



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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Office Sought: Beverly Councilor at Large

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

- **Education:** Beverly is only as good as its public schools and leveraging my role as a City Councilor to improve our system is something I am very committed to.

As a City Councilor, I'll push for responsible, sustainable school funding that matches the needs of our students and staff. That starts with a more transparent and accountable budget process, including real clarity around staffing levels and programming, particularly as it relates to fulfilling our responsibilities as a community in providing exceptional services to students with special needs. This is about what happens in our classrooms everyday and is an economic development issue – better schools lead to stable workforces, which leads to greater business investment in the community. Helping folks understand that we all benefit from excellent public schools is paramount.

- **Housing & Affordability:** Growing up, my family was housing insecure. I understand that we need to find ways to expand rent support for working-class families, including those of educators, service workers, and first-responders, and increase pathways to homeownership. I'll also work to ensure that vulnerable populations, including seniors on fixed-incomes, have increased options so that they can afford to remain in their homes or downsize.

- **Transparency & Accountability:** I'll work to formalize Beverly's community engagement standards so that residents of all backgrounds can adequately participate in our shared civic space. This includes adopting accessibility and equity standards in how we conduct city business. I will also meet people where they are and will work to be available in the spaces people already occupy, rather than relying on the public to come to me. Folks can always call: 781-346-8416.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

- I believe the totality of my life and professional experiences have primed me well for a role in elected office, especially one that the public relies on to be tactile and willing to have difficult conversations as best to move our forward together. I have spent my entire life dedicated to meeting people where they are; in an age where there is an elevated risk of pervasive cynicism hollowing out our civic spaces at every level, we need folks who have done the work of democracy to step up and remind our neighbors that we *can do this* and that we can do it together. I believe I'm well-positioned to contribute to that effort.

I grew up in Lynn. My parents were teenagers when I was born, and much of my early life was spent on the move. We spent a lot of our early childhood scraping by, depending on public services, and relying on the support of those around us. My mom, especially, worked long hours in thankless jobs to make sure my sisters and I had what we needed. But I learned early on that our future wouldn't be shaped by just one person's effort. In addition to my mom, it was the work of many, including extended family, neighbors, teachers, community organizers, and coaches, among others, that made the difference.

My path into politics began very early. At 15, I was volunteering on local campaigns through the Lynn Democratic City Committee (and the legendary Agnes Ricko), which led to an internship at the State House by 17. I went on to work for three Members of Congress, two Governors, and a number of state and local officials. I've managed or staffed campaigns here in Massachusetts and across New England, and while living in London, I earned graduate degrees from King's College London (MA) and Goldsmiths, University of London (PhD). During that time, I also worked with an African-based charity supporting orphaned children and widows and volunteered with my local branch the UK Labour Party. In short, I never stopped working on behalf of the marginalized.

Professionally, I've worked on a wide range of issues: from foreign policy during the early days of the war in Ukraine, to veterans' services, small business outreach, and community development projects focused on building trust and collaboration before the first shovel hits the ground. That commitment to open, inclusive public service is what I hope to bring to the City Council.

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

- There is no shortage of smart, forward-thinking policies being enacted by municipalities around the country (and indeed, the globe). One I believe we can immediately get a jump on here in Beverly is improving and enshrining our community engagement standards. Too often, Beverly asks its residents to come to government rather than government going to residents and, too often, government asks residents to come to it with very little notice. We also know that expecting certain communities to come to government buildings like City Hall is a more intimidating ask than is often realized.

It is my belief that by embracing a more equitable, transparent, and accessible form of engagement, the city can solve big issues and more residents can pull up a seat at the proverbial table. While area communities like Boston and Brookline have adopted strong standards, I'd also look beyond the Commonwealth's borders to the example recently set by Milwaukee County, WI in how it conducts and measures community engagement. Through a process that includes Informing, Consulting, Involving, Collaborating, and Sharing Leadership, we can build trust and help residents of all needs and backgrounds wrap their arms around what is happening in their city. I would also advocate for a systemic evaluation process which, like Milwaukee County, asks how much engagement around a specific project and/or initiative did we do, how well did we do it, and is anyone better off because of the work we did. Though the city does not have the resources of a Boston, Brookline, or Milwaukee County, I would look forward to working with key stakeholders to author a version of similar initiatives tailor made to the needs of Beverly.

