

ELECTION 2022 | NEW GLARUS SCHOOL BOARD

Five candidates are vying for two seats on the New Glarus School Board. The top four candidates in the Feb. 15 primary will advance to the April 5 election. The terms are for three years. “(I)” is for incumbent.

Alex Bean



Bean

Age: 32
Address: 307 Second St., New Glarus
Family: Married with two children
Job: Manager, enterprise solutions, Exact Sciences

Prior elected office: None
Other public service: None

Education: Bachelor’s degree in biology, Northern Illinois University; Ph.D. in molecular biology, University of Texas at Austin

Email: beanforngsd@gmail.com

Jenny Julseth



Julseth

Age: 39
Address: N9253 Crawford Lane, New Glarus
Family: Married with three children
Job: Permanency planning social worker, Dane

County Department of Human Services

Prior elected office: None

Other public service: As a social worker with Dane County Department of Human Services, I have participated in numerous committees and work groups including policy committee; Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support regional board member; peer support facilitator; hiring, recruitment, retention, Climate Work Group; Judicial Engagement Steering Committee; Camp To Belong Wisconsin, board member; Children, Youth & Families, Out-Of-Home Care Work Group; Children, Youth & Families Advisory Committee; Complex Trauma Work Group; Case Review Committee; New Employee Committee; Trauma Informed Parenting Training for Foster Parents.

Education: Master’s degree in social work, UW-Madison; bachelor’s degree in social work, UW-Whitewater; Stoughton High School

Email: julseth@hotmail.com

Bill Oemichen (I)

Age: 61
Address: W6159 Legler Valley Road, New Glarus
Family: Married with two children



Oemichen

who graduated from New Glarus High School
Job: National security researcher affiliated with UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Law School

Prior elected office: New Glarus School Board since 2019; New Glarus School Board president since 2021; St. Croix County Board, four terms

Other public service: Chair, Wisconsin College Savings Program (EdVest) board since 2006; board treasurer, Group Health Cooperative since 2015; board member, Green County Leaders since 2021; board member, AgCountry Farm Credit Services since 2017; director, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2016-17; board chair and treasurer, Monroe Clinic, 2009-15; board member and chair, UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Board of Visitors, 2009-2015; member, Consumer Oriented and Operated Plans Advisory Board to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010-2012; division administrator, Wisconsin Trade and Consumer Protection Division Administrator, 1996-2001; deputy Minnesota agriculture commissioner, 1989-96; chair, Wisconsin Counties Association Tax & Finance Committee, 1990-96; member, state of Wisconsin school accountability, global climate change, land use and identify theft task forces.

Education: White Bear Lake Senior High School (Minnesota); bachelor’s degree in economics with a concentration in science, technology and public policy, Carleton College; law degree, University of Wisconsin Law School; public policy fellow, University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Policy; and current Ph.D. dissertation candidate in agricultural/national security risk at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School at the University of Saskatchewan.

Website: On Facebook: @BillOemichenforNGSDSchoolBoard

Ron Roesslein

Address: N7662 Highway N, New Glarus
Email: roesslein1204@gmail.com

Heather Thornton

Age: 41
Address: N8273 County Road J, New Glarus
Family: Married with four children
Job: Registered nurse, nursing ed-



Thornton

ucation, UPH-Meriter; organ procurement coordinator, UW Health
Prior elected office: None
Other public service: None

Education: Greenwood High School; bachelor’s degree in nursing, UW-Eau Claire; master’s degree in nursing education, Cardinal Stritch University

Email: heatherthornton80@gmail.com

Q&A
Why are you the best candidate for this office?

Bean: Via my Ph.D., I’ve gained experience instructing both middle school and college classrooms, and my professional career has given me experience managing very large projects and budgets. My priority is to use my skills and passion to help build a school district where the community can communicate and work closely with the board for the best interests of students, staff, and the village as a whole.

Julseth: All children deserve an education that meets their individual needs and supports them to reach their full potential. I believe parents are the experts on their child(ren). Educational staff have knowledge and expertise of child development and educational curriculum. Working together, parents and staff can help each child succeed. I would encourage and welcome direct communication with families and community members, listen to strengths and challenges, and advocate for the well-being and success of all children. Working together, we will be the best team for children in our community.

