



# SO, YOU WANT TO RUN FOR LOCAL OFFICE?



PRESENTED BY



A playbook on running for local office in Burlington, MA,  
+ why you should get involved

# WHY RUN?



## Direct Impact Right at Home

You live here, which means you're in a great position to help make Burlington a better place to live! Local government is one of the best ways to see change happen in real time in your own backyard.



## Build Relationships

Hundreds of people are civically engaged at the local level here in Burlington. By running, you will build relationships and network with other people who care about our town.



## Contribute in a New Way

Members of town government are largely volunteers who step up to help make decisions, build budgets, vote on issues, and more. This is your chance to be one of those people and leave your mark!



## Learn How it All Connects

Whether it's building a new school, paving a road, or creating a new social program—How does budgeting and planning account for a changing world and evolving community needs? Learn how different facets of local government are connected.

# AVAILABLE POSITIONS IN APRIL 2025

*Meeting schedules are subject to change.*

## Town Meeting

Approve town & school budget and other financial requests; approve additions and changes to town's general and zoning bylaws. Meets multiple nights in Jan, May, and Sept.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 6 per precinct (42 total).*

## School Committee

Hire and supervise the Superintendent; set School District policy; collaborate with Superintendent to set School Department budget. Meets twice a month plus subcommittees.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 2.*

## Select Board

Approve appointments to town offices + appointed Boards and Commissions, use of the Town Common, liquor license applications, utility work grants of location and tax levy. Supervise Town Administrator. Meets twice monthly.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 2.*

## Board of Assessors

Assess real estate values, work with Select Board to set the tax rate for the town. Approve abatements. Meets once per month.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 1.*

## Recreation Commission

Hire & supervise Recreation Director, set policies, direction and budget for the Recreation Commission. Meets two Mondays per month.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 1.*

## Town Moderator

Moderate Town Meeting according to Robert's Rules of Order, ensure orderly debate and voting. Meets multiple nights in January, May, and September.  
*Term length: 1 year. Positions available: 1.*

## Board of Health

Set policy and direction for the Health Department, hire & supervise Director of Public Health, approve and administer special permits. Meets twice per month, plus subcommittees.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 2.*

## Planning Board

Approve special permits and site plans and weigh in on issues related to zoning. Also hire & supervise Planning Director, cast advisory votes on relevant Town Meeting Warrant Articles. Meets twice per month, plus subcommittees.  
*Term length: 5 years. Positions available: 2.*

## Library Board of Trustees

Set policies, direction, and budget for the library; hire and supervise the Library Director. Meets one Thursday per month.  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 2.*

## Constable

Arm of the law enforcement; serve papers, responsible for postings of official Warrants (such as Town Meeting Warrants).  
*Term length: 3 years. Positions available: 2.*

Got Questions? Reach out to a current member of the Board you're interested in. You can find the full list at <https://www.burlington.org/167/Boards-Commissions>.

# START CAMPAIGNING EARLY



Get started now – you should craft your message and begin planning immediately to get a leg up ahead of election day.

**Most campaign activities occur after many early voters have already cast their ballots.** In light of this, you're better off starting your campaign strategy early — ensuring your messaging is in front of potential voters before early voting starts in mid-March.

## Key Dates

- Jan 2- Feb 12 - Take Out Nomination Papers (and start campaigning!)
- Feb. 14 - Return Nomination Papers With Signatures
- **Mid-March - Early voting begins**
- April 5 - Local Election

**Note: Campaigning isn't nearly as linear as our game board layout might make it seem. You and your team will likely be engaging in all these activities at once!**

## START HERE

Deciding you want to run is the first step!

### RESEARCH THE POSITION

Start by understanding the activities and duties of the position you are interested in. This guide is an excellent way to start; current Board members are also a great resource.

### ASSEMBLE A TEAM & FUNDRAISE

Campaigns for town-wide offices are required to have an additional person involved; often that person serves as treasurer. Start fundraising to support your campaign, including the cost for signs, events, & more. Be sure to keep close track for your campaign finance report!

### ELECTION DAY

Set up a station in the allowed area to meet voters and celebrate the culmination of your hard work!

### LAST-MINUTE PUSHES

Using social media, word of mouth, sign-holding, and public appearances, continue to campaign up until election day.



### CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

Decide on your platform and why you care about this specific role. Test your message with friends and family to ensure it resonates. Share online, in press releases, and in person.

### FRIENDS CARDS

A hand-written card from a member of your campaign team can help voters understand why you think you're the best person for the job. You'll want to get an early start on these, too!

### SIGNS AND MAILERS

Send mailers out early and invest in yard signs to build name recognition. Plan out your timeline now — and send by the first week of March to catch early voters.

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

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## **Social Media**

Ensure you're reaching voters where they're at — share your candidacy and platform on social platforms to raise awareness and give voters a way to connect with you.



## **Website**

Build a website so you can have your platform and key points readily available in one place. Direct candidates here from your social media, emails, etc.



## **Networking**

Appearing at local events and in spaces with other Burlington residents is key for name recognition and to hear about would-be constituents' concerns. Don't discount the importance of showing your face at every opportunity!



## **Press Releases**

Develop simple announcements to share with the press (including the Buzz) and voters announcing your candidacy and other campaign activities.



## **Flyers and Posters**

Using free online tools like Canva can help you shape your policy statements in digestible formats like flyers or posters, for use both online and in real life.



## **Media Appearances**

Contacting local media to appear in voter guides or to speak on issues is a key way to build name recognition and credibility among voters.



## **Fundraising**

Fundraising might feel daunting, but you don't have to do it all alone. Start early and let your team help so you can focus on ensuring voters hear your message and know your name.