(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?

- Investigating expanded Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements with large non-profit institutions operating in Beverly. While some may presuppose that Beverly's property tax base must be enormously robust given the amount of beautiful, waterfront property, much of that real estate is owned by area universities, for example. Pursuing agreements with such institutions to help ease the burden on the city and its more vulnerable residents is a worthwhile endeavor.
- Another opportunity is the use of real estate transfer fees on large-scale developments, which would generate resources from major projects without burdening everyday homeowners. Beverly has attracted significant development in recent years, with some large properties already changing ownership. We should investigate the possibility of working with the Commonwealth on this.
- Beverly has technically banned short-term rentals of private properties through services like AirBnb and Vrbo, but is investigating whether an adjustment to regulations is warranted given that enforcement has been highly lax (just check those apps for yourself!). Beverly should either enforce the regulation (given housing scarcity and cost in "America's hottest zip code," this is my preference) or re-write the regulation to institute maximum taxation.

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

- In the wake of the longest teacher's strike in the Commonwealth's history, our community is hungry for solutions as it relates to Beverly's public schools. My plan includes:
 - o Advocating for honest and comprehensive budget reporting, including full staffing breakdowns and comparative spending data. Allowing for some engagement and interfacing with the budget prior to the "cake being baked" is vital.
 - o Supporting the exploration of PILOT arrangements where possible and engaging with the community on funding options including real estate transfer fees to finally close service gaps and to ensure we do not lose any additional staff.
 - o Pressuring the city's executive office to prioritize public education in its capital and operating budgets.

- o Restoring trust by proactively engaging the community in the budget and planning process. As the city considers the necessity of a Prop 2 ½ override, for example, I would work tirelessly to ensure that the conversation we have as neighbors is robust and in line with community engagement standards. How else can we know how best to proceed? As part of this process, I will work to ensure that our city sees an investment in our public schools as one that bolsters our long term economic development viability. The answer to the question a business that wants to invest in Beverly will inevitably ask – “how are the schools?” – should be, for the sake of our ability to attract consistent revenues to fund crucial city services, “excellent.” We need to better understand that as a community and view the issue of school funding as a more holistic one that impacts all residents.

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

- I will consistently advocate that our local resources, including the Beverly Police Department, will not be used to investigate or enforce federal civil immigration issues. The role of our police is to protect and serve our community, not act as an arm of ICE or any other federal agency. We must commit ourselves to ensuring that Beverly remains a welcoming city where a person’s immigration status is never questioned by city staff in any capacity. Protecting immigrant communities from unwarranted scrutiny builds trust, strengthens safety, improves our civic space, and reflects the values we want our city to stand for. This issue is personal to me. My wife recently immigrated to the U.S. – we know the costs, the stress, and the hurdles that our federal bureaucracy often puts in the way of those seeking to make our country home. Beverly should resist contributing to that problem.

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?

- Beverly has been a leader on these issues in recent years, and that is to be commended. However, opportunities remain. I: I’ve worked directly with environmental justice communities all around the Commonwealth and understand that we must be conscientious

about how we invest in our natural infrastructure to include vulnerable neighborhoods. We must expand on previous efforts to strategically plant trees and other elements to reduce urban heat islands as Beverly continues to develop. This conversation should center on areas like Ward 2 and 3, which are denser and feature more diverse housing; 2: Though the city has relatively strong stormwater provisions and benefits from the advocacy of on-the-ground orgs like Green Beverly, we should think about expanding rain gardens in appropriate areas as best to increase flood resiliency; 3: Expand opportunities to work with area composting businesses (already a good partnership) and finding innovative ways for the city to lead on resource re-use, including partnering with local bodies like the Waste Reduction Committee on the expansion of previously successful Fixit clinics to extend the life of materials.

