

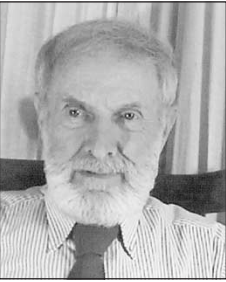
# Candidates for Brockport Village Trustees

Vote for two, four year terms. Polls open at the Village Offices, Tuesday, June 21 from noon to 9 p.m.

Westside News Inc. asked candidates to respond in writing (100 word limit) to the questions listed below.

Brief biographical information -- name, age, address, length of time as village resident, education, employment, community service activities, other elected offices, family.

My name is John Bush and I live at 157 Barry Street Brockport. My wife Pat and I have been married 46 years. We have lived all of our married life in Brockport, nine years on King Street and 37 years on Barry Street. We have two children and three grandchildren. Our daughter lives in Brockport and our son in Clarkson. I am a member of the Brockport Village Zoning Board and a long time member of Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Nativity Parish Council, leader of Nativity Nocturnal Adoration Society, Nativity Rosary Society and Nativity volunteer maintenance crew. I am a member of the Knights of Columbus, third degree St. John the Evangelist Church, Spencerport; fourth degree St. Jude Church, Gates; and Knights Color Corps St. Jude Church. I am retired from SUNY Brockport Plant Management Department.



My name is Maria “Connie” Castaneda. I'm 37 years old. My husband Benjamin and I have lived at 332 Main Street for four years with our two teenage sons Ben and Daniel. My parents, Adan and Rosario Rangel, and two of my sisters also live in the village. I graduated from Brockport High School in 1987 and SUNY Brockport in 1991 with bachelor of science in Spanish and 1997 with a master's of science in education. This is my fourteenth year with the Rochester City School District and I'm currently an education coordinator at School #12. I'm also a volunteer with the Hispanic Migrant Ministry.



My name is Laura Emerson, age 48, and I live at 89 Holley Street. We have lived in the village since June of 1991. I graduated as an adult student from SUNY Brockport in 1990. I have worked in a law firm, a prison, at the NYS School for the Visually Impaired, and now at SUNY Brockport. I am one of the founding members of SPARTAC, and have volunteered at my daughters' school teaching gym and art classes, and I have helped organize many fund raising activities there. My father, Ted Anderson, taught physics at Brockport High School.



Taxes and services: How would you work to keep taxes in check without cutting services to residents? Are there services currently not offered which you think the village could afford to offer residents or which could be funded by means other than direct taxation?

Residents elect trustees to watch over and direct the operations of the village. The trustees have an obligation to use tax money wisely to provide services to residents. It's just common sense to give priority to providing services over work on special projects. DPW workers have to put street maintenance on hold to work on the, over budget, canal front project. Tax money paid to provide services is being used to pay for the canal project. We will never be able to keep taxes in check doing this. There is nothing wrong with special projects, but all future special projects need better cost estimates and should seek private or corporate sponsors to cover the cost. The village could provide trash pick up if tax money was spent wisely. Also we need to look for ways to provide services less expensively including more seasonal help, part time help, local volunteers (to water flowers) and possible contracted services. Reduce or eliminate unnecessary engineering and legal fees.

To keep taxes in check without eliminating services to residents I would do the following: Conduct a study to assess the efficiency of police department, village assessor, contractors, water board, basically every employee. Study should yield recommendations on how to increase efficiency and how volunteers could perform some of the work. I would oppose a village manager, engineering firm, excessive legal fees. Services that village could afford to offer residents by grants or volunteer committees. Explore possibility of joint purchases of equipment, refuse pickup, cheaper electric, flowers and benches from merchants and Garden Club.

I would place non-confidential documents on-line for public access, thereby reducing time spent copying frequently requested documents. I would automate the payroll process, which is currently transcribed manually, freeing several hours of clerk time per week. One key to keeping taxes in check is to find such small efficiencies, enabling us to do more without hiring more staff. A village justice court would keep fines for breaking village codes in the village, and more than pay for a justice and clerk. Instead of consolidation, which won't save money, separating Brockport from Sweden would save Brockport taxpayers \$3.37 per \$1,000.

What is your position on the proposed amendments to the rental housing codes?

The village has to be careful with the new amendments. They could wind up with litigation costs. Certificates of occupancy now cover safety issues. I know there are issues with run down houses. Problems with parties and residents being disturbed. I would like to look into a meeting between the board and landlords. Both sides know the problems. It would be nice to avoid the cost of litigation and living for years with these problems if it goes through the court system.

