

# The Daily Item

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021



## Unions endorse Barton, Field, and Hyppolite

By Allysha Dunnigan  
ITEM STAFF



Buzzy Barton



Brian Field



Marven Hyppolite

LYNN — In recent weeks, candidates for councilor at large Buzzy Barton, Brian Field, and Marven Hyppolite have received endorsements from local unions and labor groups for the upcoming election.

Barton and Field received endorsements from Lynn Firefighters Union Local 739, while Hyppolite was endorsed by labor and community groups SEIU Local 509, the North Shore Labor Council, and Mijente.

The president of the Lynn firefighters' union, Matt Reddy, said the union endorsed Barton and Field because they were the two candidates who sought the union's endorsement and who carry the same vision going forward.

"They understand our concerns as far as the firehouses, equipment, staffing and the city growing at such a rate,

UNIONS, A7



ITEM PHOTO | VANESSA LEROY

From left, candidates for councilor-at-large Hong Net, Jose Encarnacion, Brian LaPierre, Nicole McClain, Marven Hyppolite, and Brian Field participate in a forum at the Lynn Museum on Wednesday.

## More words from mayoral and council candidates

By Steve Krause  
FOR THE ITEM

LYNN — The city's housing situation — which some at a debate hosted Wednesday night by the New Lynn Coalition called a crisis — was front and center among the topics discussed by both mayoral and councilor-at-large candidates.

Both Darren Cyr and Jared Nicholson, candidates for mayor in the Nov. 2 election, were present for the forum. All the at-large candidates,

except for Buzzy Barton, were in attendance as well.

The City Council candidates went first in the two-hour forum, followed by Nicholson and Cyr.

Cyr did not support the recently-passed housing production plan, being one of two councilors in opposition. The plan has been approved by the City Council and Planning Board. He reiterated his problems with the plan Wednesday.

"We shouldn't implement any of

it," he said. "We should go back to the drawing board."

Cyr's main issue with the plan has to do with inclusionary zoning, which mandates that certain percentages of units in developments be labeled as "affordable housing." He said such laws would actually discourage new development in Lynn because they would be too costly to implement.

Nicholson, who was on the

FORUM, A7

## Saugus will hold special election on Tech school

By Hannah Chadwick  
ITEM STAFF

SAUGUS — Town Meeting members voted against funding a new Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School (North-east Metro Tech); soon, residents will have their say.

After Town Meeting members voted against funding Northeast Metro Tech in a special session, the vote will now go to the town, which will have the opportunity to weigh in at a later date.

Funding amounts for the new school project would be evenly distributed across all 12 communities eligible to send their students to the school, which includes Saugus.

The Finance Committee met on Oct. 13 to view the financial standing of the requested funds for the construction of the new Northeast Metro Tech.

Chairman of the Finance Committee Ken-

neth DePatto spoke for the committee during the special Town Meeting on Monday. He told Town Meeting members that the Finance Committee was concerned about where the town would find the funding.

"At that time (Oct 13.), the vote was to not recommend Article Two (Northeast Metro Tech funding) because there was not an identifiable source of funding," he said.

In practice, this means that if a Prop 2 1/2 override, or debt exclusion — a temporary increase in property taxes for the purpose of funding capital projects — was initiated and failed, then the money would have to come from somewhere in the town. According to DePatto, this would spell major budget cuts across the board, and could potentially affect the town's police, fire, and school budgets.

"Those three budgets would take a significant hit in order for us to be able to pay this

METRO TECH, A6

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ITEM PHOTO | VANESSA LEROY

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#### CORRECTION

Due to a reporter's error, City Councilor at Large candidate Marven Hyppolite was misquoted in Tuesday's Item. He said: "We should not turn be turning our backs on them (senior citizens.)" *The Item* regrets the error.

## Lynnfield METCO off to 'great start'

By Sam Minton  
ITEM STAFF

LYNNFIELD — After students were stuck home for 18 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lynnfield METCO Director Curtis Blyden said that the 2021-22 school year is off to a great start.

The program has been such a success that METCO, in its recent request for additional funding, is asking for the addition of 10 students to Lynnfield's program.

"In the past we have had as many as 45 or 46 METCO students so the thought is that as long as we have the space, maybe we can get to the level where we've been in the past," School Committee Chair Rich Sjoberg said Wednesday. "Until now, we have only accepted kindergarten students, but there are many more METCO families who may be looking to other desirable towns for

METCO, A6

### CANDIDATE PROFILE

## Who is George Meimeteas?

By Allysha Dunnigan  
ITEM STAFF

A native of Greece, he has a juris doctorate degree and is currently finishing his MBA.

LYNN — Candidate for Ward 3 Councilor George Meimeteas moved to Lynn from Greece at the age of 6 and says he identifies himself as an all-around Lynn man who cares about the city.