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?

- Expanding the use of walk audits and adopting proven standards like Vision Zero goals (including those currently being developed by orgs like MAPC) will help cut down on incidents and make our streets safer. While Beverly residents consider the city to be one made up of distinct neighborhoods with different needs, we all enjoy certain benefits that could help reduce car dependence. We are fortunate to have a considerable number of Commuter Rail stops as well as grant-funded options such as the Salem Skipper and CATA bus service. We should work with state and regional leaders for more consistent funding of Cape Ann Transit Authority routes through Beverly, while also encouraging multimodal options that bring more people into our downtown. The city should compel any future developments to include strong cycling infrastructure, and when allocating city funds, we should prioritize safety and accessibility for all users. Finally, the city should also partner with local organizations like the Greater Beverly Chamber and Beverly Main Streets to attract businesses to hubs like the downtown that make it easier for area residents to forgo car trips – notably, a downtown grocery store would be a tremendous addition.

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?

- We have to get creative in how we address affordability issues as there is no silver bullet – an all of the above approach that mines sound policy and tailors it to Beverly’s needs is vital. Beverly, like other communities, needs more flexibility to address rising rents, so residents aren’t priced out of their own community – we should be advocating for practical solutions from Beacon Hill from our bully pulpit. At the same time, we should make it easier for seniors/empty nesters who want to downsize to access Community Preservation Act funds to help create affordable accessory dwelling units without burdensome zoning restrictions, such as parking minimums. And finally, real estate transfer fee policy could help generate needed funding for, among other things, the construction of additional affordable housing units.

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

- Beverly has welcomed more new housing development than many of our peer communities. For example, adjacent to Beverly Depot, the area on and around Rantoul Street has been transformed over the last decade from an economic backwater into a hub of residential and commercial activity. That said, Massachusetts is not building housing fast enough, and the housing that is built is often cost-prohibitive, frustrating many residents. While Beverly does have room and should pursue additional development in the future, our focus must be on attracting genuinely affordable options. That means local government being willing to have hard conversations through a robust community engagement process, so residents feel heard and the growth we pursue strengthens Beverly for everyone.

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

- Locally, as needed and as possible, we should move to codify protections for vulnerable communities in our schools and city buildings so that Beverly remains a welcoming and safe community no matter what happens in Washington. Critically, we have to plan responsibly for potential federal funding cuts (leading to potential state funding cuts) by turning over every leaf for alternatives. And, as previously stated, we must not commit local resources to directives

from Washington we know to be anti-American and/or unconstitutional. Fortunately, I believe a majority of Beverly's citizens would concur.

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

- Increasing transparency is my first order of business. I am very excited to formalize our community engagement process and, in doing so, would live my values by making myself available in a number of different ways. For example, though I would hold office hours or communicate via a website/newsletter, I would also go out of my way to put myself in spaces and communities – particularly those not particularly prone to interacting with government – already go/access. Youth sports, farmers markets, civic association meetings, cultural events, etc. – these are places we should be not just as attendees, but in an official capacity ready to meaningfully capture data or present information on projects, strategic planning, budgeting, and other constituent services issues. We have to wrap our arms around the fact that the average resident is not going to go out of their way to secure childcare, switch work shifts, or otherwise overcome challenges to get to a City Hall meeting. That doesn't mean they should forfeit their right to express an opinion. I've already launched a survey for our campaign designed to serve as an introductory version of how I hope to effectively leverage both in-person opportunities and digital tools to communicate with residents. Folks, I cannot stress enough how excited I am to make Beverly a regional leader in how it interacts with residents.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES/ NO**
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/ NO**
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/ NO** (note: Beverly has recently done this).

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**
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 / NO**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES / NO**
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 / NO**

(D) Additional Comments

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

- I appreciate the opportunity to send this your way – thank you.