

The Alliance For Responsible Open Government In Stillwater (afrogiswhy.com) sponsored a candidate forum on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. All supervisor candidates were invited to attend. Edward Kinowski and Shawn Connelly participated; Christopher Dunn did not attend.

Pursuant to the rules of the Saratoga County League of Women Voters, all videos of the event must be shown in its entirety. Therefore, if you would like to see the candidate forum, you may view a copy at the Stillwater Free Library.

The questions are provided as closely to the specific wording as possible. Every effort has been made to summarize candidate responses objectively and responsibly.

Questions	Kinowski	Connelly
Opening statement	Managed thousands of people, millions of dollars. Experience and expertise in operations, water, building roads, etc. Has been attending town board meetings for more than a year. Retired military. "Give back" commitment.	Two years ago when elected, goal was to keep Stillwater a great place to live and raise a family. Cited accomplishments during this time as the Paul F. Lilac Park, Global Foundries and the Railyard project.
What does each candidate think about term limits?	Researched term limits and found the subject goes back before Teddy Roosevelt. "It's a good thing. It's not the loss of experience." Term limits offer those in office to help grow other leaders. Cited example: if someone has been in office for a very long time and passes away, the community loses. Whereas if they mentor/grow someone, the community still has the knowledge of the experienced leader while developing a new one.	Discussed his father being in the service and stationed in Alaska where he taught survival training. Believes that he fought for our rights and that this right should not be taken away. "That's not what politics is about."
One of the hardest aspects of government is communication. What do you propose to improve communications?	Personally reach out to constituents and utilize local newspapers and The Express to increase town business visibility. Need "more response and action." Improve town website.	Receives criticism about the town website and he agrees it needs more attention. He stated he does "a very good job communicating." His office is always open, it's a part-time position and he spends at least 8 hours a day at town hall.

Questions	Kinowski	Connelly
<p>What do you think about extending the supervisor's term from 2 to 4 years and if you think it is a good idea, would you take the lead on it?</p>	<p>Good idea. Four years would give time to do more. Would advocate for it, but believes this should come from the people and to let them vote on it.</p>	<p>Cited several other supervisors have four year terms and he learned a lot from them. Any will tell you the first term is the most difficult and 2 years is not enough. It takes a lot of time to get up to speed, and the job is tough enough "but being a part-time job and having only two years, it is a strike against you." It should go to public referendum.</p>
<p>Sales tax revenue is the largest single source of revenue for the town. Explain in detail methodology and logic as to how you arrive at the sales tax figures in the preliminary budget.</p>	<p>"I am not going to put the people at risk any time I am your supervisor. I'm a bit more conservative." Reads three newspapers a day and knows that the economy is questioned right up to the federal level. "The last thing I would do is to inflate the figure." Needs to do the right thing; try not to raise taxes and "be a resident first." Would make the process more transparent (he attended three budget meetings and three workshops, no material available for anyone.)</p>	<p>"I am not very conservative." Believes that with Global Foundries (1200 people eating breakfast, lunch and dinner), the Intermodal train site, Water Authority water line installation, and extended season at the race track (4 days), sales tax revenue will be better. Says "if the board wants to go back and take it out of the budget, that's why we have a democracy."</p>
<p>What plans do you have to foster and enhance the relationship between the Village and Town governments?</p>	<p>Establish friendly, working relationship to work together.</p>	<p>Isn't aware of a problem with the mayor. "Politically may not have the same views, but we work those things out." Water is the biggest issue that has festered for a long time.</p>
<p>What is integrity?</p>	<p>"I live by that. It's one of the codes in the Air Force that was drilled into me. It's who you are; who you represent. Are you honest? Are you trustworthy? Yes, I'm all of them."</p>	<p>"It's when you say something that people take you for that word and people believe you are giving them the truth. My father was that kind of person and he taught me that. Integrity is something that is earned and not something you are born with."</p>

