

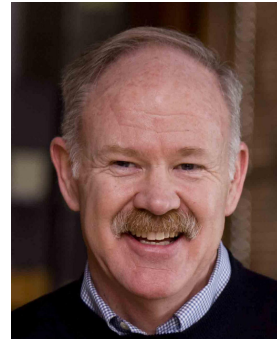
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATES GUIDE

2008

T. Kirk Ware – Board of Selectmen

Background and qualifications:

Serving on various town Committees over the last fifteen years has brought me into contact with many dedicated volunteers and town employees and given me insight into Westford's finances. In addition, my service on the Permanent School Building Committee, School Site Selection Committee, East Boston Camps Master Plan Committee and Land Use Priorities Committee has provided the opportunity to learn about our town buildings, our open space needs and the many creative ways we can manage our property and preserve open space while minimizing costs to the taxpayer.



My professional and legal experience have also equipped me in a unique way to understand and address a number of problems our community faces, including the many legal issues that we deal with on a daily basis. My three children's positive experiences and complete preparation for challenging colleges has given me a first hand appreciation of our need to maintain a first rate school system. The personal challenges I have faced in caring for my aging and ailing parents allow me to relate to the issues our seniors and their families encounter. My volunteer work coaching and teaching swimming has given me insight into the important work of our Recreation Department.

1. Why did you choose to run for Board of Selectmen?

I've served on Committees tasked with building schools, preserving open space, and working with town departments to recommend potential efficiencies. This has taught me considerable respect for volunteers and the value of their dedication and insight in solving problems. We must bring back respect for this vital work.

Several months ago I discovered a 1995 study listing the major capital projects to be addressed in Westford. By working together we have accomplished nearly all projects on this lengthy list. That did not just happen; it took planning. We must bring back long range, across the board planning and decision making.

In difficult financial times it takes insight, experience and the ability to work together to stretch our tax dollars. My life has been spent running a number of businesses and orchestrating complex projects, working with teams of dedicated professionals and volunteers, making decisions, balancing budgets and spending money carefully.

I am running for a seat on the Board of Selectmen so that I can apply the expertise I have acquired on town Committees, use my legal background and business acumen and draw on my personal experiences and love for the community to serve the people of Westford.

2. In light of the recent disastrous house fires, given the geographical size of Westford, and knowing insurance rates are affected by response times, how would you propose funding staffing for the Roger's fire station?

Our fire department is understaffed. Acton, similar in population and 20 square miles, has 40 firemen and three fire stations compared to our 30 firemen and two stations for 31 square miles. This has become a public safety issue.

Congratulations to our Fire Department for obtaining a grant covering 25% of the cost of staffing the Rogers Station. The fiscally responsible way to fund the difference is by an override this year. Our Finance Director and Fire Chief both support this method. It maintains our Reserves, informs the public of the true cost of staffing and puts the decision where it belongs - in the voters' hands. It complies with our Long Term Fiscal Policy by not incurring multiyear spending commitments without identifying funding sources.

The alternative requires us to immediately draw down Reserves below the recommended minimum. Next year, we would either "find" a new funding source, need a "mandatory" override, force all departments to compete for less available funds in the budget or have to lay off new firefighters and bear a penalty under the grant. I believe the people of Westford recognize the need to staff the Rogers Fire Station and will support an override this year.