

## **Media Advisory**

### ***Verona Education Association Provides Detail on Endorsement Process***

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For Immediate Release

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The Verona Education Association is pleased to endorse three pro-education candidates in the 2021 non-partisan Verona municipal election.

After our original press release was published in an incomplete fashion by a local media source, we would like to clarify the endorsement process.

On March 1, 2021, the Verona Education Association Representative Council, comprised of members from all school buildings and job functions heard at its regular meeting a presentation from NJEA staff regarding how to conduct an endorsement screening in the municipal non-partisan election. Representative Council meetings are open to all VEA members. The vote on the matter was set to be conducted the next week. The minutes of the meeting were posted with those of all previous meetings on the members-only section of the VEA website, where information is available to any member who seeks it out.

On March 8, the Representative Council members present voted to form a non-partisan screening committee which could potentially endorse up to three council candidates, but was not required to do so.

On March 18, the screening committee chair sent an email to all VEA members, inviting them to serve on the screening committee. All members who expressed interest were included on the committee. No elected VEA officers served on or assisted the committee.

Using models of questionnaires used by NJEA affiliates in other towns for municipal endorsements, the screening committee developed a survey for candidates that solicited responses related to issues that affect our schools and community.

The committee sent via email the five (5) council candidates the questionnaire on March 28 with a due date of April 7. The committee then sent a reminder on April 6 to the candidates who did not complete the questionnaire. The email addresses the committee used were those on record with the Township Clerk's office on March 10.

Candidates were also offered the opportunity to have a videoconference with the committee during that week. Four (4) candidates completed the questionnaire: Cynthia Holland, Jason Hyndman, Jack McEvoy, and Christopher Tamburro. Ms. Holland met with the committee briefly by Google Meet to review her responses. Michael Nochimson did not return a questionnaire or otherwise seek to meet with the committee.

The committee then met to deliberate on whether to conduct an endorsement, and if so, determine the candidates who would be recognized. The committee made the determinations solely on the responses to the questionnaires and virtual meeting. Candidates who were selected were notified on April 11.

The VEA sent a press release to MyVeronaNJ.com on April 18 announcing the endorsements. MyVeronaNJ.com published an article without seeking additional information from the non-partisan screening committee or Association leadership. However, the outlet published questions that were from the questionnaire that its editor stated that she “obtained.”

The VEA did not form a committee for the November 2020 Board of Education election, there was only one candidate for the seat.