Questions	Kinowski	Connelly
<p>The supervisor position has many roles, including Chief Fiscal Officer for the Town of Stillwater. What are the key responsibilities of such a role and what experience do you bring to the table to assure financial security of the town?</p>	<p>Managed budgets (\$30 million to \$300 million) for a “very long time.” (Air Force and Air National Guard – handling money for 36 years). Handled budgets to run four installations world-wide.</p> <p>Red card used to add time to respond: the budget is the most important thing to manage a business. “I have a vast amount of experience... and outside of just working with it, directing what you buy, running installations, deciding you need to buy this and not that, what roads to pave or not pave, and establishing priorities. It’s so critically important to make the hard decisions to support the taxpayers.” When running the installations, “it wasn’t his objective to spend government money.”</p> <p>“I’m a resident here and an American. I spent very frugally and watched every step we took and I wasn’t frivolous.”</p>	<p>Stated that when he went to school, he was strong in math. Prior to becoming supervisor, he was in the mortgage business for five years. He had someone help him “with the budget the first term and we have a very good person works for the town who does that.”</p> <p>Red card used to add time to respond: agrees with Kinowski that it is very important but stated that it “is not just my responsibility.” “Five people were elected to do the job and it’s not one person’s role.” Once he “does the tentative budget, cuts are up to the board.”</p> <p>States “I don’t have \$30 million budget experience but I have lived in the town of Stillwater and we’ve done a very good job managing the money with the debt left behind and saved the town a lot of money in, and I believe this is something that can be learned.”</p>

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<p>The supervisor's position is considered "part-time." With the potential growth in town (Global Foundries) and other growing needs, what time commitment do you think is necessary to properly do the job and what time commitment will you make?</p>	<p>"I'm retired and that has its advantage in some respects." Believes the hours can't be added up and that it is a morning to night job. Plans to spend a lot of time working at it and communicating with the board members and committees. "With their input and how you communicate, that's the mechanism that really runs the town and that's what needs to be improved."</p>	<p>"I definitely believe it's a full time position." Several other communities have it. We would have to pay for it (double if not more than we pay now). For what the job pays, "you would never want to break it down into an hourly wage."</p> <p>"I have the time and I have the commitment. And the other job I do do is the mortgage business" which can be done nights and weekends. States he is "very accessible" and doesn't see that changing.</p>
<p>What is your definition of leadership as it pertains to the supervisor position?</p>	<p>Presented example: Someone could be appointed to a leader's position, but they might not always wind up being a leader. "Why is that? Because those people who work for them may not think that person has the qualities of a leader."</p> <p>"A leader is someone who is going to take the responsibility for the job he has been assigned and pulls people together to make the things happen that need to happen."</p>	<p>Two years ago "took that role on" when he ran for supervisor. Republicans did not have a candidate and he "stepped up to be a leader" and "eventually was supported by them somewhat." "Goal of the leader is to fight for his job." There are some issues on the town board. "Sometimes you can only settle them by the old democratic ayes and nays."</p>
<p>If a resident has a problem and needs the assistance of the town supervisor, what process should he or she follow to obtain assistance? And what communication should he or she expect?</p>	<p>Establish contact list to get people to the right place the first time when possible ("one stop shopping") and have a list of emergency numbers always available.</p>	<p>Has had calls such as a dog running loose, and he has had to direct the caller. Cell phone is on 24/7. Gets numerous emails, which he answers quickly. "Being in the office as much as I am," the job is 24/7. It can be done on PT basis, but definitely need to be available 24/7.</p>

