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2021 League of Women Voter's Guide to Candidates: PART ONE: SELECTMEN

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Categories : [Government & Politics](#)

Tagged as : [Board of Selectman Election 2021](#), [Darien Elections 2021](#), [First Selectman Election 2021](#)

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Compiled each year as a public service by the [League of Women Voters of Darien](#).

This Voters' Guide is designed to provide information about the candidates to the public in a nonpartisan and balanced way to assist them in casting an informed vote on Election Day.

Questionnaires were submitted to candidates for local offices, asking one or more office related questions. Responses were limited to a specific word count and are printed exactly as submitted by the candidates. For every ballot position, a voter may write in the name of someone who is not listed as a candidate on a separate line at the bottom of the ballot for "Write-In Votes."

In the State of Connecticut for those votes to be counted, the individual whose name is being written in, must have registered with the Secretary of State. Write-in candidates for the RTM must register with the Town Clerk no later than the last business day preceding the election.

[The League of Women Voters](#) (LWV) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that encourages the informed and active participation of all citizens in the process of government. The LWV of Darien is a local group of both men and women who strive to improve the quality of democracy by increasing voters' knowledge of candidates and issues.

Vote Tuesday, Nov. 2 — Democracy is not a spectator sport!

(*) Signifies that the candidate is an **incumbent**.

NOTE: All offices appear in the order in which they appear on the ballot.

Candidates for First Selectman

Vote for One. Term: 11/08/2021 - 11/13/2023

Questions:

1. What qualities and qualifications make you best suited for First Selectman?

2. What is at the top of your agenda and why? 250 words in total

Tara Ochman, Democratic Party

Address: 476 Mansfield Ave.

1. Darien is a premier town, yet we have unmet challenges. It is the First Selectman's responsibility to solve problems, prioritize projects and get the job done for the community. As the former Chair of the Board of Education, financial manager, and community volunteer, including six years as a Trustee of the Darien Library, I bring the necessary skills to the job: the ability to deliver results; build consensus; and bring critical projects forward, get them funded and underway, as I did with the new Ox Ridge school and the air conditioning of our schools, and to complete them, as I did with Fitch Academy. I have developed responsible budgets and effective 5-year capital plans. I will foster an environment where all residents are heard.

2. Darien is at a pivotal moment. We need new leadership and energy to advance critical projects to meet the challenges facing us right now. This means improving our infrastructure by developing an updated comprehensive plan to mitigate flooding, roadway improvements, and making our community more pedestrian and biker safe. Our town-owned properties, like Pear Tree Beach and Highland Farms, need reliable capital plans for maintenance and improvement. These plans must be developed with community input and be fiscally smart. Our local businesses are steadfast community partners and we do better by supporting, planning, and working with each other. The answer is not more taxes, but better fiscal stewardship, engaging community talent and advocating for and securing more state and federal funds.

Monica M. McNally Republican Party

Address: 71 Arrowhead Way

1. I have a deep love for this town, its people, the volunteer spirit, and the way we address issues collaboratively and openly. I have worked with Town government for eight years on the RTM including as

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Vice Moderator, Chair of Public Works, and Vice Chair of Rules. I am currently a member of the Board of Selectmen. I will use this experience, and my relationships with others in government, to address today's issues, and tomorrow's. My professional background helps me in understanding the town's finances, our financial decisions and alternatives ahead. I will strive to continue Darien's fiscal discipline as pending federal tax increases affect every member of our community. I will help navigate Darien through the 2022 State legislature session, as Hartford begins "Regional Decision Making and Tax Sharing" workshops.

2. Keeping our residents safe. Protecting Darien's autonomy and local control.

Flooding and drainage are major threats to personal safety and property. Our storm infrastructure was not designed to withstand the extreme weather events we experienced this summer, and which are likely to occur more frequently in the future. Flood mitigation calls for a multi-faceted approach which requires coordination between landowners, town services and the State government. I am committed to leaving no stone unturned in assessing solutions to improve stormwater management.

We must also manage the growth in population, traffic and demands on our infrastructure that come with new development. Darien is 98% developed and further reduction in green space and permeable surfaces also negatively impact flooding/erosion.

Christian Noe, Petitioning Candidate

242 Old Kings Hwy. South

With corruption and incompetence at an all-time high among Darien employees there has never been a better time to vote for an Independent candidate to get things done. The union's tail wagging the dog brought the 4-day work week won't go unanswered.

The state is almost 70 billion in debt with 3.5 million residents = \$20,000 each. They say, "Make the rich pay their fair share." The combined wealth of CT's billionaires couldn't pay CT's debt. 7% income tax is pushing wealthy people out, who's left to pay for these blunders. Don't forget the "Mansion Tax" and "Darien needs more affordable housing."

This is my 7th time running, you know who I am. I have warned of impending disasters and they all came true. If you want the disasters to stop, if you want corruption gone you need to vote for Chris Noe. I will not tolerate incompetence or corruption.

Get involved, ask questions.

Google: "Soundkeeper Save the Sound" then scroll to the bottom. Click "Press Releases" then scroll down to October 8th 2020. "Darien Sewage Pollution Deal." Read this and start asking questions like, 'Can I trust anyone in Darien's executive branch. How many millions of dollars were promised? What has been done to date?'

