

**Press release from the Woodbury Democratic Town Committee
For immediate release**

For more information

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**Woodbury Democratic Town Committee
endorses four candidates for Region 14 Board of Education**

WOODBURY — The Woodbury Democratic Town Committee has endorsed four candidates for the Board of Education elections to be held on Thursday, June 2.

Candidates who have received DTC endorsement include John Chapman and Maryanne Van Aken, nominees for the two Woodbury board seats open this year; and Sophiezane Bartlett and John Swendsen, seeking election to the two Bethlehem board seats to be contested.

“These four candidates are committed to providing quality education for all students in Region 14, while also making good use of tax dollars,” DTC Chairperson Lesa Peters observed in announcing the endorsements. “Each has a solid understanding of the appropriate role of the Board of Education, and together will bring a wealth of experience in various areas of education and personal involvement in Region 14 schools.”

Peters noted Chapman has served on the Region 14 building committee and participated actively in youth sports as a baseball and basketball coach. Van Aken previously served on the school board, including tenures as chair, vice chair and a member of several committees, and has taken leadership roles in local campaigns to curb bullying and substance abuse.

“As a professional civil engineer, Chapman will bring business and building experience to the board, and he has demonstrated his skills in public speaking and consensus building,” Peters said. “Van Aken’s varied contributions range from her experience in sales and budget management to her leadership in volunteer organizations serving our community.”

Peters observed the two Bethlehem candidates endorsed by the DTC also will provide educational and professional breadth to the Region 14 board. She noted Bartlett, who holds a master’s degree in special education, has extensive experience as a special education teacher, as well as a day care and foster care provider. In addition to his work as school bus driver in Region 14, Swendsen has gained management, training and supervisory experience in previous positions with the Southbury Training School Fire Department, a Prospect-based environmental services firm, and a Bethlehem dairy farm.

“These candidates understand the educational and developmental needs of Region 14 students, and have proven their commitment to youth in their professional and personal lives,” Peters said. “The Chapman, Van Aken and Swendsen families all have children who attended and graduated from Region 14 schools.”

“The Board of Education needs members with diverse educational and professional experience, especially as members face the critical task of hiring a new superintendent for Region 14,” Peters said. “We encourage all residents of Bethlehem and Woodbury to vote for these candidates to ensure quality education and effective leadership for our public schools.”