

2021 Brookline PAX Endorsement Questionnaire

BROOKLINE PAX ACTIVELY SUPPORTS

Public Education — We are strongly committed to public education, from early childhood through graduate school, including comprehensive curricula, fair and tax-based funding, supporting teachers and their unions, and high standards and testing without overly high stakes.

Government Services — We support sustained state and local investment in quality municipal services such as police, fire protection, public health, libraries, schools, parks, recreation, and public works, as well as state services such as social programs, transportation and environmental protection. PAX and its endorsed candidates pursue policies of support for basic human needs, including healthcare for all, affordable housing and services for both children and senior citizens.

Public Employees and Organized Labor — We stand up for fair labor practices and for policies that show respect for the dedicated people whose competence and commitment make Brookline and this Commonwealth work.

Respect for the Environment — PAX supports aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of toxic emissions into our air and water; energy policies that are “green,” sustainable and economically just; the maintenance and enhancement of green spaces everywhere; and sound environmental regulation to ensure that these goals will be achieved.

Diversity, Social Justice and Peace — We work to preserve ethnic and economic diversity and to increase social, racial, economic justice for all, through affordable housing, universal healthcare, and all fundamental civil rights and liberties. We defend the human rights of all people—regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or location; and we support truly multilateral solutions to international affairs. We oppose the unilateral (or near-unilateral) use of force, with the exception of defensive force justified under international law by clear and convincing evidence of a serious and imminent threat of aggression—and then only to a degree commensurate with the magnitude of the threat.

www.BrooklinePAX.org

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limit answers to 2 total (single-spaced) pages—including questions

AND, please re-name this document as asked in our cover email
“Latin” text used as a space filler – delete and substitute your answers!

Name: Marissa Vogt Address: 12 Tabor Place Precinct: 4 Term: 3 yrs
Phone: 617-487-1068 Email: vogt4brookline@gmail.com
Recent occupation(s): Senior Research Scientist, Center for Space Physics, Boston University
Elected/appointed gov't & public interest group *offices held*, especially local, and including committees: TMM P4 (caucused in) 2020-2021; Pedestrian Advisory Committee Member 2020-present

Do you: Own single family home X; Own condominium ; Rent apartment ; Other

Are you a Brookline school parent/ guardian? School(s): future Pierce School (ages 1 & almost 4), BEEP fall 2021

1. Elections– In recent contested races (including out of district Congressional races, if any), what candidates or ballot questions (local, state, national) have you **actively** supported:

I am an active voter in local and national elections and have attended some protests/marches but I have not actively participated in any recent campaigns. One reason I became a TMM last year was to become more involved politically, though with a full-time job and two young kids I have not had a lot of spare time, especially this past year.

2. WHY ARE YOU RUNNING? What major challenges do you see ahead for Brookline? If elected, where will you focus?
What in your background is pertinent?

The major challenge will be how we deal with the ongoing public health, economic, and racial equity crises and their aftermath. Even in post-pandemic life our local businesses/restaurants will continue to need our support, PSB students will need additional socioemotional and academic resources to help cope with the “lost” school year, and residents who lost income or jobs will need more social services. We need to address racial inequity in Brookline and help our vulnerable residents who have been most affected by the pandemic. Affordable housing will continue to be an issue. In college I was a reporter for our student newspaper, so transparency and accountability are important to me. As a newcomer to Brookline politics, I feel that many parts of our Town government are fairly inscrutable to outsiders, so in my first year as a TMM I have really tried to engage residents in my precinct (though this year has been particularly challenging for community outreach because of the pandemic).

3. BUDGET PRIORITIES: Please rate the following, from very important (5) to not important (1): Affordable housing 5;
Facilities and Streets 3; Libraries 4; Low Taxes 1; Parks 3; Police 3; Fire 3; Public Health 5;
Recreation programs 2; Schools 5; Transportation Alternatives 4

4. LABOR/PUBLIC EMPLOYEES: Brookline’s had recent controversies about both the teachers’ (2016 negotiations and now Covid) and the Police unions (the Nov. T/Mtg vote to approve it). What’s your views (a) generally about how much to support unions, and any history you have on it; and (b) on the aforementioned Police contract (i) for TM incumbents if you votes, and for others how you think you would have voted? **SEE APPENDIX A.** ,

a) I fully support worker’s rights, including the rights of public employees. (My father was a New Hampshire state employee for 20+ years.) Unions, including public employee unions, have an important role in securing good work conditions and in mediating conflict between employees and employers. That being said, I am sometimes uncomfortable with some actions by the police and teachers’ unions, who are hyper-focused on their workers (as they should be – that’s their job!) and not on the overall public interest. (To be clear, it is in the public interest for public employees to be well-compensated and fairly treated, but that is just one part of a larger picture.) b) I voted against the police contract. I did not think we should give the police employees a larger raise than other Town employees – except in very rare circumstances, all categories of Town employees should receive the same cost of living raises. Also, I was unhappy with the way that the contract was presented, which suggested the extra raise included an extra “quid pro quo” for agreeing to begin the first steps (not even the final contract!) in negotiating the terms and conditions of body cameras.

