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One candidate described his work in social media, a second talked about lessons she learned as a lawyer and a third about his work in construction.

The three, Dave Kerpen, Rachel Gilliar and Peter Smith, are vying for two spots on the Port Washington school board.

They introduced themselves to the community and fielded questions from residents Monday night at the League of Women Voters' Meet the Candidates event at the Port Washington Public Library.

All three of the candidates agreed that the two main priorities of a board member are to oversee the district's superintendent and maintain the budget, but told the crowd they would use their unique qualities to do so.

Kerpen, who has lived in Port Washington for seven years and is the CEO and co-founder of Likeable Media, a company that does social media marketing, said he wants to use social media to connect with parents and residents.

"We will be using social media better than any other school system in the country probably in terms of getting the word out and making sure we drive action," Kerpen said.

Gilliar, who has lived in Port Washington for eight years, said her work as a lawyer has allowed her to better understand people's situations and help with their interests.

"As a consultant and an attorney, I've studied clients' stories in order to figure out how to best advise them to be the best that they can be," she said.

Smith, a Port Washington resident of 50 years who has been volunteering with the community and district athletics for more than 20 years, owns a construction management company in Port Washington and said he would use his knowledge to help the district go forward with its planned infrastructure improvements.

"With my construction management experience, I will be able to work with the school district very closely with the remaining projects in the bond," Smith said referring to the $70 million bond referendum passed in 2015.

Kerpen taught math in New York City from 2004 to 2007 and was a chapter leader for the United Federation of Teachers before briefly entering the race for Queens borough president in 2009.

When asked about children opting out of state exams, Gilliar said although her children are not old enough to opt out, when they are, they will opt out.

"If they were in third grade today, I would be opting them out," she said.

Smith said his children, who are now out of the school district, did not opt out, but if he could do it again, he would have had them opt out.

Kerpen said he and his wife had their kids take the exams, but said he is supportive of people who decide to opt out of the test.

When asked about how to take action against hate in schools, especially after students discovered a swastika in a bathroom of Paul D. Schreiber High School in November, all three candidates said it was important to better educate students to be able to confront bias and anti-Semitism.

"I don't think there is any room for this type of behavior," Smith said. "What better way to end it then to get programs started with funding that teaches them at an earlier age that it will not be tolerated."

Gilliar said she doesn't know if there could be additional funding because she is not familiar with the funds going toward the cause, but "there is a great deal being done on anti-bullying and inclusiveness and that's important."

Kerpen said anti-Semitism does not come out of nowhere.

"It comes from kids not learning how to express themselves," he said. "Of course I would support programs that teach tolerance and to fight anti-Semitism and bigotry at all times, but it's even more important to teach emotional health and well-being at a very early age."

The candidates also traded views on piercing the state-mandated tax cap, with all three saying if it had to be done they would be in favor, but only after reviewing all of the options.

The three are running for two spots vacated when Alan Baer and Christina Nadolne said they would not seek re-election.

Residents will vote for the school board on May 16 from 6 a.m to 10 p.m. at the Carrie Palmer Weber Middle School.

Residents will also vote on a $151 million school budget that calls for a $4.5 million increase in spending and a 1.01 percent tax levy increase.

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