

**West Windsor Municipal Democratic Committee  
Local Candidate Endorsement Process  
January 29, 2021**

**I. Purpose:**

The purpose of this Endorsement Process is to support democratically-minded candidates for local office. The strength of our endorsement lies with the support and enthusiasm that our members bring to the campaigns of candidates endorsed by the West Windsor Municipal Democratic Committee (Committee).

The Committee endorsement is more than a stamp of approval: it is a commitment of time, resources, and mutual support.

To receive an endorsement, the Committee's membership must be confident that you share the Committee's values of accountability, transparency, and inclusive democracy, while also aligning with the Committee's policy platform.

In addition, the purpose of this Endorsement Process and the activities leading up to endorsement is to form a cohesive Slate of candidates.

**II. Endorsement Type:**

Nine months prior to the upcoming local election, the type of endorsement will be selected by majority vote of Committee members present at the meeting or through electronic means. The vote will be between the two options described below. The Endorsement Committee shall run the vote.

**Option 1 - Slate endorsement**

A "slate" is defined as a group of candidates that run in multi-seat or multi-position elections on a common platform. A Slate need not contain candidates for all open positions. In this type of endorsement, the slates are formed before the endorsement and are voted on as a group. In the slate endorsement type, only one slate will be endorsed per election cycle.

If the winning slate has a vacant position, the slate may request in writing to the Committee Chair for a special vote to endorse the new candidate(s) to the slate.

**Option 2 - Individual endorsement**

In this type of endorsement, individual candidates seek endorsement for a specific position and are endorsed for that position. After the endorsement, the winning candidates shall form a slate with cohesive messaging, campaign manager, literature, website, and other campaign activities. Although endorsed as individuals, the Committee endorses the combined slate.

**III. Endorsement Process:**

**1. Endorsement Timeline:**

For each year in which there is a local election process, the endorsement meeting and vote must occur no later than 5 months prior to the election. The endorsement timeline, to be established upon by the Endorsement Committee in advance, must be emailed to all Committee and leadership of the West Windsor Democratic Club 90 days prior to the endorsement meeting of each year in which there is a local election process.

Example November Election Timeline (Exact dates TBD)

December	Endorsement Committee appointed by Chair
January	Endorsement Type vote Endorsement Committee meets
Early February	Email Notice of Endorsement Timeline & Application Information for Candidates
March	Interested Candidate Meeting
mid--April	Application Due and Forwarded to Membership
Early May	Endorsement Meeting and Vote
Early November	Election

## **2. Interested Candidate Meeting**

At least 30 days prior to the application due date, the Endorsement Committee shall host an Interested Candidate Meeting. The purpose is to provide information about the process, discuss platform ideas, solicit comments, and nurture potential slates, if relevant. This meeting is optional and is open to any resident of West Windsor.

## **3. Endorsement Eligibility and Application Content**

All seeking endorsement must be eligible for the offices they seek.

The application, to be drafted by the Endorsement Committee, must provide the following information:

- a. Name and position sought by each member of the slate (ie. Name 1 – Mayor, Name 2 – Council) or by the individual
- b. Identification of the slate's Campaign Manager, or if an individual, a suggestion/recommendation of a Campaign Manager
- c. Overview of the slate's/individual's reasoning for running, including their vision for West Windsor, those voting coalitions they can offer, and the top 3 issues they see facing the town.
- d. Responses to issue-based questions as determined by the Endorsement Committee.
- e. Information about qualifications and experience, which may include employment, volunteer, and education information. Leadership roles should be highlighted.
- f. Information about the history of involvement with the Democratic Party, if any.

g. A statement on fundraising expectations including any information available regarding the slate's/individual's ability and plan to raise funds to support their election.

f. A statement on time expectations, including expected time commitment to campaign

g. Sample marketing materials, which can include flyers, brochures, Website url address, and/or FB Page (or equivalent) of the slate/individual

Candidates must also include and agree to the following language in their application:

"In seeking the endorsement of the West Windsor Democratic Committee, I hereby agree to be bound by the results of this endorsement process and will participate in the slate as chosen by this Process. Furthermore, if I am not selected as an endorsed candidate/slate, I will support the decision rendered by this Endorsement Process and support the Democratic ticket. Finally, I pledge not to run in this election on another or competing slate, as this will dilute the impact of West Windsor Democrats."

