

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce

# connect

## Decision '24

★ **EARLY VOTING DATES** ★

*October 24 - October 31, 2024*

*7:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.*

*Washington County  
Early Voting Centers:*

*17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740*

*66 W. Water Street, Smithsburg, MD 21783*

*710 N. Main Street, Boonsboro, MD 21713*

★ **GENERAL ELECTION DAY** ★

***Tuesday, November 5, 2024***

*7:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.*



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Election Guide Printer



# Decision '24

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# Decision '24 Forum Information

## ★ Board of Education

Date: October 2, 2024  
Registration Opens: 6:30 A.M.  
Breakfast Served: 7 A.M.  
Program Begins: 7:30 A.M.  
Location: Applause Caterers  
58 E. Washington St.,  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

## ★ City Council

Date: October 9, 2024  
Registration Opens: 6:30 A.M.  
Breakfast Served: 7 A.M.  
Program Begins: 7:30 A.M.  
Location: Applause Caterers  
58 E. Washington St.,  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

## ★ Maryland 6th

### Congressional District

Date: October 23, 2024  
Registration Opens: 6:30 A.M.  
Breakfast Served: 7 A.M.  
Program Begins: 7:30 A.M.  
Location: Applause Caterers  
58 E. Washington St.,  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Contact Maddie Monica at [maddie@hagerstown.org](mailto:maddie@hagerstown.org) / 301.739.2015 ext. 100  
or register at [www.hagerstown.org](http://www.hagerstown.org)

All candidates were asked to respond to this question in 125 words or less:  
Why should someone from the business community vote for you?

**\*All candidate responses copied exactly how received, no edits were made. Answers are capped at exactly 125 words.**

## Washington County Board of Education

(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)



**VICTORIA BEACHLEY**

Response was not received by deadline.

### **PIETER BICKFORD - INCUMBENT**

I couldn't be prouder of how our business community has partnered with our school system to grow our apprenticeship program to be the #1 in Maryland, meaning more students can graduate with meaningful skills and even jobs. Despite flat-funded budgets, we also lead the state by having the highest starting salary, the most secure schools, and a laptop for every student. We've also implemented universal pre-K, preparing students and reducing childcare costs for working parents. I played a key role in hiring Superintendent Dr. David Sovine, who prioritizes partnerships with local businesses. As a board member, I will continue to advocate for programs ensuring students graduate with a plan, whether joining the workforce, the military, or higher education.



### **CHARLES A. BURKETT**

As an entrepreneur, I created and ran 3 successful small business in WC for 25 years. I believe it is time to get away from only promoting college to our high school students. There are many local businesses that offer high paying skilled jobs that do not required going into debt with college loans. I would love to see our schools promoting and encouraging our young people to get into business for themselves. Our country is built on the back of small businesses. Finally, we need to get back to teaching the basics and not someone's political agenda.



### **ASHLEY MCCUSKER**

As a parent of two current students, I view school as one of our children's first jobs. Unfortunately, we are not currently doing a good job in getting the majority of students ready for the workforce. There may be expectations for students to show up and on time, but there is no consequence for not doing so. They can also pass each grade with little to no effort. If school actually were their job, many would be fired. We are already seeing the effects of this in the workforce, and business owners know exactly what I'm talking about. We must change the current status quo, and that is my plan, if elected.



### **ROBIN MERCHANT SPICKLER**

I am a lifelong resident of Hagerstown/Washington county. I have taught for 44 years in the WCPS system and served on numerous advisory/special WCPS committees. All my family members attended WCPS from K-12 and now two of my grandsons attend WCPS. I have served as a WCTA Building Rep./WCTA Board for many years. I am a member of the MSEA/NEA Teachers/Retired Associations. I have received the recommendation of educators and am on the Apple Ballot. I want our schools to be the absolute best they can be. That means giving our students the education they need to pursue their dreams in the jobs and careers they want. On behalf of our students, their families, and every community ... I am experienced, committed and invested.



### **STAN STOUFFER - INCUMBENT**

WCPS is an economic driver. WCPS effectively prepares students to be part of a skilled workforce that will attract businesses and enhance community economic vitality. WCPS has the highest rated internship program in Maryland. Numerous quality career programs exist at Tech High and our other county high schools.

I have consistently supported adequate funding for the BOE's annual needs-based budgets while understanding that there are limits to available funds. State and private audits consistently attest to our fiscal responsibility. I have consistently advocated for and supported fiscally responsible collective bargaining agreements with our three employee bargaining groups. Having served on both of the employee and employer sides of the educational collective bargaining process, I have excellent knowledge of the process.







**MELISSA WILLIAMS - INCUMBENT**

With your support, I'll continue working to provide multiple pathways to success for ALL members of our diverse student population. Graduates must be prepared to enter the workforce or pursue additional education in a rapidly changing world.

Significant accomplishments I supported during my service on the BOE include increased Career and Technology Education offerings; universal free pre-K for four-year-olds; increased safety and security measures; increased behavior and emotional supports; excellent dual enrollment opportunities; a renowned student apprenticeship program; and public/private partnerships. Input from the business community helped create our school system's new strategic plan. I know that as the BOE implements the plan, your ongoing support and collaboration will be invaluable. I'm passionate, experienced, and committed to keeping our schools on the path to excellence.

**DR. APRIL ANN ZENTMEYER - INCUMBENT**

Response was not received by deadline.



# City Council - Hagerstown

(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)

## KRISTIN B. ALESHIRE - INCUMBENT

Any individual that resides within the City of Hagerstown and which plans to exercise their right to vote for any candidate currently seeking the office of Hagerstown City Council member, should research the candidates and contact them directly to discuss matters important to their interests and then vote for whom they choose is most qualified in meeting their expectations in appropriately representing their interests in that public office.