Oemichen: I have worked closely with district administration, teachers, staff, and the school board to successfully navigate difficult issues and competing interests during a pandemic. My professional risk assessment and health background helps me to guide the district to make the best possible decisions in a very challenging environment. As board president, I strive to lead the board to consensus and to listen to all constituents. Constituents tell me that even when we disagree, they still feel heard. As a result, all of our school board meetings have been respectful and productive. We make progress.

Roesslein: No response.

Thornton: We moved to this area because of the schools and currently have two kids that attend NGSD. I believe this is a great school system and want to make sure it continues to improve. A role

model said to me, “things are always changing. They are either getting better or worse but they never stay the same.” I have been on the board of Small World Daycare for 3 years. I strive to ask hard questions when the board is making decisions while looking at the big picture. I look at all sides of the issue and present my thoughts on different options considering what the long-term effects of each choice is.

What is the most important issue in this election and how would you address it?

Bean: Apart from COVID protocols, the most important issue I’d like to address is that of our special education program. We owe it not only to students in this program but to our entire community to give full effort to investigate ways in which we can better support these students and their families. This sets these children up for success and helps strengthen compassion across all of our students.

Julseth: Providing an education that prepares children to be successful, contributing members of the community, must remain the priority. It is critical to focus on a core curriculum that prepares children for opportunities in post-secondary education, military services, trade schools, and employment; recruitment and retention of quality staff; extra curricular opportunities and facilities that allow children to develop interests, gain confidence, and connect with peers; a fiscally responsible budget; and a strong value system. The children in New Glarus are our future leaders and community members!

Oemichen: COVID is necessarily requiring a great deal of time and attention. However, there are many other important issues facing the district. They include building a cost effective, state-of-the-art primary school and high and middle school tech ed addition that meet the learning needs of our students for years to come; recruit and retain quality staff during a challenging hiring environment; building upon the district’s “Exceed Expectations” rating from the state; and ensuring our school board makes decisions based on common sense, careful research, objective data and community input.

Roesslein: No response.

Thornton: Navigating the pandemic is a big issue. It continues to impact all areas of school – academics, staffing, and after school activities. Unfortunately, the guidelines on what to do during this time are always changing and there are varying sources of these guidelines. I would advocate for us picking a source and following that guideline rather than making our own.

Building the new school and updating the other spaces is another big issue. I would advocate for us staying within budget and keeping academics as the focal point in this expansion.

Amid COVID, how do you balance student learning and student health outcomes?

Bean: Most would agree that in-person learning is best for students, staff and families. In my experience as a researcher, new evidence requires reevaluation of assumptions and practices. My priority will be to have a proactive approach that adjusts mask, distance, and activity protocols that keep the students and staff safe so that we can continue in-person learning whenever possible.

Julseth: Education and long-term success (physically, academically, emotionally and socially) of children should remain the priority of the New Glarus School District. Parents choose public education for various reasons, including in-person learning, peer connections, and development of social skills. Over the past two years, administration and staff implemented mitigation strategies that balanced continued learning and the health of children. Parents have been provided with the opportunity to vaccinate their child(ren) if they choose. It is time to re-focus on the priority – education of children.

Oemichen: My top priority is to ensure our 1,000 4K-12 students are safely in the classroom to learn to their greatest possible potential. Virtual instruction has proven to be challenging for many students and has led to many falling behind. There is also considerable evidence virtual instruction leads to delayed social development and to mental health concerns. I will do everything possible to keep our students in the classroom to learn while taking mitigation measures to keep students and staff safe.

Roesslein: No response.

Thornton: This is the million-dollar question right now. I would advocate for us picking a guideline and following with that source. I would also remind families not to send kids to school sick. In the past 2 years we have learned a lot about different resources we have for and within our education system. We need to harness these resources and use them to assist with the kids who are home sick or those that need additional help/resources. For example, we know that long-term, online school does not work for most but it can be a support for someone who learns from seeing or hearing or is out sick.

ELECTION 2022 | BARNEVELD SCHOOL BOARD

Three candidates are vying for the Town of Brigham seat on the Barneveld School Board. The top two candidates in the Feb. 15 primary will face each other in the April 5 general election. The term is for three years.

