training in school violence mitigation, behavioral threat assessment (BTAM), policy development, fiscal management, budgeting, labor and personnel matters, and labor negotiations.

He is certified as an Advanced Accredited Chief Executive (ACE Advanced), Certified Public Manager (CPM) and Certified Negotiations Expert (CNE).

"Most importantly, I am a compassionate father of three children in the Hanover Township school system and possess strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which I intend to utilize to guide the BOE's (Board of Education's) focus back to local education matters," Gibbons said.

With the recent negativity surrounding the Hanover Township school dis-

trict, Gibbons decided to run in this year's election with hopes to "refocus on local education issues and step away from hastily devised extremist and partisan policies that seem more like solutions in search of problems."

Gibbons said he finds the recent litigation with the Attorney General to be an unfortunate, avoidable and costly distraction from local school-related issues, and it appears to him to be "a solution in search of a problem."

"The policy clearly overstepped legal boundaries when it veered away from behavior-related issues and singled out students solely based on a particular gender identity or sexual preference," Gibbons said.

"It must be repealed. Moreover, the aggressive stance against the Attorney General and the state Law Against Discrimination is a direct violation of the board members' oath."

This, Gibbons said, has cast a negative light on Hanover's school district and township at large.

"My primary goal is to restore a focus on local education issues that center on 'curriculum, compassion and community,'" Gibbons said.

Karen Mascolo

Mascolo is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) at Overlook Medical Center in Summit where she provides anesthesia services for all patients but primarily for the pediatric population.

Mascolo said she is a product of Hanover Township's public schools and decided to raise her family in Hanover for the excellent school district and wonderful community.

"Being a mother of three small children, I am invested in Hanover's future and want to provide the best possible education for the students in our town," Mascolo said.

"Teachers and staff are leaving our district and many are passing us by due to the negative light that has been shown on our town. We need to refocus the board away from politicized agendas and focus on curriculum, compassion, and community. My commitment to positive change and motivation to create a safe and effective environment for learning is what Hanover needs now."

Mascolo said it is upsetting to see Hanover's beautiful town tarnished because of the Attorney General's litigation with the school board. The current board, Mascolo said, has overstepped and decided to go against state law and state Board of Education rules and regulations.

"They are so focused on their own political agenda that they do not see how they are hurting our students, teachers and community," Mascolo said.

"Rather than focusing on improving our district's curriculum and bridging the gap from Covid, they have spent their time and our tax dollars to fight for an unnecessary policy."

"Parents have every right to choose what their child learns in school. They do not have the right to mandate what every other child is allowed to learn. If the current board continues down this politicized path, our state funding could potentially be in jeopardy, thereby reducing vital programs and crucial resources to our schools."

Mascolo said, if elected, she hopes to work with the community to create safe and effective policies that benefit all students.

"I plan to listen to the needs of our students, parents, and staff to come up with solutions that provide equity in our schools," Mascolo said. "I hope to help our dis-

trict retain and attract highly qualified, effective teachers and staff. I hope to focus resources on student programs that will enrich and support their academic needs. Lastly,

I hope to preserve Hanover's reputation and provide a safe environment for all students, parents, and staff. We must continue to be a community that inspires excellence."

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Morris Plains Borough

LEGAL NOTICE

Borough of Morris Plains
Morris County, New Jersey

Notice to Bidders
Shade Tree Work
Contract No. 2023.A

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that sealed proposals will be received by the Borough of Morris Plains up to 10:30 a.m. on November 29, 2023 at the Morris Plains Municipal Building, 531 Speedwell Avenue, Morris Plains, New Jersey. The contract documents include the following shade tree work:

1. Tree take down only
2. Tree removal only
3. Pruning and elevation of street trees
4. For Elevation of Street Trees
5. Single Branch Only
6. Stump Removal Only
7. Tree Fertilization
8. Emergency Services
9. Performance of Authorized Field Inspections
10. Deep Root Watering (New Plantings)
11. Cabling

The Contract Term shall be January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 with the potential for up to two 1-year Contract Extension or one 2-year Contract Extension, for calendar years 2025 and 2026 at the option of the Borough pursuant to the provision of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15. All Bidders must submit bids on the Contract Term and the potential two 1-year Contract Extension and one 2-year Contract Extension periods in order to be considered or the bid proposal will be rejected as non-responsive.

The contract is subject to the availability and appropriation annually of sufficient funds as may be required to meet the extended obligation for succeeding years. The contract shall also be subject to 60 day written notice to the contractor of termination of the contract.

This request for proposals is being solicited through a fair and open process in accordance with N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5.

This Contract is subject to all of the Department of Labor Safety and Health Regulations and to the applicable provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

All bids and proposals are to be made by Tree Experts certified by the Bureau of Tree Experts under the authority of N.J.S.A. 45:15C-1 et seq. Bidders shall readily identify themselves as Certified Tree Experts in their bids and proposals.

All bids shall be made on the forms furnished and shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked with the name and address of the Bidder, the name of the Owner and Title of the Contract. Any bids submitted prior to the bid opening date or by mail or overnight delivery service shall be in sealed envelopes addressed to the Borough of Morris Plains, c/o Ana M. Thomas, Borough Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, 531 Speedwell Avenue, Morris Plains, New Jersey 07950.

Each bid must be accompanied by a certified check, cashier's check or bid bond in the amount of \$500.00, payable to the Owner, as a guarantee that if the contract is awarded to the Bidder he will enter into a contract with the Owner.

Each Bidder must complete and submit the Proposal Form, Shade Tree Commission Bid Form, Information Sheet, Ownership Disclosure Statement, Non-Collusion Affidavit, Affirmative Action Assurance Form and Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran contained in the proposal package in order to be eligible for consideration for award of this Contract. All bidders must include a copy of the Contractor's New Jersey Business Registration Certificate as required pursuant to P.L. 2006, Chap. 57, as amended from time to time.

The successful Bidder will be required to furnish payment and performance bonds each as specified in the Instructions to Bidders contained in the contract documents. Each Bidder shall submit with his proposal a completed Consent of Surety Form, stating that the surety company will provide him with the required payment and performance bonds.

The attention of the Bidder is called to the conditions of employment to be observed and minimum wage rates to be paid under the contract. The successful Bidder shall be required to comply with the provisions of the Department of Labor's current wage rate determination, the New Jersey Prevailing Wage Act, the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, the Copeland Act, and the David Bacon Act, as applicable.

The Contract will be awarded to the lowest responsible Bidder based upon the total weighted average as set forth on the Shade Tree Commission Bid Proposal Form, the right being reserved by the Borough to reject all proposals which may be informal or the acceptance of which for any other reasons would be detrimental to the best interest of the Borough, and to waive informalities.

By the direction of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Morris Plains.

Ana M. Thomas
Borough Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer
P.F. 586.03

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