The Franklin County Sheriff Election

By Julian Adam

In Franklin county, a new sheriff is elected every 6 years, but this year is a bit different. This year's election is a special election to fill the void that Christopher Donelan left. There are 3 candidates running for the position: Lori Streeter, Gary Gagnon, and Jon Hall.

When Christopher Donelan–the former sheriff of Franklin County–retired before his term was completed, Governor Maura Healey appointed Lori Streeter to be the interim sheriff (an interim sheriff takes the job of a former sheriff that left office before their term was over, and keeps it until election day, when candidates run to officially fill the office). Now that election day is nearing, Streeter is running to retain her seat.

Running against Streeter are Gary Gagnon, a former correction officer, deputy sheriff, and police sergeant; and Jon Hall, the former police chief of Northfield, MA.

Gary Gagnon



Gagnon, 42, is running a reform campaign, and states in a Greenfield Recorder article that the current Sheriff's Department is "riddled with small-town politics and bureaucracy." He says his campaign is about "restoring transparency to the office." He is running as an independent, and says on his Facebook campaigning page that his platform "transcends party affiliation."

If elected, he promises to improve morale in correctional facilities and the department at large, as well as stop the alleged corruption in it. In addition, he wants to focus on chaplain services for those incarcerated. On his Facebook, he says, "Faith-based programs can offer help and rehabilitation and should be supported."

As for concerns, the first is that he is running a reform campaign against a candidate who has only been in office for a little over a year (the usual term is 6 years). His main accusation is that the current sheriff is corrupt, and sacrificing morals for money and power. However, Streeter didn't set her salary, so one could argue that this an unfair accusation. The second is that he wants to get rid of job interviews, removing the human connection aspect, and relying solely on resumés, both of which can cause problems.

Finally, while it doesn't have anything to do with his campaign, it should be mentioned that in 2014, he was fired from the same sheriff's office that he is now running to lead. He was eventually reinstated in 2016, but the fact that he was fired raises questions about his capability to lead the department.

Lori Streeter



Streeter, 62, is the current sheriff of Franklin County. As said previously, she is the interim sheriff closing out Christopher Donelan's term. She is running as a democrat in this sheriff's election, and won the primaries by a landslide. She says that the department "needs leadership that has experience." With her 30+ years of expertise, along with her year-and-a-half as interim sheriff, she believes that she is the best one for the job.

She joined the department in 1985, and cites her experience as one of the first female officers, and her presence for "every major transition in that department," as a perspective that allows her to understand the department better.

According to the Greenfield Recorder, if elected, Streeter promises to "expand the department's educational programming and establish a women's pre-release program, designed to help individuals transition back to society by providing services, training and support."

After Streeter won the September 1st Democratic Party nomination, she said she was grateful for the support and "ready to continue leading with integrity." She lives in Greenfield with her wife, Maggie.

The two biggest concerns with Streeter mainly have to do with her work as sheriff. The Athol Daily News criticized her office spending, citing her $3,000 purchase for matching hooded sweatshirts and $7,200 for parade float materials, office decor, and blinds. According to the Office of the Inspector General Report, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office's spending process was "opaque, chaotic, and deeply flawed" (Shapiro, 2026, page 50).

The other main concern is a seemingly credible story found on Gary Gagnon's Facebook page, in which Gagnon put up campaign signs on public property outside of the Heath Fairgrounds. These signs were removed within an hour by John McDonough, the police chief of Heath. Chief McDonough said he couldn't put them on public property, "just like any other town." Later, Gagnon spotted Lori Streeter signs in the same place he wasn't allowed to put his. He cites McDonough's support for Lori Streeter as the reason for Streeter's signs to stay up, calling it a "two-tiered justice system." (Read the full story here)

Jon Hall



Hall, 45, has served as police chief of Northfield for the past 5 years. Prior to that, he worked as a sergeant, then lieutenant, at the UMass Amherst Police Department. He is running as an unenrolled candidate, and says he is running because he loves Franklin County and he wants to do what he can to support it.

In a video, Hall said, "I'm going to go in there and make this the best Franklin County Sheriff's Office I can for Franklin County because I care about Franklin County." He is also quoted saying, "I make no promises other than I'm going to get up every morning, go to work and work hard."

If elected, Hall promises to use the sheriff's department to supplement law enforcement in its towns and to merge overhead costs like administration, facilities, and equipment in order to aid lower funded individual towns. He also wants to promote litter cleanup across the county, and to enforce illegal dumping regulations. His plans also include the opportunity for inmates to volunteer for community service in local areas. In the Greenfield Recorder, Hall says, "It takes a team. [and] I'm going to have to get to know the team."

His law enforcement career began in 2000 as a security supervisor at GCC, where he also earned an associates degree in criminal justice. He also holds a bachelor's degree in the same subject from Westfield State University. Hall lives in Northfield, where, in addition to being the police chief, he also serves as the JV girls basketball coach at Pioneer Valley Regional School.

There are no major concerns to be found with Hall other than one Facebook post from Tom Herzig, who says Hall cannot find time to speak with voters, and states that Gary Gagnon is the only candidate promoting transparency. While this may be a valid complaint, it should be taken with a grain of salt, considering the fact that Tom Herzig is Gary Gagnon's Campaign Treasurer, which reveals a possible conflict of interest.

Conclusion

After reading this article, you now have a good sense of each candidate, and what they stand for. You can now cast your vote with proper knowledge of each candidate. Do not forget to go out and VOTE.

Sources Cited

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