In 2004 a million-gallon sewage spill was documented to occur every time it rained by Malcolm Pirnie engineers. They advised install a larger pipe, the elected chose to ignore repairs, now we'll pay 10 times the cost.

Candidates for Board of Selectman

Vote for up to Two

11/08/2021 – 11/13/2023

Questions: 250 words in total

1. What qualities and qualifications make you best suited for Selectman?

2. What is at the top of your agenda and why?

Michael J. Burke, Democratic Party

15 Lake Drive

1. For any board to be high functioning, the members must be critical thinkers, collaborative, informed, communicative, accountable and motivated to get things done. These are qualities I possess, and have exhibited throughout my professional, and volunteer life.

My community service in Darien started when we moved here in 2008. I immediately started helping coach our twin son's youth sports teams. In 2009, I was elected to the RTM and served there until being elected to the Board of Education in 2014. In those elected roles, I examined and vetted town and school district budgets during public hearings. As a member of the BOE, I negotiated teacher contracts, chaired our policy committee and worked collaboratively with other members, administrators and parents to navigate the COVID pandemic and kept our children and staff safe. I also helped lead the effort to get important capital projects completed, including field reconstruction, cafeteria expansion and the long-stalled lights installation at the high school.

2. At the top of my agenda is enacting effective and responsible flood mitigation. As an RTM member, I approved the creation of studies that called for action. It is well past time for elements of those plans to be updated and adopted. I am ready to act. Attention is also long overdue concerning our public lands usage and we need to vastly improve community engagement.

I have a demonstrated record of effective community service. I am fully ready to serve on the Board of Selectmen.

***Sarah Neumann Democratic Party**

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94 Gardiner St.

1. I have served Darien on the Board of Selectmen for the past two years, with prior experience on the RTM and a variety of volunteer roles in Darien over the past 17 years. While on the Board of Selectmen, I have consistently collaborated across many Boards and Commissions in town to deal with a variety of issues. My vast volunteer experience has shown that I learn quickly to identify issues, and work effectively to arrive at solutions. My focus is on listening to and giving voice to all Darien residents to make the most informed decisions for our town.

Keeping our residents safe and well-informed will always be at the top of my agenda. I am currently working on the Town's pedestrian safety campaign and will be serving on the building committee for the Hindley, Royle, and Holmes schools projects that are about to begin.

2. One of my main priorities on the Board of Selectmen will be to work to find solutions for our flood and erosion issues around our town. I have been heartbroken to see the damage, both physical and emotional, that this has inflicted on so many of our residents and businesses. The town has conducted multiple studies in the past 60 years, and yet flooding is worse than ever. It is time for solutions

I remain focused on finding solutions to consistently improve Darien and look forward to serving Darien on the Board of Selectmen for another term.

Marcy A. Minnick Republican Party

417 Hoyt Street

1. As CEO of a 60-year-old manufacturing company, I understand how to look at an organization strategically and make improvements and decisions for success over the long haul. Workforce is highly valued and sought after in my industry. Because of this, I need to stay competitive in employee retention, innovative in planning for our company's future and accountable for the profit and loss of the company. These skills will allow me to make a unique contribution as a Selectman here in Darien. I am a natural problem solver and I am thoughtful when crafting solutions to complex issues. I'm a listener and I am trustworthy. Your voice will be heard, valued and respected with me as your Selectman.

2. The safety and security of Darien children and families is at the top of my agenda. This includes public safety, walkability, anti-bullying and diversity and inclusion. I want all families to feel comfortable and confident as they move through town and raise their children here. I also want our police force and emergency responders to feel valued and supported in our community. Darien residents are highly engaged, and over the past ten years I have taken the opportunity to immerse myself in this community. As both a parent and volunteer, I have heard many of your concerns. I am ready now to use my professional skills to make sure those concerns are addressed and investments are made in a thoughtful, inclusive and productive manner.

30 Crimmins Road

1. I have been a Darien elected official for thirteen years, serving on the Board of Finance since 2008 and as Chairman since 2015. In that time, I have gained a thorough understanding of Town government, built enduring relationships among elected officials and town staff, and developed a public reputation for clarity, integrity and competence.

I am a collaborative leader who works hard to ensure open dialogue, transparent debate and good humor with everyone. I strive for consensus and inclusivity, but I will ask irritating questions until I get the answers I need. I welcome hard work and dedicated service from our talented volunteers. I will always put the interests of Darien first.

2. For me, infrastructure is a top priority. We have sufficient financial resources, and debt markets are favorable, so we have the capacity to support new initiatives. Flood mitigation and remediation are top of mind, and a lot is being done already, but this is an enormously complicated problem that does not lend itself to easy, quick or inexpensive solutions.

Also on the agenda is public safety. I applaud all that our Police do to keep us all safe, and we can do more as a Town to support them, develop new solutions, and continue building public awareness and responsibility.

Finally, local decision-making is critical. Democrats in Hartford want to increase their control over our schools, beaches, homes and businesses. But government works best when it is local, and our team will strive to keep it that way.