A self-employed real estate broker, Meimeteas got his juris doctorate degree from the Massachusetts

School of Law in 2020 and is currently finishing his Master of Business Administration degree from Fitchburg State University.

His wife works in the Lynn Public Schools and they have a 15-year-old son.

He said he is a family man who cares and listens to those around him.

MEIMETEAS, A6



ITEM PHOTO | ALENA KUZUB

Will Sutherland, a 26-year-old man with autism from Lynn, was hired in July 2021 by the new Life Time athletic resort at the Northshore Mall in Peabody with the help of the Northeast Arc's supported employment program.

## Northeast Arc is given experience of a Life Time

By Alena Kuzub  
ITEM STAFF

PEABODY — To start building relationships in the community, the new Life Time athletic resort at the Northshore Mall in Peabody jumped on a proposal from Northeast Arc in Danvers to participate in their supported employment program by hiring a full-time employee with a disability.

Will Sutherland, a young man with autism from Lynn, was referred to the Northeast Arc by

the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission based in Salem. Sutherland, 26, then worked with Sal Palermo, a lead job developer in the Supportive Employment Department at Northeast Arc, to find and secure a job.

"We are a human-services agency," said Palermo. "Supported employment helps individuals with on-the-job training, getting them ready to get into the working field, resume creation, and job coaching."

LIFE TIME, A6



ITEM PHOTO | VANESSA LEROY

Ward 3 City Council candidate George Meimeteas.



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LOW 60°  
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# Saugus is set to hold special election on Metro Tech school

**METRO TECH**  
From A1

debt service with the absence of a debt exclusion," said DePatto. Saugus Town Meeting members had the opportunity to vote on if they chose to stand with the Finance Committee's recommendation for the town or not. Town Moderator Ste-

phen Doherty explained to Town Meeting members that in order for a financial article to come before the Town Meeting, it has to receive a recommendation from the Finance Committee. "Every article that comes before us, if it's a financial article, then it requires a recommendation from the Finance Committee; that recommendation from the

Finance Committee then becomes the actual article we are voting on," said Doherty. DePatto said that the Finance Committee hoped that the members would support their recommendation "with hopes that we can get a debt exclusion in front of the people, let them vote on it, and go from there. "Hopefully, they support

it," he added. And they did, 37-6. After the Town Meeting vote, the article will now go to a special election where the residents of Saugus can cast their ballots on funding the school with a debt exclusion. A date has not yet been set. *Hannah Chadwick can be reached at hannah@itemlive.com.*



ITEM PHOTO | VANESSA LEROY

Ward 3 city councilor candidate George Meimeteas stands at Red Rock Park in Lynn.

## Who is George Meimeteas?

**MEIMETEAS**  
From A1

Moving here from Greece at a young age, Meimeteas said he is a proud small-business owner, and knows many others in his ward with similar stories to his. "It makes me extremely proud to share the American Dream with them," he said. One of Meimeteas' favorite things about Ward 3 is its variety of businesses and the fact that people can walk the beach in the morning, play basketball at one of the parks, and end the night at one of the food establishments. "I love Ward 3 and I love the people in it," he said. If elected, Meimeteas said he will fight for more resources to help address the pandemic's economic fallout and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery for residents and businesses in Ward 3.

restrictive way. "We have to ensure that our focus is on the priorities that impact every family and business," he said. During his time campaigning and door knocking, Meimeteas said he has heard a variety of concerns from neighbors, including the state of King's Beach and the parks and open spaces. "Those on Lynn Shore Drive and close to the beach have concerns about the bacteria in our ocean and how they are heavily taxed for having access to the ocean that they are not able to use," he said. "Those living close to our parks and open spaces have concerns with the cleanliness of these areas and the impact it has on their ability to use (them)." Every neighbor he has encountered has mentioned improving the poor condition of the roads and the potholes as a concern as well, he added. "I will put an emphasis on these (improvements) as your Ward 3 councilor," he said. "We have to diversify our tax base to reduce residential tax rates and we have to improve our services and maintenance of our public buildings and roads." During law school, Meimeteas said the biggest thing was being able to listen to and work with clients, which is something he said he will do as a city councilor. "I am honest, approachable ... and always willing to listen," he said. "I am asking for your vote, as I am a family man that cares about your family." Meimeteas is running against Coco Alinsug for the Ward 3 councilor seat, which was previously held by City Council President and mayoral candidate Darren Cyr. *Allysha Dunnigan can be reached at adunnigan@itemlive.com.*



ITEM PHOTO | SPENSER HASAK

The town's institution of a late bus has allowed more METCO students to participate in after-school programs.

