

Pat Rist

1. What do you think the schools are doing right to prepare students for a successful future? Likewise, what do you think could be improved upon and how would you make that happen? (3-minute response)

*A. There is the business advisory council, made up of businesses from the community, that discuss preparing students for the future. Seek out more internships in the community. The Pathways Program allows the students, entering as freshmen, to chart out a path such as nursing or the arts or finance and take the appropriate classes. There are opportunities to intern locally learning leadership skills. Currently, the school wants to add manufacturing and is seeking seed money. Not being a board member I know I can still make recommendations and seek out other community opportunities for the students.*

2. How will you ensure schools cultivate engaged and informed citizens, ready to work together across difference and actively participate in our democracy? (2-minute response)

*A. See the answer to no. 9*

3. How would you build consensus and support in the community around the work of the school district? (2-minute response)

*A. Ms. O' Brien, Board Chair, proposed an Ad- Hoc Steering Committee to determine the best ways to engage the broader community and student groups. Ms. O' Brien will chair the committee and asked for Board members who are interested in serving on the committee.*

4. If you were to send a newsletter to every Bethel household, around what three issues would you focus your update? (30-second response)

In order to engage everyone

*A. I would:*

*Discuss Town Issues*

*Provide School updates*

*Indicate how to communicate with the town easier either on line or by telephone and provide links and numbers.*

5. What are your qualifications for running for First Selectman? (30-second response) *35-year Bethel resident – BS/Mgmt and MBA/Marketing – retired after 15 years with Oracle as an Operations Manager, Oracle University; Siebel Systems, Operations Mgr; MOHR Development, consultant to the Financial Services Industry, Director of Client Services; (MOHR to Siebel to Oracle all acquisitions and I moved with them); 18 years with Xerox Learning Systems.- 25-year President Bethel Historical Society – 24 years working with Bethel 2<sup>nd</sup> graders as their Bethel History instructor for a ½ day, now working with Bethel 3<sup>rd</sup> graders running classes in the one-room school as they would have in 1867; Member Board of Directors Bethel Chamber of Commerce running town-wide events.*

6. Do you like the non-binding "Too High/Too Low" questions included in our referendum ballot? Why or why not? (1-minute response)

**A.** No, I don't as it does not give the voter an opportunity to indicate WHY TOO HIGH or WHY TOO LOW. I think it is a useless question.

7. How would you balance having good schools with affordability? (2-minute response)

**A.** *Everything has a budget so it is important for the town to increase revenue through smart development – commercial and industrial. We also have to go after a greater share of ECS. For residential we need more affordable housing but not 8-30g and through our TOD (downtown) we have required that 20% of TOD housing is classified as affordable. Revenue has to exceed expenses.*

8. How would you work within the community to get more people, including those Bethel households without school-aged children, involved and supportive of issues facing our schools? (2-minute response)

**A.** *The Board Chairman has suggested an Ad Hoc Committee to find answers to this question. I have no children in the school system but I've worked with the schools for 24 years. This may require non-traditional tools such as a come and meet Dr Carver for a Q&A session once a quarter, a newsletter out to the entire community even if no children are in the school system, create an outreach group as political parties do, invite community members to be part of an advisory committee. Reach out to churches, parks and rec and parents. Don't just rely on social media.*

9. What role, if any, do you think students should have in the political process? (1-minute response)

**A.** *I believe politics should be brought into the classroom to start the students along the road of their involvement. This is a great opportunity for students to come together, learn how to discuss their political views and possible differences, without attacking each other. It provides opportunities to have meaningful conversations with parents/friends about their political feelings. They will learn that often times conflict is normal but it does not have to turn to nastiness. They will learn to not accept political comments at face value but look beneath the surface for the truth and hopefully avoid social media as a way to attack. They will understand government and the importance of voting.*

10. Looking forward, what do you think are the biggest issues on the horizon over the next 5 to 10 years and what would you do to address them? (2-minute response)

**A.** *I don't think the social, emotional well-being and behavior of students will diminish and will require even more from teachers and professionals. There will be a huge technology shift that schools must keep up with. Students will see artificial intelligence now managing jobs once held by people and the schools must prepare them for this; there will be jobs but they will be very very different. More state mandates*

*will be heaped on all school districts with no funding to support them; talk to your legislators, based on forecasts there will be an increase in purchased services and supplies (hopefully with consortium purchases the dollar numbers will decrease) there will be an increase in the cost of benefits including insurance, pensions etc. We need to maximize the resources that we have.*

11. With increasing school enrollments, what additional measures beyond current practices would you implement to validate residency requirements? (1-minute response)

*A. I think the schools now are doing all the right things in that they have identified students not from Bethel. It is unfortunate they have to hire an independent investigator but that seems to be a successful way to manage this.*

12. As more families move into our great town we are facing two significant challenges: 1) larger class sizes 2) increased expenses for support services needed for our growing ESL and special needs populations. Supporting this growth adequately (including hiring the needed teachers & support staff) can only be accomplished with an increased budget. Will you support this need this spring when budget season comes along? (2- minute response)

*A. Yes, I will support the budget. I make a point of attending every budget meeting to fully understand why increases are needed. In many cases we will have no choice as the state mandates things such as EL teachers based on the population. We have to serve our population and maximize our resources. Again, we have to continually look at our needs.*