

Special Edition THE BRIDGE

Town Meeting 2024
Norridgewock, Maine

ph (207) 634-2252
www.norridgewock.gov

The Bridge's Meet the Candidates is back! As we did last year, we offered every person appearing on the local ballot the opportunity to answer a set of questions. Candidates were issued the same set of questions and given an allowance of up to 1,000 words in their responses, and each was given the opportunity to submit a photo. Only candidates for the Select Board responded to the request; no candidates for other offices responded to the request.

Submissions are listed by office; candidates are listed alphabetically by last name. Absentee ballots can be requested at any time between now and March 2. In-person voting will take place on Monday, March 4, 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

MEET the CANDIDATES

**NORRIDGEWOCK
TOWN MEETING**

Back-to-Back Elections: March 4 & 5

Norridgewock has back-to-back elections on Monday and Tuesday, March 4-5. Monday is the annual town meeting election of officers, while Tuesday is voting for the Presidential Primary. Information on the Town Meeting is in the box below, while the Presidential Primary on Tuesday will be standard voting from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm at the school.

With the new semi-open primary system in Maine, only certain voters can cast a ballot in the Presidential Primary. If you are enrolled as a Democrat or Republican, or Unenrolled, you will have a ballot to cast. If you are in one of the two parties, you must take the ballot for that party; if you are unenrolled, you may choose. If you are enrolled at a Green Independent, Libertarian, or No Labels, you will not be able to cast a ballot in the primary unless you unenroll or change party affiliation no later than Friday, February 16. If you are unsure of your party affiliation, you may contact the Town Office at 634-2252.

You can request your absentee ballot anytime between now and close of business on Thursday, February 29. You can do so by stopping by or calling the Town Office, online at <http://bit.ly/voteabsenteemaine>, or by scanning the QR code above.



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING INFORMATION

Monday, March 4, 2024

Mill Stream Elementary School Gymnasium

Polling Hours: 8:00 am – 7:00 pm

Open Town Meeting begins at 7:30 pm

Select Board Member & Overseer – One-year term, Five Seats

Kelsea Bickford

Work Experience: I was an educator for 10 years, but recently started working in higher ed at UMF.

Political/Civic Experience: I served my first year on Norridgewock's Select Board this past year. Aside from that, my experience is largely volunteerism. I am currently a member of the Farmington Rotary and recently became a member of the Somerset County Association of Resource Providers (SCARP).

Why am I running? I am running again because I continue to believe that Norridgewock is a great place to live and work, and I would be honored to be a part of our community's success and growth.

What qualifies me? I believe what qualifies me are my prior experiences with various committees and clubs, as mentioned in the "Political/Civic Experience" section. I also believe my graduate studies in Peace and Reconciliation qualifies me as I have had extensive training with deep and active listening, conflict resolution, and community building.

What is the biggest challenge facing Norridgewock? I believe the biggest issue currently facing Norridgewock is communication. I believe that at this time in Norridgewock's history, it is important for community leaders and residents to have open communication about both the challenges we face and opportunities for growth and change.

How would you address that? I believe the town is already beginning to address this by considering new methods of communication. Getting community feedback once these new methods are being utilized will be vital in determining their effectiveness. The town can also use the feedback to improve communication methods and pivot if necessary.

Name two other priorities and what you propose to do about them: Two other priorities of mine are teen programming and increasing community involvement at events. I would approach this by listening to and learning from youth, adults, and families to find out what excites them. I also believe a big part of this would be advertising (which hopefully will be aided via better communication), but also finding resources within the community to grow opportunities for community members.

What's one thing you want voters to know about you? I want voters to know that I learned so much by serving on our Select Board last year. I am committed to continuing to learn about Norridgewock's history as well as town policies and procedures to ensure Norridgewock continues to be a great place to live and work. I truly want to *serve* our community and lift up community member's voices as best I can. I pride myself on being a good listener, open-minded, and reliable.