My position on the proposed amendments to rental housing codes is as follows: I believe more information is needed before making a decision that will change the Village of Brockport forever. I would enlist the volunteer help of the economics department at the college to assess the impact these code changes would have on all taxpayers. A group of village tax payers that truly represents the whole community must also be consulted to prevent the village from further litigation. Until then we should follow and enforce the existing codes.

An excerpt from the NYCOM manual's Board of Trustees section: "...may take all measures ... for the safety, health, comfort and general welfare of its inhabitants, the protection of their property, the preservation of peace and good order..." I support the proposed zoning amendments, as long as they are sound, enforceable and have already been upheld in court. If another disaster occurred, like last fall's carbon monoxide poisoning of six student renters, I would not want it on my conscience that students or emergency personnel were harmed because of political indecisiveness. Village officials should not succumb to intimidation by a minority.

Other than taxes and the rental amendment topics, what other issues do you feel village leaders and residents are faced with? How would you address them?

I feel we have not given priority to taking care of our infrastructure. The Department of Public Works has no plan. We need to adopt a preventive maintenance schedule with a history record. This schedule should cover everything in the village, to include streets, sidewalks, curbs, trees, sewers, buildings, trucks, cars, tractors, everything owned by the village. This plan would schedule inspections to find problems. Small problems could be taken care of so they don't become big problems. Also preventive maintenance could be scheduled for all equipment. Good maintenance helps equipment last longer avoiding replacement costs. In my job at SUNY, I worked with a preventive maintenance program for years. A program like this does work and would help in maintaining our infrastructure.

Other issues village leaders and residents are faced with and ways I would address them: The infrastructure is in dire need of repair, I will work hard to redirect and restaff the DPW. The lack of honest open communication between the village and community. I will answer village residents' questions without having them FOIL. Reestablish regular community open informal forums where residents can voice opinions/concerns. Establishing community advisory group made up of neighborhood representatives. The lack of cooperation between the village, town, college. Develop new intermunicipal agreements with local town, college and school districts to share resources, ideas and equipment.

We need to continue to expand the tax base in the village by discovering what the local market would support, then recruiting those kinds of businesses. I believe it is a very grievous state of affairs when members of a community cannot trust their local government, which is comprised of their neighbors, people in their community. That is why Glenn and I want you to know that we will establish an ethics board to hold ourselves accountable, to uphold our belief that a government that is most effective has nothing to hide.

What qualifications do you bring to the village post for which you are running?

I would bring to the village board years of "common sense" dealing with people and problems. I would like to make village government open, so all residents could be part of all decisions affecting them and make it possible for residents with problems to contact board members and know everything possible would be done to help them. My job experience involving supervising maintenance and repair of heating, cooling, sewer, water and electrical services underground and in buildings; scheduling of annual maintenance for all systems; writing specifications for equipment replacement; writing state and federal grant applications; scheduling of a large maintenance crew 24/7 with a minimum of overtime; advance planning of repair jobs to keep labor cost as low as possible; make a job schedule with priorities first; supervise all work done by outside contractors; pursue energy conservation measures to cut utility costs; work within a budget each year; tight scheduling of heating, cooling and lighting to keep energy costs low.

Qualifications I bring to the board: I am focused and well organized. I am a good listener, independent thinker, open minded and flexible. My experience as a teacher has enabled me to learn patience and perseverance. My latest position as a coordinator enhanced by abilities as a problem solver and organizer. I also have experience as a grant writer. Besides being a Brockport resident, I graduated from Brockport High School and SUNY Brockport. This unique background allows me to see the whole picture, and will enable me to overcome the special challenges facing a diverse Victorian and college town.

Most of my working career I have worked in an administrative support role. In that time, I have been part of a team and played a role in seeking efficiencies in offices where they, too, faced fiscal constraints. That mindset and experience will transfer easily and naturally to a governmental setting where professionalism, communication, status reports, cost-cutting brainstorming and exploring new ideas are invaluable. I would implement the "creating excellence in local government through professional management" philosophy as described by the International City/County Management Association.

How would you describe the quality of life in Brockport? What are some of the village's assets? What areas would you like to see improved?

