

## RHODE ISLAND WILLIAMS ASSOCIATION

# ***Holding a Community Together: A Discussion with Four Williams Mayors***

**Thursday, March 4, 2021**

7:00pm - 8:00pm (Eastern Time) / 4:00pm to 5:00pm (Pacific Time)

[Click here to register for the Zoom event](#)

2020 was a year to remember for American cities, large and small. A devastating pandemic struck in the spring and continues to challenge city governments that had never seen anything like it. Our mayors, hospitals and businesses were caught in the storm. Residents were hungry, out of work, scared, sick and dying. How would cities respond? Could they handle it?

Add to this the killing in May of George Floyd and the protests that ensued. Cities were torn apart: Black Lives Matter! Blue Lives Matter! Defund the police! The cities' mayors were again in the crosshairs.

All this in an election year, and the mayors were faced with establishing new ways to vote. Even now, we recently witnessed a turbulent transfer of national political power.

Three Eph mayors were in the thick of it during 2020, and a fourth won election to office with a first term starting in December.

**Tom Bernard '92 P '21**, is the Mayor of North Adams, MA (pop. 12,900)

**John Hamilton P '21**, a Williams parent, is the current Mayor of Bloomington, IN, (pop. 85,000).

**Betsy Stix '86** began her first term in December as the Mayor of Ojai, CA (pop. 7,400).

**Ken Willcox '67**, retired in January after three terms as the Mayor of Wayzata, MN, (pop. 4,600), located a few minutes outside of Minneapolis.

They have graciously accepted our invitation to describe how city government worked over the last year to remember. Please join us for a forthright and fascinating panel discussion.

Presented by the Rhode Island Williams Association and moderated by Paul Streicker '67.

## Speakers



**Tom Bernard ('92 P' 21)**

Mayor of North Adams, Massachusetts

Tom Bernard '92 (P '21) has served as mayor of the City of North Adams, Massachusetts, since January 2018. In addition to his city leadership role Tom serves as chair of the school committee of the North Adams Public Schools. He previously served as director of special projects at Smith College; in various administrative roles at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), most notably as executive assistant to the president and clerk to the MCLA board of trustees; and as a development officer at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).



**John Hamilton (P '21)**

Mayor of Bloomington, Indiana

John Hamilton (P '21) has been serving Bloomington residents as their mayor since January 2016. He brings to the office a history of and a commitment to improving the quality of life for all in the community; of particular focus have been those residents on the lower end of the economic scale. Hamilton believes a city's budget is a reflection of its values. During his tenure there has been a concentration of resources targeted to growing affordable housing, lowering the local carbon footprint, diversifying and expanding job opportunities and supporting social justice all under the broader goals of economic, racial, and climate justice.



## Betsy Stix ('86)

Mayor of Ojai, California

Betsy Stix '86 was recently elected as the Mayor of Ojai, California and began her first term in December. As Mayor of a small city of 7,400 people, Stix works closely with a five-member City Council that serves as Ojai's legislative body. She has worked previously as a teacher and educator for over thirty years and hopes to use her community building skills to bring people together on a number of important topics. Some issues Betsy will prioritize during her first term are social justice, affordable housing, fire readiness, water supply, and ecological as well as financial sustainability.



## Ken Willcox '67

Mayor of Wayzata, Minnesota (Retired)

Ken Willcox '67 retired from city government in January after serving twelve years as Mayor of Wayzata. He and a partner owned and operated two truck-related manufacturing businesses from 1985 until selling the companies in 2017. He is also a retired U.S. Navy Captain and a Vietnam veteran. He was first elected to the Wayzata City Council in 2004. In 2008 he was elected Mayor and was re-elected for two additional four-year terms. He also served as a member of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Freight Rail. Most recently Ken oversaw the completion of a multi-million dollar downtown pedestrian plaza and promenade along the shores of Lake Minnetonka. This was phase one of a ten year beautification effort he launched called Panoway on Wayzata Bay.