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<p>Why was the intermodal facility not on the planning table for the Town of Stillwater with so many potential emissions, traffic and noise generated when part of it is contiguous with the Town of Stillwater? When</p>	<p>“Not being your current supervisor, I can’t explain where the hiccups occurred.” One of the things he would not have done was to give lead agency status to Halfmoon. “You never advocate part of your position if you have a position to take.” The project is in Stillwater and he saw their website (www.movethebridge.com), offered his assistance, and suggested they go to the town board, which they ultimately did. Since that time, the board passed a resolution in an attempt to help them.</p>	<p>Disagrees. “Lead agency is given to communities all the time.” (Stillwater gave lead agency to others for the Esplanade and AMD). For Route 67 project, Process was never done (by engineers); they never filed with our building department and we “tried to do right thing since then.” Need to “go through the process now with the applicant as he should have done originally.”</p>
<p>How are you going to retain some of the nice farmland? Part of the charm of the village and town is the farmland. How do you personally feel about it?</p>	<p>Identifies difference of personal feelings and what it takes to run the town. He read the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Included, residents were queried on what they wanted to have. “With proper planning and zoning,” can preserve rural areas. Corridors are established by the Comprehensive Plan for commercial development. Need to bring business to offset growing taxes. “If you don’t grow, taxes will continue to increase.” We are becoming a bedroom community through loss of business over the years.</p>	<p>“I believe in protecting the farmlands. There are plenty of acts to protect them.” Worked with Saratoga Plan. Let the planning board know we want farm land conserved and not to turn into Clifton Park.</p>
<p>What is your feeling about the need or no need to combine the town and village under one government?</p>	<p>“Times may dictate change. I can’t answer that because the people have to.”</p> <p>Recognizes cultural needs of village residents who want to maintain their identity. If we can not control expenses (all over the U.S.), this may become a reality. “I would bring the reality to the people.”</p>	<p>“I don’t believe it is something the town should go after.”</p> <p>“Layers of government are not necessarily good, but people have the right to go to the village and town, they know where the boundaries are.”</p> <p>“If the village and town could work well together, the village would have to ask the town to take it over.”</p>

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<p>What is your greatest accomplishment or experience, and how will that experience assist you in the town supervisor duties?</p>	<p>His last year in the service when he volunteered to go overseas. It was a 24 hour a day operation. Emergency Management was “put to the test” where “sleep was not an option” and where “team is the approach.”</p> <p>“It takes more than one (person) to do the job.”</p>	<p>Winning the election 2 years ago and signing the Global Foundries contract.</p> <p>Red card used for additional time to add: last year’s ice storm and “the way we pulled together as a community.”</p>
<p>Why did the elected officials, village, town and county wait 10 years to inform the people of the (PCB) contamination?</p>	<p>It’s a good thing to not always trust your government and to be activists for the checks and balances. “We learn from horrible experiences.”</p>	<p>“Can’t answer from 10 years ago.”</p> <p>Not in favor of the dredging but the only thing that came out of it was that it shut down village water plant and now the EPA is purifying it. The Village forced the EPA’s hand and the EPA needs to make it right. “They will never make it right for those who got sick.” The Village sold the town water but “I won’t put it on the village.” “No PCBs were ever found in the wells.”</p>
<p>If elected, in the next two years what do you plan on changing?</p>	<p>Two issues: the supervisor is the fiscal manager and the budget is #1 – “you have to start with the budget, review and understand it right to the last cent, and don’t over extend...”</p> <p>#2 is to communicate better with the people and to listen to the residents.</p>	<p>Agrees with communication that it needs to be kept open and that “we continue to work with constituents and the budget is certainly important.” Believes that the toughest part is not answering to some of the people and being a “free thinker.”</p> <p>“Making sure we give quality roads, police and fire and keep taxes from hurting that.” As things expand with Global Foundries, a full time police force may be necessary, “but the people don’t want taxes to go up but you have to give amenities.”</p>