The quality of life can be very good for some residents and not so good for others. Some examples: residents living in a neighborhood of well kept homes, with well maintained streets, curbs, sidewalks, sewers that work okay. The quality of life is good. Residents living near poorly maintained rental property, with tenants having parties and no respect for others, the quality of life is not so good. Residents struggling to live on a fixed income. Facing tax increases every year that are many times more than cost of living increases they get, the quality of life is not so good. Rising taxes and poorly maintained infrastructure affects everyone. The village needs to address all issues that affect residents' quality of life.

Our village has many things to be proud of - its rich history, safe friendly neighborhoods, wonderful and unique shops, hard working volunteers, and the canal to name a few. Brockport residents take great pride in their village and their homes. I am proud to call Brockport my home. The greatest asset Brockport has is the university. The college is the largest employer in the area, invigorating our community with an invaluable economic infusion and diversity that benefits the village as a whole. Areas I would like to see improved are: the infrastructure of our village, equal, fair representation of all village tax payers, ensuring the wise use of village tax money, economic development, college should be better utilized. There is great potential for volunteerism from the student body and faculty.

One aspect I like about Brockport is the proximity of our lifestyle needs: stores, school, job and library. Another strong point is its sense of security. People are free to walk anywhere in the village, residential or merchant sections, any time of day or night. I believe that is because of the presence of the police department, which allows for this secure lifestyle. Would Brockport lose this safe feeling if the police department were gone? I believe it would, and that is one road I won't take.



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My name is Scott Hunsinger. I am 39 years old, my wife, Kory, and I live at 80 State Street. I have lived in the village since 1998. I graduated from Spencerport High School in 1984 and from Fairmont State College in 1989 with a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice. I am the aquatics director and head swimming coach at Genesee Community College in Batavia. I am also the manager of the Merchant Street Smokehouse. I currently am a member of the Brockport Lions Club serving as vice president.



My name is David Wagenhauser. My wife, Laura, and I and children, Dana and Ethan, live at 45 State Street - a historic home which we are restoring. I grew up in Spencerport and graduated from SUNY Brockport and Syracuse University College of Law. I practiced law in Washington, DC, but after a few years came back to raise a family and run our family business, Westside Home Care Agency, where we help the elderly and others remain independent in their homes. I am on the Zoning Board of Appeals and recently spearheaded the re-establishment of Brockport's Community Service Program.



(Incumbent). My name is Jim Whipple. I am 60 years old and a lifelong resident of Brockport. My wife, Charlene, and I live at 59 Frazier Street. We have two married children, Laura (Rob) and Jim (Andrea) and four grandchildren. Formally educated at RIT as a public accountant, I retired from Kodak as a Senior Business Analyst. Now, I drive a Brockport school bus. I have been a member of the Brockport Fire Department for over 40 years, a deacon and elder of the First Presbyterian Church, a past president of the Lions Club, an organizer of BISCO and a director of the Greater Brockport Development Corporation.



Taxes and services: How would you work to keep taxes in check without cutting services to residents? Are there services currently not offered which you think the village could afford to offer residents or which could be funded by means other than direct taxation?

There is a serious need to be fiscally responsible within every village department. Taking a positive cue for the fire department and the ambulance corps it is the responsibility of the department administrator and the village board, working together to thoroughly explore all options of retaining the outstanding level of services while maintaining or reducing current and future expenditures.

After 22 percent tax increases the past four years, we seem to be paying more and getting less. I'm a police supporter, but we must get these (and other) costs under control. Containing overtime and successfully renegotiating the contract in two years are vital. My legal and business experience would prove invaluable in cutting costs while ensuring public safety. Some key items from my extensive plan include: putting trash collection out to bid - which could result in cash savings of \$160 per household per year; eliminating the use of attorneys at village board meetings; and repealing the board's three percent pay increase.

While at Kodak, I taught project management. Every project must have a plan and in village business, the budget is a plan. Carefully tracking the budget versus actual activity/expense is where you will discover opportunities to save expenses and curb potential over runs. We are fortunate in Brockport to have services offered by not only the village, but also the town and the college. It is hard to imagine a needed service not already offered.

What is your position on the proposed amendments to the rental housing codes?

I would not and could not approve of code changes that as a result would plunge the village into more unneeded litigation. Exploring codes currently on the books and enforcing compliance from all parties should be the main priority. I would like to see a coalition formed of all parties involved; the community, the landlords and the village government, to help oversee this growing concern.

