

2022 Board of Health Candidates

One to be elected for three years: Candidates Ruth Trimarchi and Jennifer Infurna

One to be elected for one year: Candidates Lauren Costello and Gregory Sawicki

Ruth Trimarchi

Precinct 5

ruthtri@gmail.com

Community Activities

Member of Town Meeting; Climate Action Advisory Committee; League of Women Voters; Winchester Trails; Winchester Home and Garden Club; Winchester Community Gardens; Trees Sub-Committee of the Planning Board and Conservation Commission; former Cultural Council member. I am a very active participant in our community and truly loved the four years I worked as the Manager of Flower Operations at Wright-Locke Farm, which further extended my community involvement as I worked with hundreds of volunteers, staff, customers and business owners.

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Board of Health?

I have a strong background in science, science education, knowledge of how local government works and deep involvement and love of Winchester. I have a Bachelor's in science, a Master's in education, and I completed three years of graduate work on a PhD in Molecular Genetics, before starting our family and moving to other professional work. I've been a public High School Science Teacher, a Community College Adjunct Professor, and a hands-on Laboratory Researcher at Harvard University, the University of Ghent, Belgium, and in the industrial sector. I've also conducted research in Social Science at the Heller School of Public Policy and Management at Brandeis. I have multiple publications in peer-reviewed science and science education journals which are available on my Linked-In profile.

I have many years of local community service in Winchester and am known for thoughtful, collaborative leadership. I led three Town-appointed Committees, bringing 26 people together to develop the leading document that now guides Winchester's climate work. This document, the Winchester 2020 Climate Action Plan, was recently cited by Moody's as a positive factor in maintaining Winchester's Aaa Bond Rating.

As a leader in climate change in Winchester, I assisted Town Staff in writing over \$350,000 in climate grants. To date Winchester has received almost \$250,000 of these. This skill will be helpful on the BOH as we look to health/climate grants to support the Board's work. I head up the Resiliency Working Group of the Climate Action Advisory Committee and worked with Winchester's Fire Chief and Health Director to develop a Heat Statement which was unanimously voted in by the Select Board and now guides Winchester's preparation for high-heat days. As a member of the Trees Sub-Committee, I am currently collaborating to develop a public educational Trees Forum. In 2021, I mentored and oversaw the work of a CAAC Intern completing his Masters in Public Health with a focus on environmental issues. I've led the climate team in bringing 17 climate events to Winchester, including Katie Theoharides the MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Jonathan Buonocore a Health and Climate Scientist at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health.

I have a strong local history of actively working on fairness issues, leading a team of thirty people to change the name of the Board of Selectmen to the Select Board; and producing an equity chart to parallel each recommended action in the Climate Action Plan.

What are the primary responsibilities of the Winchester Board of Health?

The authority of the Winchester Board of Health comes from Massachusetts General Law and our local Town Charter which charges our BOH with protecting “the environment and public health” of Winchester. This is a broad charge and includes a long list of responsibilities. Primary responsibilities are to:

1. Establish *local* policies regarding all aspects of protecting the environment and health, such as mandates governing actions during health crises; emergency preparedness; mental health support for all age groups; tobacco and alcohol use; and food safety
2. Oversee health violations and work with violators to ensure compliance
3. Work closely with the Health Dept to impose fines for noncompliance with safety inspections or permit violations; and to ensure alignment with all state policies and regulations
4. Work closely with Town Staff, Schools, Boards and Committees, Winchester Hospital, businesses and the public to listen to concerns and work together to find solutions and to revisit those solutions when events change
5. Communicate regularly and effectively with all sectors of the Winchester community - health, government, businesses, schools, the public - to constantly improve messaging, education and to continuously find new ways to build a healthy community together

What current Winchester public health issues do you think are most important?

1. The Covid19 Pandemic –
We are all very pleased that all key Covid metrics are down and are continuing to decline. The right time to lift the mask mandate has arrived. And now that the mask mandate has been lifted, it is important to recognize that the isolation of this pandemic and the lengthy lockdown have had significant impacts on mental health and social/emotional/learning concerns for our youth and for all ages. It is time to pull together as a community and turn our attention to opening up.

As a member of the Board of Health I will promote up-to-date vaccinations for all eligible age groups; support our vaccination and testing clinics; and advocate for increased mental health services. I will also ask the Board to consider recommending long-range infrastructure improvements such as more permanent improved ventilation systems in municipal buildings and additional safe outdoor recreational options.

2. Mental Health and Wellness –
I was one of the participants in the Winchester Hospital Community Health Listening Session in February 2022 to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, and what we learned from that Assessment is consistent with the August 2021 Winchester Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Both assessments revealed that mental health issues are an ongoing concern for the Winchester community, along with other social concerns such as bullying, equity concerns and access to health care, in particular access to more mental health care providers. The Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community has been working for years to provide useful mental health and wellness resources through several granting agencies. Now due to the pandemic, there is an even greater demand.