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<p>As supervisor, you are paid a salary and you are a public servant. The money is an extra bonus. Do you feel it's proper to request mileage refunds as part of your duties or to continue to be reimbursed for those costs?</p>	<p>Example provided: Kinowski attended a firehouse meeting where the budget was up for a vote (he was the only one in the audience). There was a discussion about the various places the fire volunteers travel and that when they come from downstate, they come with private buses that they own. Kinowski asked, "Has spending gotten out of hand maybe? Do people ask for a little too much maybe?" He stated maybe we need to scale back and perhaps change the rules. He will volunteer his services as often as possible throughout the town.</p>	<p>"From sitting on the County Board of Supervisors, in your day to day operation of the job, the County asks you on a regular basis to put in for it, I put in for it on several things when I had to go to Albany, but not for going to meet with a resident or going to town hall." Everyone else in town hall puts in for it, it's in the personnel manual, and he doesn't think it should be abused.</p>
<p>The supervisor is the town's personnel manager. What experience do you have in human resources management?</p>	<p>Chief of personnel 109th – 9 years. Worked on the Board of Personnel for the State of New York. Degree in Human Resource Management. Wrote personnel manuals, hundreds of personnel policies, and negotiated contracts (3 unions)</p>	<p>"As far as having that kind of background, absolutely not. As far as being able to work with people on a one to one basis and understanding people, I think I do a good job."</p> <p>"I haven't ran a \$30 million budget," but works well with others, communicates with the other supervisors very well, "but as far as personnel town hall, I do a very good job."</p>
<p>What is your greatest weakness and what do you do with that weakness and how do you turn it around?</p>	<p>One of my worst – "I remember numbers better than names."</p>	<p>Spelling and "my ability to not correct myself when I do stuff like that." "That's why you have a secretary who has a very good background with stuff like that." "I learned to make sure that other people check your work."</p>

Questions	Kinowski	Connelly
<p>(Regarding last year's ice storm) What would you do in case we have another incident of this magnitude? How would you improve the response of our emergency responders?</p>	<p>Wasn't involved in the actual town wide emergency plan, but had personal experience in his area (cut trees to remove them from the road, assisted neighbors, helped people get warm sharing his home) #1 thing is for people to help people.</p> <p>Very skilled people working Emergency Management and there is a plan in place. He understands there are communication issues between all agencies and improvements are extremely important. Only \$500 in last year's budget for Emergency Management. May not even be able to put out a letter with this budget.</p>	<p>One of the key words – volunteers. "I don't think you have to have a \$20k budget." We have volunteers and emergency management in place. "...the 2 fire departments with the biggest issue need a chain of command. Whoever ends up not being the boss is never happy." As supervisor, I was in charge and I didn't know of anything out in the field. Sitting in this building where I was told I had to stay, the firemen did a phenomenal job. The only thing he was told they (Connelly and 2 others) shouldn't have done is stay up 26 hours straight. Think we need to work on the plan, but we did a phenomenal job.</p>
<p>Having attended town meetings for the last 2 years, politics being politics, and politicians being politicians, during the meeting they open the floor to the public. And the public comments. Then there's no more comments and the floor is closed. Then they bring up a key issue to vote on or discuss and the public cannot say anything and it's a critical issue. How would you change that so that all critical issues are put before the public so they can comment?</p>	<p>"I really think the board does a fairly good job on conducting your business, except with all the issues to be discussed, if it isn't on a sheet of paper or someone doesn't address it, you lose the opportunity to discuss it." Everything should be "identified up front" but how many times is there a resolution that is not on the printed format? There is limited information on the given a subjects. Process may be to explain the entire resolution up front.</p> <p>Used red card to extend time: If you have an opening comment in the beginning you should be able to have one in the end.</p>	<p>"I could see if something was brought back to the board that may have been brought up in the past where something was tabled and brought back, it's something a supervisor has no control over when someone takes something off the table." The people should have the right to speak and the process may need to be changed. Maybe the floor needs to be opened up for a specific issue.</p>

Questions	Kinowski	Connelly
Closing statement 1 minute each	<p>”Just because I was in the military, it doesn’t make me an expert.”</p> <p>Comments included what he did do. Worked hard to achieve what he did. Enlisted for 12 years and then started going back to school nights to get degree. Studied and promoted throughout his career. Has a lot of experience.</p>	<p>“I will hopefully move forward in my career as a politician, I enjoy politics and want to stay in. I am not a party politician.” Does what he “feels is right.” He is “on his own” because of lack of support, but “there were enough people who wanted me on the ballot.”</p>