

Statement of Candidacy for the Selectboard

Thomas R. Shemanske

My wife and I moved to Grantham at the very end of 2017, and after forty years in the Math Department at Dartmouth, I retired from my position as a faculty member at the end of June 2021. Slightly before my retirement, I was appointed as a member of the Zoning Board and in 2022 became the chair of that board. In the same year I was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Trustees of the Trust Funds and have continued as a board member filling different roles each year as file keeper, bookkeeper, and chair.

As part of the Zoning Board, I have grown to understand a broad range of land use issues, and being a quasi-judicial board, we do our best to balance the purpose and technicalities of the local ordinances with the inevitable exceptions to any rule ever proposed. Residents come to the ZBA for permission to do something that is not generally allowed (a variance) or something that requires special conditions to be satisfied (special exception). When the board became swamped with applications involving residential solar installations or activities near protected bodies of water (Anderson, Eastman, Stocker Ponds, the Sugar River, etc.), we made proposals to change the Zoning ordinance to reflect new realities.

As trustees of the Town's trust funds, we are the gate keepers making sure funds created and funded by the voters are used as intended. As you saw with a plethora of warrant articles at last year's Town meeting, we have taken time to clarify the wording that defines the use of various trust funds to allow more transparent access.

I have attended Selectboard meetings for 6-9 months and am slowly gaining perspective of the scope of that board; they do a lot! I have attended all the budget work sessions and hearings and have some ideas of how the budget process might be better organized. We are fortunate to have hired an extremely capable Town Administrator, Emily Owens, however the timing of the retirement of our former administrator, just two weeks before the close of the fiscal year, left our new administrator scrambling to assemble audit documents for a year of activities over which she had no oversight, and then drop immediately into budget season for the upcoming fiscal year. I see the budget process evolving, and I will do whatever I can to help that along.

As with any board or committee, new members bring new ideas and energies to help bring those ideas to fruition. They also bring with them the constant question, "Why do we do it that way?" New members help the Town's policies evolve, and with new Master Plan results, I am sure there will be many interesting discussions. I am confident I can help the town as a Selectboard member.