

BSCSD School Board Candidates Make Their Case

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Ballston Spa Central School District Board of Education candidates Katie Thimineur, Susan Filburn and Dottie Sellers participate in a “meet the candidates” discussion Tuesday, May 10, 2016, at the high school library.

BALLSTON SPA — The three candidates for the Ballston Spa Central School District Board of Education made their case for being elected, praising the work of the school district and discussing how they would serve as a bridge between the administration and the public.

Candidates Susan Filburn, Dottie Sellers and Katie Thimineur participated in a “meet the candidates” discussion at the high school library. The three women are running for two seats on the board, with the winners each serving three-year terms. Filburn is the lone incumbent, while Sellers was appointed to fill a vacancy in March, and Thimineur is seeking her first term on the board.

The trio fielded questions from students in the Participation in Government classes, including discussions on district spending, the role of a board member and demographic shifts in the community. The election will be 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, 2016. It coincides with the 2016-2017 school budget vote, with Malta residents voting at the Malta Town Hall and all others voting at the Ballston Spa High School.

Thimineur, a massage therapist and former child care provider, is a parent of two students in the district and a 26-year resident. She acknowledged that budgeting is not her strong suit but advocated for more local control over the education process and said she became involved in local schools more than four years ago after noticing what she called “changes and shifts in the curriculum.”

“Parents and educators should make the decisions that affect our children’s education,” she said. “The board sets tone for the school system and is responsible for being a bridge between educational professionals and the community.”

Filburn, a 15-year resident and parent of a seventh-grader, has been on the board for the past three years. She cited her budget experience as a public administrator in the state Division of Budgets and noted her eight years in the U.S. Army as part of her belief in being part of a greater organization. The board is the best place for her to serve the community, she said.

“I’d like to be part of the positive change that I think is going on in Ballston Spa,” Filburn said.

Sellers moved here in 2009 after retiring from the Army. Her daughter graduated from the high school last year and said Ballston Spa is the first community that her family has been able to truly be involved in.

In addition to her brief tenure on the board, she also has been a part of the Ballston Spa Education Foundation and has spent the past eight years working with the National Guard developing curriculum and working on budgets.

“The community has a vital role in the education and safety of our children here in the district, and if we’re going to have that educational and safety net for our children, I think we need to be involved in the community,” Sellers said.

In responding to the students’ questions, there was largely consensus from the candidates that the district has succeeded in providing ample extracurricular activities, improved the facilities and producing a budget to meet students’ and educators’ needs.

They noted that the district has been fortunate to have the financial resources to fund its various programs and upgrades, if a scenario arose where they had to look at budget cuts their focus would be on looking at areas that would be least detrimental to the students.

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