## CAROLINE ANDERSON

As a business owner, mother and a wife, I bring a unique perspective to the business community. My ability to balance multiple roles demonstrates exceptional time management, resilience, and empathy. I more than likely understand the needs and challenges of working families, while also advocating for policies that support work-life balance. My diverse background can drive innovative solutions and foster a more inclusive and supportive business environment. Being able to speak in French, Spanish, and English enhances communication within a diverse business community, while facilitating international partnerships and expanding market research. It also fosters cultural understanding and inclusion, across different cultural backgrounds. Voting for me means choosing a leader who represents the interests of both business and family, while promoting a well-rounded and diverse community.

## ERIKA T. BELL

My name is Erika Bell, not only am I one of your candidates for City council; I am a business owner in downtown Hagerstown called Tribe Cold Press Juice Bar.

Small business is one of my platforms. Entrepreneurship and is important for growth and development of our communities and cities. It builds legacies and helps ensure our youth build skills and confidence. This is one of the reasons I continue to partner with the western Maryland consortium to ensure that they can get their first sense leadership from local businesses like Tribe Cold Press Juice Bar. This makes an ecosystem of supported growth. My goal is to work with the city to put a guide into play that will help small start up businesses with





### **MARK BELL**

I am not a politician and will not ever be one. I am not running for the benefits of office and will refuse to enroll in the City's pension plan. Hagerstown is not the same community where I grew up. I will serve Hagerstown just as I served my clients in my 32 years as a successful small business owner. It's essential that all of Hagerstown be afforded the same opportunities to be safe, secure, and prosper. I am committed to addressing all of these issues individually and help Hagerstown to move forward in the optimal positive direction.

### **TIARA R. BURNETT - INCUMBENT**

As the current Councilwoman, I have played a key role in supporting the business community and advancing the Urban Partners study recommendations, such as expanding Downtown Arts and Entertainment initiatives. This has facilitated new events and improved coordination with local businesses, encouraging more visits to Downtown.

I support our DCED team's recommendations, including grant proposals, crucial for economic development. Additionally, I keep the business community informed about opportunities through social media and meetings with DCED staff, entrepreneurs, and business owners.

Addressing safety, I have approved increased police pay and approved the creation a police-community liaison position. I've embraced technological advancements like drones, cameras, and virtual officer training to enhance public safety. I will continue to work with our partners to improve safety in our city.



### **SEAN FLAHERTY**

I believe it's important to create an environment conducive to economic growth that fosters opportunities to our residents, allowing businesses to thrive and prosper. I support making an easier process to open a business in Hagerstown, strengthening existing businesses by better communication with the city- cutting red tape, easier permit process, faster response times. I support more incentives for use of blighted buildings, and better recruit and retain local talent in partnership with local colleges and trades. To further develop our customer base, I support the MARC train Brunswick line expansion to Hagerstown to connect to higher income jobs. I also want to bring in higher paying jobs (e.g., IT and Defense) and increase tourism from the DC area.

**STACY L. MICHAEL**

Born and raised in Hagerstown, I offer a fresh perspective and deep awareness of our community's needs and opportunities for improvement. With over 20 years as a Senior Project Manager, I have a proven track record in successfully managing multi-million dollar deals, bringing crucial expertise in planning and execution to benefit our city. My vision includes increasing youth engagement through expanded programs and volunteer opportunities, revitalizing infrastructure planning—including fully staffing our Police Department—and fostering robust economic development. As a committed volunteer and advocate for our city, I am confident that by working together, we can create a stronger community, TOGETHER!



**RICH OWENS**

I have been a businessman for most of my professional career. As a Radiation Therapist and a general contractor, I have always been challenged to think outside of the box. I am a creative problem solver and work well with people. Coming up with viable, achievable answers to complex problems stimulates me. My wife and I own and manage the “Inn On Potomac” in the downtown historic district. I worked on this business from start to finish, interacting with the city zoning, code compliance and permitting departments for all phases of the project. The business was started and has been running successfully for over a year now. Business owners/developers deserve clear, decisive, and knowledgeable answers from city representatives to facilitate their success. Vote for Rich

**PETER E. PERINI, SR. - INCUMBENT**

Response was not received by deadline.





### **MATTHEW J. SCHINDLER - INCUMBENT**

I'm currently spearheading an initiative reimagining community development, specifically code department to embrace facilitative and accommodative service models. This will directly affect the current business community and aspiring small businesses to ensure barriers are removed and that we work with businesses to fill our vacant storefronts and fix up our beautiful aging buildings.

Pushed for additional funding, resources, and staffing for our community engagement office, to allow for more city events, festivals, and initiatives to drive foot traffic and visitors into the city.

Supported the addition of a Federal lobbyist so the city can tap into previously unutilized federal.

Continuing to support additional initiatives for public safety, ensuring the future of our utility systems, and pushing for additional initiatives to remedy vacant and blighted properties.



## Mayor - City of Hagerstown

(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)

### **BILL MCINTIRE**

As a successful business owner for 14 years in our city , I understand the challenges and opportunities our business community faces . My experience has equipped me with the knowledge to advocate for policies that support local businesses , promote economic growth , and create vibrant , sustainable business environment . As mayor , I will prioritize streamlining processes , improving infrastructure, and fostering partnerships between businesses and the city government . I am committed to ensuring that our city remains a thriving hub for commerce and innovation . Your vote for me is a vote for an advocate for not only our businesses but for our community as a whole .



## District 6 Representative in Congress

(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name)



**APRIL MCCLAIN DELANEY**  
***DEMOCRAT***

Response was not received by deadline.

**NEIL C. PARROTT**  
***REPUBLICAN***

Response was not received by deadline.





# *Decision '24*

[www.hagerstown.org](http://www.hagerstown.org)