As a member of the BOH I will advocate for increased mental health and wellness services and will work to continuously keep our community informed of available resources.

3. Environmental Issues –

These include protecting our air and water; building community resilience for the health impacts of high heat, ticks, mosquitoes, rats, and extreme storms due to climate change; protecting our open spaces including recreational parks, Town forest, rivers and ponds; enhancing our tree canopy; educating residents regarding radon, which is the #2 cause of lung cancer after combustible smoking, and promoting radon assessment and remediation; and supporting new emergency preparedness and response programs. Messaging and public education campaigns provide opportunities for the BOH to have a greater positive impact on environmental issues in Winchester.

I will bring a strong, informed and clear vision of how the BOH can help to actively address the health impacts of environmental issues, including implementing the public health recommendations in Winchester's 2020 Climate Action Plan.

4. We need to put the public back in public health –

The BOH has an opportunity to improve communications and engagement with the public. There are many communities within Winchester, yet we are also ONE community. As a Town Meeting member, I voted for the new Communications Committee, because there is a need for improved communications among all sectors of our town. These include our schools, businesses, religious and sports communities, political affiliation communities, gardening communities and others. Some of our families have lived in Winchester for generations and some arrived yesterday. Households in Winchester have many different structures and sizes. We are many communities, we are a changing community, yet we are still ONE community.

I will put an increased focus on actively reaching out to communicate with and to engage all communities within Winchester's public sector to promote public health.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I am passionate about ensuring that BOH decisions are data and fact-driven and I bring a strong science lens to my position on Covid, the environment, and all of my positions.

My position on Covid is that all available data indicates that now is the right time to lift the mask mandate, while continuing to promote vaccinations and other CDC recommendations.

Winchester needs to stay vigilant and use this time to plan and prepare. This means that the BOH needs to work on messaging and communications and to develop considered responses to possible future covid spikes or other pandemics. The BOH should continue to promote 'up to date' vaccinations for individuals over five years old, and when vaccines are approved for younger children the BOH should get the word out and offer additional clinics as soon as those vaccines become available.

My position on environmental issues is that now is the right time to increase our protection of our waterways, trees, parks, and recreational areas; to promote public awareness of risks of heat, radon, vector-borne diseases, and other less-publicized risks; and to increase our community's resilience to the impacts of climate change on human health. I have a unique and timely background and expertise in bringing environmental action to the Board of Health, along

with significant knowledge of local town government and our community, making me particularly effective at understanding the issues, soliciting public input and collaborating with key stakeholders to implement reasonable and fiscally-sound solutions.

Jennifer Infurna

Precinct 3

Community Activities

- Winchester Board of Health, Board Member – December 2021-March 2022
- Winchester Soccer Club, Board Member - 2019 – present
- Winchester Soccer Club, SFC Registrar – 2019 - present
- Winchester Soccer Club, Age Group Coordinator – 2017-2020
- Winchester Soccer Club, Coach – 2017-2020
- Ambrose PTO – ongoing

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Board of Health?

I have a master's degree in Public Health from Boston University and have devoted my entire career of more than 20 years in public health policy and health care in both governmental and private sectors. As such, I would bring a unique policy perspective to the Board of Health.

My public sector work has included:

- Research Director for the MA Joint Committee on Public Health at the state legislature, responsible for analyzing, evaluating, and advising elected officials on public health laws proposed for the state. Many pieces of legislation that I worked on are laws in Massachusetts today.
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), conducting outreach, education and implementation of the Affordable Care Act throughout the six New England states.
- Awarded a competitive research fellowship from the CDC/Association of Public Health Laboratories/National Center for Infectious Disease carried out at the MA DPH State Laboratory Institute.

In the private sector, my career at Mass General Brigham (MGB) has included:

- Chief of Staff to the Chief Operating Officer
- Government Relations tracking health care policy and regulations in Massachusetts
- Payer Strategy & Contracting where I negotiated health insurance contracts on behalf of the entire MGB hospital system
- Infectious disease research, working in a biohazard Level 3+ infectious disease laboratory on clinical trials studying immune responses to HIV to develop novel treatments and vaccines

From these experiences, I will bring the following strengths to the BOH:

- Strong understanding of federal, state and local government laws, infrastructure, and organizations
- Extensive experience developing and implementing public health and health care policies, laws and legislation

- Ability to work collaboratively with key stakeholders solve problems and develop evidenced-based priorities

What are the primary responsibilities of the Winchester Board of Health?

Massachusetts state statutes and regulations outline roles and responsibilities for local boards of health that fall under broad categories, including the protection of public health, the control of disease, the promotion of sanitary living conditions and protection of the environment.

