



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Geoffrey N Epstein

Office Sought: Mayor of Framingham

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

- a. Education
- b. Environment
- c. Infrastructure

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I have 10 years of experience as an elected official in two different cities and have a breadth of city municipal experience unmatched by any current elected official in Framingham, including the Mayor. Here is my record:

ELECTED OFFICE SERVICE

- Framingham School Committee & Chair Finance Committee 2018-2021
- Newton School Committee 2008-2013

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RECORD

- When Framingham transitioned from a town to a city, ensured that the divisiveness of the prior School Committee was replaced by a cordial team approach, with Adam Freudberg as Chair.
- Initiated the annual practice of a joint meeting between the School Committee and City Council Finance Subcommittees for an annual budget preview and discussion.

- Ensured the Framingham School Committee student representative was properly elected following state law MGL 71 38M, not appointed as in prior years.
- Drove the effort which resulted in Lincoln Lynch being hired as Executive Director of Finance & Operations.
- As Chair of the Finance & Operations Subcommittee reformed the budget process, including the budget book, and wrote the policy updates which institutionalized the changes: DB & DI
- Created the Climate Change, Environment & Sustainability Subcommittee, chaired it for 2 years and wrote the first policy of any School Committee in the state on that topic after conducting an 18 month collaborative process, including students.
- Proposed the solar canopy at Brophy Elementary School
- Worked collaboratively with fellow members to get air-conditioning finally
- completed for the high school, so that students and teachers would not roast at 95 degrees on hot days in June and September, as they had for 20 years.
- Ran the Fuller Debt Exclusion flyer effort, designing and printing 10,000 flyers and running a 20 person team, which dropped them across Framingham, and helped get the 86% YES vote.

THE FRAMINGHAM OBSERVER

- More than 170 articles on all aspects of Framingham government published in the last 2 ½ years:
<https://framinghamobserver.substack.com/>

3. **What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to adopt locally?**

Charter support for neighborhood area councils as in Newton.

(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

1. **Given state law, municipalities in Massachusetts are limited in their taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue to support essential city services?**

Framingham has more than \$40 million in excess capacity which can be tapped to raise revenue with City Council approval and based on a compelling

plan. The pension liability payoff date can be moved out from 2030 to 2040 to free up \$10 million/year.

2. **What are your top priorities for ensuring that all students in your city can receive a high-quality public education?**

Return the \$18 million the Mayor took from local funding of the schools over 4 years and ensure that the local contribution to the schools budget keeps pace with inflation. That is the money side. On the educational action side:

- a. Pre-K for all 4-year-olds
- b. 20% pay increase for classroom aides to bring pay to market and solve the shortage of quality aides
- c. On time school buses

3. **What can your city do to help protect immigrant communities under attack from ICE and ensure genuine community safety?**

Never let ICE in the schools. Prevent local police being used as ICE enforcement agents. Work to prevent wearing of masks by any law enforcement personnel of any kind. Argue with every means at my disposal to prevent locals being threatened or terrorized. Team up with Mayors across Massachusetts to present a common front.

4. **What are your top three policy priorities for making your city climate-resilient, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?**

Solar panels on every city building and in every city parking lot. 8,000 trees planted on the southside to bring environmental justice to that community, lowering the temperature by 10 degrees in summer. Transition all city buildings and vehicles away from fossil fuels.

5. **What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of city residents to safely get around by walking, biking, or public transit?**

Radically improve the bus system and initiate an express bus to downtown from both Framingham I-90 access points. Lobby for the 3rd rate Commuter Rail to be electrified and separated from the road system, so high speed trains can run every 5-10 minutes. The current rail system is a rural railroad in an urban setting. With high speed, electrified rail, areas further from the city can be developed and housing built at much lower cost than in already developed

areas. I'd like to see a rail system as good as that in Sydney, Australia. Add a bike sharing program like Bluebikes to the city.

6. **What policies will you advocate for to ensure that your city can be a place that is affordable for residents to live at any stage of life?**

Ensure that programs like the property tax deferral program for seniors have income limits which are adjusted for inflation. The current \$60,000 limit needs to go to \$72,000 like Boston. Further, the practice of trying to fund retiring the \$200 million backlog of water & sewer work using water & sewer fee rate hikes has to stop. Those fees are not tax deductible and are punishing residents on fixed incomes. Other funding schemes need to be found, including the one mentioned earlier re extending the pension liability payoff date to 2040.

7. **[If relevant] How would you assess your city's MBTA Communities Act rezoning efforts so far?**

The worst in the state. See: [How Framingham's MBTA Communities Act Response Ran Off the Rails](#)

8. **What strategies would you employ to resist federal overreach from the Trump Administration while protecting critical services and funding for residents?**

Band together with other Mayors and the Governor to fashion the best strategy. We have to hang together or we will hang separately.

9. **How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?**

Exactly as I have in my Substack newsletter: The Framingham Observer, only now with all of the information in the city easily accessible and communicated to the community, at least once a week in a substantive Mayoral newsletter.

(C) **Yes/No Policy Questions**

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES**
2. Do you support the creation of an unarmed, community-based emergency response program, separate from the Police Department, to respond to mental and behavioral health crises? **YES**

3. If your community has not already, do you support adopting the new specialized stretch code, which would require new construction and major renovations to be built to a very high-efficiency standard with all-electric (as opposed to fossil fuel) heating and cooling systems? **YES**
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES**
6. Would you support a home rule petition to establish a small transfer fee on high-end real estate transactions to create dedicated funding for affordable housing production and preservation? **YES - We have the CPA in place**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **NO - That is very problematic as has been proven in the past and could easily diminish the supply of affordable housing. High speed rail and access to low cost housing further out is the answer.**
8. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES**

(D) Additional Comments

(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)

Take a look at the solutions proposed on my campaign website at:
<https://www.geoffepsteinformayor.com/priorities>