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## Ochman Stays on Board of Ed, Board of Selectmen Now Searching for a Democrat

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After the Nov. 2 election, some political maneuvering on the Board of Education has resulted in Tara Ochman changing her mind — she'll stay another year to finish her term on the school board.

On the Board of Selectmen, new members are in place except for Michael Burke, a Democratic candidate who won't be taking his seat. The board is looking for another Democrat to replace him.

Newly elected First Selectman Monica McNally issued a news release Thursday telling town residents that the board is searching for a Democrat to fill the vacant fifth seat on the board.

Current members of the board, including McNally, are her fellow Republicans, Marcy Minnick and Jon Zagrodzky, and Sarah Neumann, a Democrat. Burke had run for the office and was among the five top candidates (as least as of when Ochman decided not to take a seat on that board) but didn't take his seat.

### **Maneuvering on the Board of Education**

Tara Ochman had originally announced after the election that she would [neither continue sitting on](#) the Board of Education nor take the seat on the Board of Selectman that she was entitled to by virtue of the votes she received. (Those votes weren't enough to win First Selectman, but under town election rules, they get counted alongside other candidates for selectman.)

The Darien Democratic Town Committee endorsed Stacey Tie, who had run (with Julie Best) for open seats on the Board of Education. Republicans David Brown and Tara Wurm took two of the three open seats in the election, and Best won the third. Tie, in fourth place, had lost out.

The Democratic Town Committee had met Saturday to endorse Tie for the position that was about to become vacant, Democratic Town Chairman David Bayne wrote in a letter Sunday to David Dineen, chairman of the Board of Education.

"As a candidate in last week's election, Ms. Tie demonstrated that thousands of Darien voters wish for her to serve on the Board of Education," Bayne wrote. "We, therefore, request that the Board of Education honor the wishes of those voters and choose Ms. Tie to fill out the remainder of Ms. Ochman's term." [Tie announced](#) that she was willing to serve out the term.

When Ochman said she would leave the Board of Education, the decision on who her replacement would be fell to that board, which had to choose a Democrat — but with a majority of Republicans potentially rejecting the request for Tie.

Late Monday afternoon, Ochman announced on Facebook that she was changing her mind and would keep her seat on the board:

"I understand that this is a departure from my announcement last week to resign from serving in town government, unfortunately politics has gotten in the way of governing.

"It has been an honor to serve on the Board of Education for the past five years, and today I am announcing that I will continue my service to the children and residents of Darien as a member of the Darien Board of Education.

"We learned this weekend, that there have been discussions within the Board of Education that it may break with tradition and reject the DTC's nomination of Stacey Tie for the BOE, should I have carried through

with my decision to vacate my seat.

"As you know Stacey was a candidate for the BOE in last week's election and earned almost 3,000 votes. She is well-qualified to serve on the Darien BOE and would be a welcome new voice for and of the community.

"Darien needs to get back to work, to the business of governing and not politics. I look forward to proudly representing the needs our children and community on the the Board of Education."

**McNally's Announcement on the Search for a Fifth Selectman**

Here's [the full text](#) of McNally's announcement:

There is currently a vacancy on the Darien Board of Selectmen that must be filled by a registered Democrat. The duly elected current Board of Selectmen has the responsibility of selecting the individual to fill this vacancy.

Recognizing this responsibility, the Board welcomes anyone interested in serving the community as a Selectman to complete the Common Application found on the Town of Darien website at [www.darienct.gov/volunteer](http://www.darienct.gov/volunteer) and send it directly to [loleary@darienct.gov](mailto:loleary@darienct.gov). Interviews will be held virtually next week.

Today is Veterans' Day. As we reflect on the patriotism of the men and women who served, and are serving, in the armed forces, please take a moment to consider this opportunity to serve your own community. Thank you.

Monica McNally

First Selectman, Town of Darien