As a member of the Zoning Board, I routinely deal with housing codes. I'm neither a college basher nor student basher. I believe the majority of rental owners are concerned about the safety of tenants and maintenance of their properties. There are safety issues, however, that are not being addressed. This is unacceptable. The proposal to create new codes perplexes me. If we're not enforcing current codes, how are we going to enforce additional codes? The rental owners at a recent meeting asked why existing codes weren't being enforced. On this we agree. Enforcement and compliance should not be options.

This is one proposal on which I can honestly say I do not have enough information to vote. The proposed changes were presented to us by our attorney, who is working on some property issues. After much discussion, we agreed to take it to the public for their opinion. It is obvious that we do not have the answers as to what the socio-economic impact would be. I believe it will be quite some time before the consequences of the proposed changes are known.

Other than taxes and the rental amendment topics, what other issues do you feel village leaders and residents are faced with? How would you address them?

In going door-to-door and talking with people, I have found that the village infrastructure and the strain on the under staffed DPW is a concern. There must be a strong effort to seek grants that do not require matching funds. Beneficial projects like the South Avenue extension were a direct result of non-matching fund grants. While matching fund grants may be an enticing endeavor, the repercussions of the Welcome Center have shown that stretching our DPW has a negative effect on the village. I would do everything I could to make sure that the end result of these projects doesn't result in another Carolin Drive disaster.

There is little disagreement that our streets, sidewalks, etc., are in need of repair. In March, I asked why there was no plan for routine maintenance. A week later, I was pleased to see the village announce its intention to create such a plan. However, they budgeted \$60,000 less than they spent this year. The DPW is understaffed. I would vote to provide the DPW with the resources they need to maintain our streets and sidewalks. The dialog, openness and tone between the board, taxpayers and others must improve. I would restore openness and bring professionalism to the board.

The past and the current state of Brockport are well known. What we need to do now is plan for the future. A good look at our infrastructure will help us develop a plan for streets, sewers, sidewalks, curbs and lighting. Working with the fire department and the police department we can develop future scenarios. We also need to devote time to our business and commercial activities. This is where an aggressive economic development plan is necessary. We must keep our downtown energized as well as bring in new businesses.

What qualifications do you bring to the village post for which you are running?

Two of the best qualifications that I bring to the new board are my enthusiasm and commitment to work for all the members of the community. I am dedicated to work with all the current and potential members of the board to work toward the common goal of making Brockport a positive example for all villages to follow. My college education in the fields of criminal justice and political science gives me a good understanding and foundation on which to work for the residents of Brockport.

While we may agree on some issues, there are clearly differences among the candidates. My experience practicing law and running a business make me best suited to take on the challenge of managing Brockport. I have a proven track record of success. I have extensive experience negotiating contracts. In a competitive market, I have grown our family business (with as many employees as the village). I have effectively and conservatively managed finances. I have ideas to reduce costs while improving our quality of life. These are directly transferable skills that enable me to hit the ground running.

The two most important qualifications I bring to the office of trustee are experience and desire. I have been a trustee for 16 years, including eight years as deputy mayor. I have provided leadership in the areas of fire department, police department, streets, buildings, personnel and water. I still have the desire to serve another term as trustee; a true public servant willing to listen to the people in order to better develop plans for the future.

How would you describe the quality of life in Brockport? What are some of the village's assets? What areas would you like to see improved?

The quality of life in Brockport is very good. If it wasn't I would not be committed to running for village board and raising a family here. There has been a negative attitude over the last four years, residents are not happy, communication within the village government and between the village and the community has been a stumbling point. We need to get back to open lines of communication and restore a Positive Village Attitude (PVA). In this historic Victorian village on the Erie Canal we need to remember that our biggest and best asset is the residents. I will make every effort to work for the people and restore their PVA.

Brockport's assets abound: the charm of our historic downtown and canal front; family friendly neighborhoods; SUNY Brockport; and most of all, the family, friends and neighbors who make living here special. Brockport is a great place to live, work, grow a business and raise a family. However, I believe we can and must do better. We must make Brockport more affordable, while improving our quality of life. We must repair our infrastructure. We must improve communication and restore pride in village government. My business/legal experience and professionalism enable me to leverage our assets and realize Brockport's potential.

I believe the quality of life in Brockport is "good." The village provides all the critical services and the town and college provide additional opportunities for social and educational activities. While taxes seem high, you have to remember that the fire department and police department are provided by village taxes. Most area villages do not include those services. By far, people are the best asset we have. In addition, we have a handsome village, an inviting canal front and a wonderful college. A better partnership between the village board and the citizens can help identify opportunities for improvements.