#### **4. Application Submission**

Slates/Individuals seeking endorsement must submit a signed application (see attached at the end of this process document) for endorsement at least three weeks prior to the endorsement meeting via email to the Municipal Committee Chair and Endorsement Committee Chair. Unsigned applications will not be accepted. If using the slate endorsement type, all information for the slate as a whole will be provided on one application.

The applications will be distributed to eligible voters, along with the endorsement process rules by email at least two weeks prior to the endorsement meeting.

#### **5. Endorsement Meeting**

##### **A. Voter Eligibility**

There will be two voting groups:

**a. West Windsor Democratic Committee Members.** Eligible voters include duly elected or appointed members of the West Windsor Municipal Committee. Committee members must be appointed at least 45 days prior to the Endorsement Meeting to be eligible to vote.

**b. West Windsor Democratic Club.** West Windsor Democratic Club may contribute three eligible voting delegates to the Endorsement Meeting. *The West Windsor Democratic Club may choose how to contribute those delegates' votes which can range from appointed individual voters to the results of a West Windsor Democratic Club vote held concurrently or any other chosen method.*

##### **B. Moderator**

At least two weeks prior to the endorsement vote, the Committee Chair will select a neutral party ("Moderator") from outside of West Windsor to conduct the election proceedings, whose name will be provided along with the endorsement rules to all eligible voting members as defined herein.

### **C. Presentation by Candidates**

Each qualified slate/individual who has submitted a timely application will be allocated time per candidate to make a presentation about their qualifications to the voters, immediately followed by a question and answer period. Presentations, as well as the question and answer periods, will be presided over by the assigned Moderator. Each slate/individual will address the voters and answer questions separately, with the other slate's candidates/individuals sequestered in a separate room until called in for their individual time slot. Names will be drawn randomly to determine the order of presentations.

### **D. Voting Process**

At the conclusion of the presentations and question and answer periods, the Moderator shall call for the vote. Committee members shall cast a vote, with Committee members only voting once. Only those present at the meeting may vote and no proxies will be given. The elections shall be conducted using a simple vote with the option of choosing one or none of the listed slates, utilizing paper ballots.

If after the first round of voting, no option has achieved 51% or more of positive votes, the slate/individual with the fewest votes will be removed from the ballot and a second vote will occur. Subsequent votes will occur until a single option receives 51% or more of positive votes. If "none of the listed slates/individuals" receives 51% or more of positive votes, the vote will conclude without an endorsement. ("None of the listed slates/individuals," as an option, will always remain on the ballot.)

### **5. Endorsement Committee**

The Endorsement Committee shall consist of at least 3 members, all of whom are active committee members, and shall be formed for each municipal election. The Endorsement Committee Chair and members shall be appointed by the Municipal Chair before January 1st of the election year.

The Endorsement Committee shall:

- 1) Establish the application and local issue questionnaire
- 2) Publish the timeline of the Endorsement Process
- 3) Host the Interested Candidate Meeting
- 4) Distribute the applications
- 5) Determine and publish the Endorsement Meeting proceedings
- 6) Determine and publish the final rules of endorsement voting
- 7) Distribute the materials submitted by the slates/individuals to the voting members
- 8) Provide credentials for eligible voters at Endorsement Meeting

### **6. Miscellaneous**

In the event that a slate/individual endorsed by this Process drops out or is for any other reason ineligible to run, the Committee Chair may convene a new Endorsement Process in accordance with a modified version of these rules.

### **7. Approval and Amendment Process**

These rules may be amended by a simple majority of the Committee members in attendance at least 60 days prior to any Endorsement Process and shall take effect immediately.

Attested to by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristin Epstein, Chair  
West Windsor Democratic Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sujit Singh, Vice Chair  
West Windsor Democratic Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tirza Wahrman, Treasurer  
West Windsor Democratic Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grace Power, Secretary  
West Windsor Democratic Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_