TOWN REPORTS WILL BE AVAILABLE BEGINNING NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 22

Once available, Town Reports will be available at the Town Office, Norridgewock Public Library, Kennebec Market, Friends Food Mart, Oosoola Country Store, and York's Market.

Select Board Member & Overseer – One-year term, Five Seats

Ronnie L. Blodgett, Jr.

Work Experience: I have been a Certified Police Officer since 2002. I currently work for the Somerset County Sheriff's Office as a Detective assigned to the District Attorney's Office where I specialize in Domestic Violence cases but am assigned to whatever follow up needs to be done on any type of case. Prior to becoming a police officer, I spent time in construction and business management. I have owned my own small business (lawn care) for over 20 years as well.

Political/Civic Experience: I have served the Town of Norridgewock as a Select Board member over the last year. Prior to this I have been on the Board of Director's for the old Youth and Family Services Organization, been a member of the Domestic Violence Task Force, the Sexual Assault Response Team, youth outreach programs and volunteered with Maine Special Olympics.

Why am I running? I am running again for this position so that I can continue to be vested in the decisions we are making as a Town to move forward into the future. Norridgewock has been a great place to live and I want to help the town continue in this direction.

What qualifies me? I feel that my time spent in community organizations over the years as a police officer and having been a member of the Select Board over the past year give me experience that qualify me for this position.

What is the biggest challenge facing Norridgewock? I still think that budgets are the biggest challenge for any town/city currently. This is largely based on the steep upward trend of costs associated with personnel, which has risen greatly since COVID-19 hit.

How would you address that? I believe we need to look at the long-term goals of the town to see where we are headed and what we need to get there. Once we have this plan laid out, we need to look at our costs and revenues to accomplish this plan while still being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers, but at the same time servicing those taxpayers with the services they need.

Name two other priorities and what you propose to do about them: My first priority is to make sure we are being fiscally responsible while at the same time moving the town forward into the future. A second priority is to try and get more people involved within the community. We have many elected positions that continue to go unfilled, and there is not a lot of interest in filling some of these positions.

What's one thing you want voters to know about you? I want them to know that I do not have any hidden agendas for running for this position. My main priority is to do what is right for the Town of Norridgewock and its residents.

What does a School Board Director do?

- Policy Making
 - Designate a Superintendent of Schools
 - Plan, set goals, and appraise results
 - Approve and adopt financial resources
- Negotiation and approve collective bargaining agreements
- Set clear expectations/standards and adopt policies regarding instructional programs
- Communicate with various constituencies
 - Advocate for the needs of students
- Establish procedures for the operation of the Board
- Review and evaluate Board operations and performance
- Approve the annual school calendar

The Board generally concerns itself with broad questions of policy rather than with administrative details. Those details are typically addressed by the Superintendent and his/her staff, who is then in turn held responsible for the supervision of the entire school system.

Select Board Member & Overseer – One-year term, Five Seats

Cheyenne Goodrich

Work Experience: I am currently employed as a respiratory therapist. I have also worked as an in-home caregiver, non-profit group home coordinator, firefighter, sales representative, customer service representative, and fast food line worker. Some would say that I am a "Jack of all trades." However, there is one thing in common with my vast work experience: they all involve supporting the community and its members.

Political/Civic Experience: I am currently an active member of the Norridgewock Recreation Committee, as well as a 2023-2024 MSAD 54 school board member. I have a history of volunteerism, including the important role as the leader of our company's Family Readiness Group (RFG) when our spouses were deployed overseas.

Why am I running? My husband and I moved to Norridgewock three years ago, and at that time, I felt an obligation to become an active member of our community, supporting the visions and needs that our community holds. I strongly believe in setting a good, safe environment for our youth, and I want to continue to encourage their involvement in developing our vast, growing community.