## Lynnfield METCO off to 'great start'

**METCO**  
From A1

other grade levels." METCO is also looking to expand its program to East Boston. Blyden said that due to its proximity to Lynnfield (only a 25-minute bus ride), METCO has been identified as a great potential host community for students in East Boston. The METCO program is asking Lynnfield to make some adjustments; Blyden is asking the School Committee to vote on the number of students to be placed in the town in January instead of April. This allows for earlier decisions to be made by METCO, which in turn will allow for students to have more time to adjust to the district. Lynnfield has been involved in the program since 1968, two years af-

ter the METCO program was founded. Through the program, Boston-area students have the opportunity to attend school in several suburban communities, including Lynnfield. Currently, the town has 35 students enrolled in the program who come to the town's public schools from Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Roslindale, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, and the South End. Blyden reported that 50 percent of middle-school METCO students are involved in after-school activities in Lynnfield and that the program has received positive feedback from parents and caregivers from both Boston and the town. This year was also the first year that a late bus operated in Lynnfield and Blyden added that it has allowed METCO students to pursue

learning activities outside of the classroom. When it comes to those who participate in sports through the program, Blyden noted that the organization is seeing a shift in where students choose to play. "The real shift has been a lot of middle-school students in the middle school are staying in the district to play sports, and a lot of that is (due to) enhanced relationships between our parents," said Blyden. School Committee member Jamie Hayman also touched on the important aspect of relationship building. "I think this year in particular, and last year as well, that relationship building is so fundamental to all our students being successful in school — and relationships are where it all starts," he said.

Through Lynnfield's collaboration with METCO, three students are a part of A Healthy Lynnfield, the town's substance-use prevention coalition, and one student was selected to participate in the Boston Mayor's Youth Council. For Sjoberg, much of the credit for the positive impact the program is having in Lynnfield belongs to Blyden. "Kudos to Curtis for the job he has done. He is such a valuable asset beyond his interaction with just the METCO kids, it's all kids," he said. "He is an incredible asset to all of our students and everyone in the school community and has done a tremendous job." *Sam Minton can be reached at sminton@itemlive.com.*

## Northeast Arc is given experience of a Life Time

**LIFE TIME**  
From A1

Palermo usually spends about two to three days a week networking and talking to various employers about hiring some of his clients who might have autism, intellectual or other disabilities. About 85 individuals currently work for various businesses in the Northshore community, Palermo said. Several people work for Nutre Meals in Peabody, for example, making boxes and preparing meals. Several other individuals work at Starbucks by greeting customers, putting away stock, or doing housekeeping. Once a person is hired, Palermo said, Northeast Arc provides job-coaching support. A job coach helps

individuals like Sutherland to learn their job and then train them. The organization currently has five job coaches. Palermo and the coaches check in weekly with managers and with their clients about once a week or as needed. Palermo said that their clients enjoy working in the community, meeting new people, and learning new skills. Of course, earning an income is important, too. Palermo found the Life Time housekeeping job posting on the Indeed employment website. He sent in Sutherland's resume and received a call back, which led to a couple of Zoom interviews. Sutherland was hired the last week in July. "Will is a great guy," said Palermo, describ-

ing Sutherland as a hard worker with a great work ethic. Sutherland lives independently with a roommate in an apartment in Lynn, not very far from his parents. He said that his work at Life Time is easy and fun and that the people are nice. He said that his job coaches make sure that he does what he is supposed to do and, if there is any problem, they work on it together. In his free time, Sutherland likes to play video games and spend time at his parents' backyard by the fire. Sutherland works on the operations team maintaining locker rooms, folding towels, performing cleanliness checks, and general upkeep through-

out the facilities. He is compensated equally to his peers. His shifts at the club are typically five hours long and he works 15-18 hours a week in total, which is comparable with other employees. The average team member works about 12 hours a week, said Andrew O'Donnell, the general manager of Life Time in Peabody. "When we build a club, we try to truly be a part of the community," said O'Donnell. The club opened in July, and at the time, Life Time was hiring about 300 people. It is the 158th club nationwide and the first one to open in Massachusetts since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. O'Donnell, who grew up in Toronto, liked the idea

of partnering with Northeast Arc in this instance because his father worked with young adults with special needs, helping them to develop personal and professional skills and finding employment for them. "That's something I saw my dad do as a labor of love for years. He had a high passion for caring for people," said O'Donnell. As soon as a manager came to O'Donnell with this idea, he said, he immediately wanted to step up. O'Donnell said that Sutherland was a good candidate because he had past work experience. Sutherland went through the interview process and got the job. After working for a while, Sutherland expressed through the

Northeast Arc process that he wanted to stay with Life Time for the long term. O'Donnell said that Sutherland has quiet confidence and he is good at receiving and following directions and getting feedback. Sutherland is a great addition to the team and in return he seems to enjoy working in a group setting, O'Donnell said. Both Northeast Arc and Life Time are hoping that this partnership can continue and result in more people with disabilities working at the athletic resort. *Alena Kuzub can be reached at akuzub@itemlive.com.*