Kevin Clougherty

Age: 69
Address: 5212 Middle Earth Road, Barneveld
Family: Married with one adult son
Job: Retired

Prior elected office: None

Other public service: Board member, Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts

Education: Bachelor’s degree of arts, UW-Milwaukee

Email or website: krclougherty@gmail.com

Jaci Haack



Haack

Age: 38
Address: 5218 Middle Earth Road, Barneveld
Family: Married with four children
Job: Vice president of strategic accounts, Virgin Pulse

Prior elected office: None

Other public service: Volunteer, Rec Department Coach, multiple sports for three years

Education: Black Hawk High School; bachelor’s degree in jour-

nalism, UW-Madison; master’s degree in business administration

Email or website: jlherbst@uwalumni.com

Jennifer Knight



Knight

Age: 48
Address: 2544 County Road H, Barneveld
Family: Married with two children in the Barneveld School District
Job: IT director,

Group Health Cooperative of South Central WI; CrossFit coach and co-owner, Trollway CrossFit

Prior elected office: None

Other public service: None

Education: Master’s degree in organizational leadership; bachelor’s degree in human resources; paralegal certificate

Email or website: jenlk329@gmail.com

Q&A
Why are you the best candidate for this office?

Clougherty: Prior to my retirement, I had over 30 years experience as a benefits and risk management consultant to school districts throughout the state. I facilitated training in school shooting and suicide prevention, employee health improvement, and how to increase the efficiency of the most widely used school computer systems. I would also

work to keep children in school as reason allows, expand high-value opportunities for all students, and believe I could assist the district leadership to manage costs.

Haack: I currently have 3 kids that attend school in this district and will have 4 kids in the district next year. I will be an advocate for every student and staff member and will listen fairly to all issues regarding the school. I care deeply about the students, staff and community members that the decisions regarding the school affect and I have a truly impartial and fact/data-based approach to solving issues.

Knight: I chose to run for school board because I want to have a deeper connection with the community. I have no particular agenda. I am in a leadership role in my career, as well as a small business owner, both of those roles have taught me to listen to understand from a place of curiosity, not judgment. I have experience making complex decisions and engaging in dialog with others to understand all aspects of those decisions. My skill set will equip me to participate in a meaningful way with the other Board members.

What is the most important issue in this election and how would you address it?

Clougherty: The district is searching for a new District Administrator. My past experience and connections to educational organizations and associations may provide additional resources to find a candidate who would be the best fit for the district. Also school districts face a serious challenge

with no increase in state funding for this second year of the budget cycle. I believe my experience could help to discover and make the most of any additional student learning opportunities available with minimal cost to the district.

Haack: COVID has been such a split issue amongst the staff, students and community and it feels top-of-mind for everyone. My approach would be to address it based on the data. As someone who looks at health care data all day, every day, data is not something you can argue with – numbers are black and white. And not the overarching data in the county or state. The actual data that applies to those that are spending their time in the school all day, every day.

Knight: Rebounding from COVID, getting the kids who have fallen behind due to the disruption back on track, and continuing to monitor mental health. In order to rebound effectively, we need stability in our school. The first step is hiring a new school superintendent. I would approach this search looking for a candidate who has an understanding of a rural school district. I have experience with interviewing and hiring. With experience interviewing and hiring from my 20 years in leadership, I believe I can be an asset in the hiring process.

Amid COVID, how do you balance student learning and student health outcomes?

Clougherty: All indications are that the community spread of COVID-19 may be much less of

an issue by the start of the next school year. Meanwhile, we need to keep our children and families safe; and do what’s best for everyone in our community. We can accomplish those goals by following the expert guidance from the Iowa County Health Department. I think the current board has done a better job of keeping children engaged with in-person learning than many districts, while still adhering to that sound advice.

Haack: I want to ensure that all students and staff feel safe, but that parents also feel that they have a say in health care decisions regarding their children. This is why I think looking at the data that applies to our students will help to ensure we are making decisions based on something that truly applies to our students and staff. COVID is a virus that we need to learn to live with and not in fear of, and it’s important to me that learning and mental health are not overshadowed by it.

Knight: I would continue in the manner the current school board has, following the science, data, and recommendations of health officials. Barneveld has done an extraordinary job of keeping the kids in school not just this year but bringing them back quickly in a safe manner last year. I do agree that there are social and emotional cues that are missing from having kids wear a mask and not being able to see each other’s faces, however I feel that erring on the side of caution is the best course of action.



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