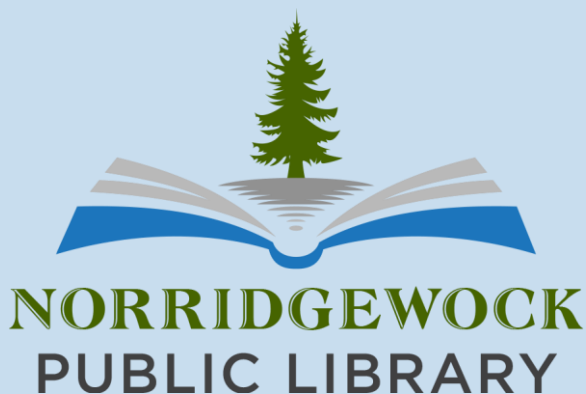
What qualifies me? As mentioned in the "political/civic experience", I am no stranger to advocating and supporting the local community and its members. From the elderly and disabled to those reintegrating back into society, supporting local youth, and those with medical and emergent needs. All of these require compassion, dedication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, active listening, and integrity. All attributes that I would like to contribute within our community.

What is the biggest challenge facing Norridgewock? Unfortunately, inflation continues to be a challenge within our community. Economic costs continue to rise, causing families and individuals within our community to deal with financial strains. These strains are concerning when families are worried about putting food on the table, and/or keeping their homes warm during harsh winters.

How would you address that? In order to combat the effects of inflation within our community, I would encourage and support local business development, including enhancing the advertisement of local resources available to all community members in need. I would continue to learn about current rising costs and how to best support the community during these impactful times.

Name two other priorities and what you propose to do about them: My main priorities are to raise community readiness/awareness and encourage community involvement at local events. I would do so by engaging with community members to listen and learn about their interests/needs. I would support funding opportunities, enhance advertising, and public awareness of local resources and scheduled events. I believe that knowledge is the key to success.

What's one thing you want voters to know about you? I am a very compassionate, honest person who is not afraid to advocate for what is right. I will be one of the first to help a neighbor in need. What you see is what you get!



*Find your next book at your local library!
Tuesday & Thursday 10am - 6pm
Wednesday & Saturday 10am - 2pm*

(207) 634-2252

library@norridgewock.gov

Kelli Dorais, Librarian

...and don't forget to LIKE us on Facebook!



Town of Norridgewock

Town Meeting Municipal Election

March 4, 2024

Sample Ballot

Select Board Member & Overseer

One Year Term

Vote for no more than FIVE (5)

- ☐ Bickford, Kelsea J.
- ☐ Blodgett, Ronnie L.
- ☐ Everett, Matthew J.
- ☐ Goodrich, Cheyenne M.
- ☐ Lynch, Lindsey M.E.
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____

Tax Assessor

One Year Term

Vote for no more than THREE (3)

- ☐ Curtis, Charlotte A.
- ☐ Frederick, Ronald E.
- ☐ Lyman, James J.
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____

Budget Committee Member

Three Year Term

Vote for no more than THREE (3)

- ☐ Desroches, Tara L.
- ☐ Ketchum, Rebecca F.
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____

SAD 54 School Board Director

Two Year Term

Vote for no more than ONE (1)

- ☐ (write in) _____

MSAD 54 School Board Director

Three Year Term

Vote for no more than ONE (1)

- ☐ (write in) _____

Library Trustee

Five Year Term

Vote for no more than ONE (1)

- ☐ Keister, Ruth A.
- ☐ (write in) _____

Sewer Commissioner

Two Year Term

Vote for no more than TWO (2)

- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____

Sewer Commissioner

One Year Term

Vote for no more than ONE (1)

- ☐ (write in) _____

Planning Board Member

Three Year Term

Vote for no more than TWO (2)

- ☐ Ames, John A.
- ☐ Lancaster, Jean L.
- ☐ (write in) _____
- ☐ (write in) _____



Everybody falls on hard times, and it's important for us to be there for them to help get back on their feet. The following are just a few of the benefits that come with giving back to your community:

Positive Impact -

Personal Well-Being -

Strengthen Your Community -

Meet New People -

Ripple Effect -