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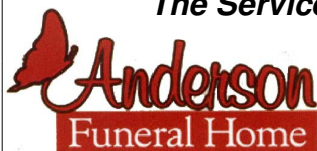


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Five candidates run for two 'in' seats on HA school board

Editor's Note: This is the second in a multi-part series detailing candidates for the April 17 General Election. Information is based on answers to a candidate questionnaire.

Hoopeston Area voters have choices in the April 17 race for school board.

Five candidates are running for two seats in the "in" part, which used to be the former Hoopeston School District.

Incumbent Mark Wagoner and newcomers Joel Bird, Kathleen Franklin, Stephen P. Highfill and Mark Schaumburg are running for two four-year terms.

Incumbent Steve Unger did not seek reelection.

In the "out" part of the district, Chris Elliott of Rankin is running unopposed. Current member Mark Eighner did not run again.

Bird, 30, is a Hoopeston Area High School graduate and attended DACC. He is a grain inspector and manager of Champaign/Danville Grain Inspection's Hoopeston office.

Issues facing the district include keeping the school here and into the future. "I would like to be able to see the school flourish and keep the jobs here in the city," he said. "I don't want to see a child's education suffer because of them being a number at an over-populated school."

Bird said assets he would bring to the position include the ability to be impartial and listen to both sides of an issue, especially because he has no children in the district yet, and a strong dedication to the school and to Hoopeston.

Franklin, 42, has an associate's degree in computer networking and is working towards a bachelor's degree in information systems technologies. She is employed as an associate end user support person.

Franklin sees the major issues and communication



between parents teachers, students and administration and low test scores and graduation rates. As for communication, "implementing the STI program was a good start; but there is more room for improvement," she said.

STI allows parents to monitor their students' progress, homework, grades and other information online.

As for the low test scores and graduation rates, Franklin said scores are higher at the grade school level, then drop. "I believe to address this, we need to look at curriculum and if we are providing adequate tools for our kids," she said. "We need to find ways to keep kids in school. Every single kid has the ability to succeed and every single kid should be encouraged to find that within themselves."

Franklin said she has been sending children through the district for 16 years. "I am very familiar with its strengths and weaknesses," she said.

Highfill, 35, graduated from Hoopeston Area and attended DACC and Eastern Illinois University. He is currently manufacturing supervisor at Hoopeston Foods.

Issues facing the district involve the need to put aside personal agendas and feelings when voting on matters and maintaining a reasonable budget. To ensure this, Highfill said he would ask himself, "Is this decision the best decision for all of the children involved," and would also make decisions to stay within budget restrictions. He also said he would like to thoroughly investigate before making a decision that affects an individual student, whether it be for a positive or negative matter.

Schaumburg, 43, graduated from Buckley-Loda High



FRANKLIN

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Candidates continued from other side

School and Lincoln Tech in Indianapolis, Ind. He is a station leader at Baltimore Aircoil, Paxton, where he has worked for 23 years.

Schaumburg said he is open-minded and will be well-informed before making important decisions. He doesn't believe there are major issues facing the district at this time but said hiring a superintendent is a priority.

Four of Schaumburg's six children currently attend Hoopeston Area schools.

"If elected...I will do my very best to see that the

Hoopeston Area school system is maintained in ways that benefit both its students and the community," he said.

Wagoner, 48, attended Hoopeston schools and graduated from the Illinois Police Training Institute. He is a self-employed contractor and has served on the board for four years, three as vice-president.

Issues facing the district include working with the new superintendent to make sure the desires of the board are being addressing and improving communication at all levels. Also, with many teachers eligible to retire, it is important to attract quality people and then support and



WAGONER

Weather



Breezy today. High 51. Tonight, blustery. Low 31. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, chance of rain late. High 53, low 41.

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encourage them once they're here. Working with the Rossville-Alvin district and possibly adding more vocational classes are also important, he said.

Wagoner said he brings honesty, a hard work ethic, dependability, integrity and common sense to the board and that he speaks what he feels, even if it is not politically correct. He has two children attending Hoopeston Area High School.

"I look forward to serving the good people of this district for the next four years," he said.

Obituaries

HOUMES - Mary M. Houmes, 87, of East Lynn died at 3:10 a.m. Tuesday, April 10, 2007 at her daughter's home in rural Rankin. Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at East Lynn United Methodist Church. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery, Hoopeston. Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Friday at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Memorials are suggested to the church or Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital.



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