Some examples include keeping records and reporting diseases dangerous to the public health, as well as prevention, in collaboration with the MA Department of Public Health. Local boards enforce state sanitary codes related to safe housing, food permits and restaurant inspections, and safe standards for swimming in pools and beaches. Local boards enforce state environmental codes for septage and garbage, solid waste, and hazardous waste as well as regulation of pesticides and compliance with smoking and tobacco laws.

What current Winchester public health issues do you think are most important?

Our town health department has been working tirelessly responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we look towards recovery, we need to move to a more proactive approach to support Winchester's health and wellness by focusing on three key areas:

1. Using evidence to determine the priorities that our BOH and town will work on going forward
2. Improving collaboration with other Winchester boards and Town Meeting members to coordinate public health initiatives and policies
3. Developing a long-term plan, and robust infrastructure for addressing mental health and wellness in Winchester

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Right now, there is increased demand for mental health services and serious gaps in access and resources as never before. Children, families, and adults of all ages are struggling with depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, which have always existed, but have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

If I retain my seat on the BOH, I will work with residents and leaders in our town to develop a plan to strengthen mental health resources for our community focused on four key areas:

1. Access
2. Awareness
3. Infrastructure
4. Mental Health Stigma

Lauren Costello

Precinct 3
costellofh@comcast.net

Community Activities

Business Owner for 20 years – Costello Funeral Home in Winchester, in business since 1961
Winchester Town Meeting Member, Precinct 3 – 17 years
Winchester Town Meeting – Committee on Rules, Precinct 3 – 3 years
Winchester Chamber of Commerce – Board of Directors - 3 years
Wildwood Cemetery Advisory Committee – 4 years
En Ka Society of Winchester – 15 years
Winton Club of Winchester - 15 years
Winchester League of Women Voters – 15 years
Massachusetts Funeral Directors Association – Board of Directors – served a 3-year term

Candidate statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Board of Health?

As a Funeral Director, I have worked closely with the Boards of Health in many towns in the Commonwealth over the course of my 27-year career, and am familiar with their responsibilities. I have been involved with many professional and community organizations that work independently and collaboratively to support the Winchester community on many levels, and am known as a committed professional, responsible and dedicated volunteer and citizen. Professionally, I am familiar with OSHA regulations, Universal Precautions safety training and working within local and state regulations. I have interpersonal competence that includes guiding and counseling bereaved families through funeral planning and various grief situations. As a Town Meeting Member, I have been committed to consistent attendance at Town Meeting, fairly representing the members of the Winchester Community through many project and budget decisions, without any personal agenda or preconceived opinion. I am open-minded and a good listener.

What are the primary responsibilities of the Winchester Board of Health?

The key bullet points on the Board of Health website are “**PREVENT, PREPARE & PROTECT**”. This slogan condenses and simplifies their enormous commitment to public health, with duties including vaccinations, emergency planning, environmental concerns and sustainability, substance abuse, mental health, tobacco and nicotine regulation, food establishments, and sharps collections, among others. The duties vary based on the situation.

What current Winchester public health issues do you think are most important?

All of the local public health issues are important. Covid-19 and the mask mandate are at the forefront right now. There is a large gap between whether people believe masks should be required or not. Substance abuse and mental health are also highly important. Winchester is moving in the right direction with the **Coalition for a Safer Community** that offers assistance, events and educational seminars to educate, inform and protect Winchester residents. Sustainability planning falls under a large umbrella, and I look forward to delving deeper into the methods and projects currently in Winchester.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Right now I am most passionate about the current mask mandate. People are anxious, and tired of the difficulties of mask-wearing, especially with children, and not everyone is going to be satisfied with the decision of keeping the mandate in place or reversing it. As the number of

Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations decline, hopefully, with facts and verifiable medical statistics, we can return to the lifestyle that does not include masking and living in fear. The Board of Health's responsibility to the Winchester community requires complete and accurate research. My personal position is that I would like to drop the mask mandate, while paying close attention to the local and state Covid-19 dashboards that track the data, the local and state mandates, and try to keep myself and my family safe. It is a fluid, ever-changing situation, since virus variants can emerge at any time. However, there is no place for my personal opinion as a member of the Board of Health. The position on every issue is based on fact-finding as a team effort, working collaboratively with other town departments and organizations, supporting the Winchester Health Director and competently representing the Winchester community.

Gregory Sawicki

Precinct 1

drsawickiboh@gmail.com

Community Activities

- Winchester resident since 2018 and proud father of 2 young children (ages 5 and 1)
- National Medical Advisory Council, Make-a-Wish Foundation
- Patient Access Steering Committee, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Clinical Research Advisory Board, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Board of Health?

Relationship-building, collaboration, and communication are key qualities in both a physician and a public servant. I am running for the Winchester Board of Health to promote rational, science-based policies for our town and to advocate for services to promote health and well-being for the most vulnerable members of our community, including children and seniors.