5. HOUSING – What are your views on: (1) in general & very briefly, how urgently Brookline needs more affordable (both subsidized and market rate) housing?; and (2) changing some or all (a) 2-family zones to multi-family and (b) 1-family zones to 2-family? Brookline urgently needs more affordable housing options. We should address the needs of low-income residents by providing additional safe, quality public housing. We also need more “workforce” housing options. Many or all of our 2-family zones should be multi-family, particularly in North Brookline and areas near transit, where there should be no single-family. Development can be done while still addressing many neighborhood preservation concerns (i.e., set restrictions on changes to building exteriors but let interiors be redeveloped into smaller units).

6. ENVIRONMENT – Town Meeting has taken many steps -- e.g., restricting plastic bags & Styrofoam containers; and encouraging alternative transportation, net-zero building, electric vehicles. What involvement if any have you had with such issues? What might be next? I haven’t had any involvement with these efforts, though I support them. My family chooses not to own a car and we compost with Black Earth. I would like to see Brookline adopt this composting program townwide (subsidizing the cost for low income and public housing residents) and I would like to see increased public transit options. We need to continue to develop policies that discourage vehicle ownership (eliminate parking minimums – land would be better used for parks or housing) and encourage more zipcar/ride sharing initiatives.

7. OVERRIDES and DEBT EXCLUSIONS – Generally, how might we balance the needs for housing, school capacity, services, open space, and more, while striving to avoid being even less affordable (e.g., due to higher property taxes)? I’m sensitive to the concerns about making Brookline less affordable, but it seems that our property taxes are lower (percentagewise and in absolute dollars) than neighboring municipalities – overall we may need an even more (non-linear?) progressive property tax system. We should also make sure that we aggressively negotiate our PILOT payments and invest in our Economic Development & Long-Term Planning department to develop a broad commercial tax base.

8. RACIAL CLIMATE: How do you perceive Brookline’s racial climate (i) in the Town workforce, (ii) in our schools, and (iii) in town, generally – especially, please speculate *comparing us with elsewhere in MA and USA*. I have *personally not* experienced or witnessed a negative climate in Brookline, but I am white, and when discussing Brookline’s racial climate, we need to listen to and believe the experiences of BIPOC and people from other marginalized groups. What they say, and what data show, is that systemic racism is very much a problem here in Brookline and we must improve our racial climate. For example: in a recent year, 5 Black female administrators left PSB; BIPOC residents report feeling discriminated against by police on the basis of race; census data show that Brookline is very racially segregated; and BIPOC students are underrepresented in Brookline high school AP (advanced placement) classes by a factor of 3.

9. POLICE DEPARTMENT/POLICE BUDGET: Your view(s) on (i) Brookline police, in general, and (ii) specifically regarding large budget cuts proposed (but defeated) last June? See Appendix B (from Combined Reports to TMM’s)
i) I support the recommendations of the Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline. The police play an important safety role in our community and I am not anti-police, but I do think our community needs a different model of policing.
ii) I voted for the large budget cuts. I received emails from about 80 residents on the topic and I read and replied to each one, and I listened intently during the Town Meeting debate. Ultimately, I voted to cut the budget partly because I think education and public housing should be a higher priority, and I was particularly swayed by the data we saw comparing Brookline's police budget (in terms of \$ per resident or # of police officers per resident) to neighboring towns.

10. TOWN VS. CITY GOVERNMENT: Describe what you see as the pros and cons of town vs. city government, in particular the role of a Select Board vs. a mayor, and the role of Town Meeting vs. a city council.
I am still reading about this issue and I don’t have a firm opinion yet, but I’m glad we’re having the conversation because our current form of government has some problems that could be addressed by becoming a city (or by changing our current bylaws). Town pros include the citizen warrant article petitions and Select Board open meetings.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Very briefly, and optionally, anything else we should consider?
You can find more info. about me and my TMM campaign at <http://bit.ly/vogt4brookline> or @vogt4brookline on Twitter

I would like PAX’s endorsement: Signed electronically: __Marissa F. Vogt____ Date: __March 17, 2021__