I have worked in medicine and public health for the last 20 years. I am a pediatric pulmonologist, the Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Center at Boston Children's Hospital, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. I also have a Master of Public Health in Clinical Effectiveness from the Harvard School of Public Health. My research focuses primarily on addressing health outcomes and disease self-management and adherence in children, adolescents and young adults with chronic respiratory diseases, such as cystic fibrosis and asthma. I am particularly passionate about improving health systems for adolescents in support of successful transition to adulthood. I have published over a hundred peer-reviewed articles and am a reviewer of high-impact journals in the field of respiratory medicine.

Developing and nurturing caring and empathic relationships with children, parents, and families are the cornerstones of my career. As a doctor who cares for medically complex children, I need to provide informed and thoughtful advice, often at difficult or uncertain times. I have learned that shared decision-making, open communication, and honesty are the best ways to achieve strong patient-doctor relationships. I will use these skills to ensure that the Board of Health develops and strengthens town-wide public health programs and advocates for a community-wide approach to protecting the health of all residents. I'm excited to bring my professional expertise to serve my family's community in Winchester as a member of the Board of Health.

What are the primary responsibilities of the Winchester Board of Health?

In general, the Board of Health needs to address local policies for numerous public health and environmental concerns, including emergency preparedness, mental health support services, tobacco/e-cigarette/alcohol policies, and food and restaurant safety.

As an elected body, the members of the Winchester BOH need to be stewards for the health of our community and represent the interests of our residents when developing local public health policies. Members of the BOH need to be aware of state public health guidance and regulations to ensure that our town is in alignment, and must work with the town's Health Department to ensure that adequate resources are provided for enforcement and enactment of public health policy. Most importantly, members of the BOH need to work with other town leaders and boards to develop and effectively communicate public health policy.

What current Winchester public health issues do you think are most important?

We live in unprecedented times. The COVID pandemic has placed public health into the forefront of all our residents' lives. What started as a sudden shift in our hospitals, schools, homes, and workplaces has transformed our society in many unpredictable ways. No one wanted to spend each day worrying about their health or the health of a loved one, but all of us were asked to do just that.

My work on the front lines as a pulmonologist gives me first-hand experience with the incredible strains our health care system is facing. Although we are fortunate to live in an area with world-class medical, scientific, and public health infrastructure, even here our health care workers are exhausted trying to continue in their day-to-day roles while addressing the challenges of COVID. I have spent countless hours speaking with high-risk patients and families about how to stay healthy during these times, in particular ensuring that all have access to effective vaccines and treatments.

As a town, Winchester is filled with residents who have stepped up to face the challenges of the past 2 years in their personal and professional lives. Due in part to community-wide efforts including effective mitigation strategies and vaccination, we are now entering a new phase of the pandemic. Communication with our residents will be even more important in this phase, and the BOH will need to be proactive in its strategies. As a pediatrician, such effective communication is a fundamental skill. On a daily basis, I have to explain complicated medical information and transmit advice in a manner that can be easily understood and adhered to.

The pandemic has unfortunately contributed to a mental health crisis in our population. As a pediatrician and parent, I have seen first-hand the impact social isolation and societal disruption has had on children and teens. The Board of Health has a responsibility to work with the Health Department and other town leaders to advocate for expanded mental health resources and services.

Even if COVID is currently taking precedence, the Board of Health will also be faced with other critical issues in the future. By working closely with town leaders, community-based organizations, and engaged residents, we together can improve the lives of all in our town.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

The BOH has to ensure that our community promotes a collective responsibility to protect the health of all residents. I am running for the Board of Health specifically to help town leaders with

the next phase of pandemic policies. Winchester needs new, empathetic, and experienced voices at the table to advocate for the youngest children and most vulnerable. This also means that decision-making from the BOH needs to proactively respond and protect the health of Winchester's residents based on ever-changing data and metrics, rather than following an established ideology that could lead to inconsistent or confusing policy. In medicine and public health, managing uncertainty is essential. What may be a correct decision today may have to change in the future as new information or data is received. Just as I have to explain daily treatment or plan changes to families when on hospital rounds, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the BOH is focused on timely and understandable education and communication to all residents on how we can all contribute to the health and well-being of our community.

Today, effective COVID mitigation measures are better understood, and vaccines are effective and widely available. The Board of Health needs to enact proactive, sensible, and responsive policies to continue to protect our community. Close collaboration with the Health Department, Select Board, School Department, and School Committee, among other relevant stakeholders, is essential to meet these goals. This includes strengthening existing efforts for ensuring access to up-to-date vaccination and testing services. I've always been so proud of our town for having school-based flu and HPV vaccination programs. I think we should proactively plan additional school-based COVID vaccination opportunities as boosters will likely be recommended for younger children later this year. Education and outreach to the public about these efforts will be essential.