

Democracy North Carolina

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Study of Trends in Campaign Finances For Chapel Hill Town Council Since 1995

The following is a report by the non-partisan, non-profit watchdog group *Democracy North Carolina* regarding elections and campaigns for the town council of Chapel Hill since 1995. Peter Walz, Community Organizer for *Democracy North Carolina*, conducted this report. This report follows *Democracy North Carolina's* report in February 2003 regarding spending trends in the mayoral campaigns in Chapel Hill since 1995. The town council is currently considering a petition by Chapel Hill citizens for a "Voter-Owned Elections" program, which would provide a public financing alternative to council candidates who accept strict spending and fundraising limits. Senator Wib Gulley of Durham has introduced Senate Bill 760 in the state legislature, which would grant local governments such as Chapel Hill the authority to enact public financing programs.

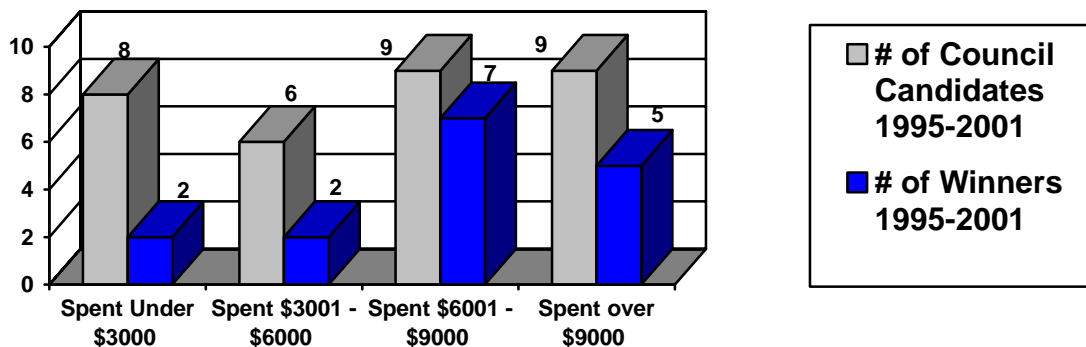
Trends in Campaigns for Chapel Hill Town Council:

Council Candidates Dig Deep into Own Pockets:

- 2 in 3 council candidatesⁱ since 1999ⁱⁱ gave significantⁱⁱⁱ amounts of their own money to their campaigns. More than 1 in every 5 dollars raised by council candidates since 1999 originated from the candidates themselves (\$28,704^{iv} out of \$131,528 raised in those two elections).
 - Top givers to their campaigns: In 1999 Madeline Jefferson loaned her campaign \$5,793 of \$8,195 raised in an unsuccessful bid, while Julie McClintock loaned her campaign \$5,597 of \$11,982 raised in her unsuccessful bid to retain her council seat.
 - 44% of the council candidates in 1999 and 2001 gave their campaigns at least 30% of the total amount they raised.

Top Spenders Find Success:

- If candidates finished as one of the top four spenders in their council election (covering 1995-2001 elections), they had a 69% chance of finishing as one of the top four vote-getters and thus winning a seat on the town council.
- Since 1995, candidates who spent under \$6,000 were much less likely to win than candidates who spent over \$6,000. Only 4 of the 14 candidates who spent under \$6,000 won a council seat. 18 council candidates have spent over \$6,000 (9 of whom spent over \$9,000) and 12 of them were winners on Election Day.



Council Candidates Very Homogeneous:

- 92% of council candidates^v since 1995 are white and 77% are registered as Democrats according to voter registration records. Edith Wiggins and Larry Daquioag are the only non-white candidates to mount meaningful campaigns. The only other campaign by a non-white candidate was that of Franklin Bowden, who filed as a candidate in 1997 but was eliminated from the study because it was determined that he did not mount a meaningful campaign under the study criteria. Lisa Everett is the only candidate currently registered as a Republican to run for the town council since 1995. While she spent only \$225 in her 2001 campaign, she garnered 2,180 votes to finish in 7th place.

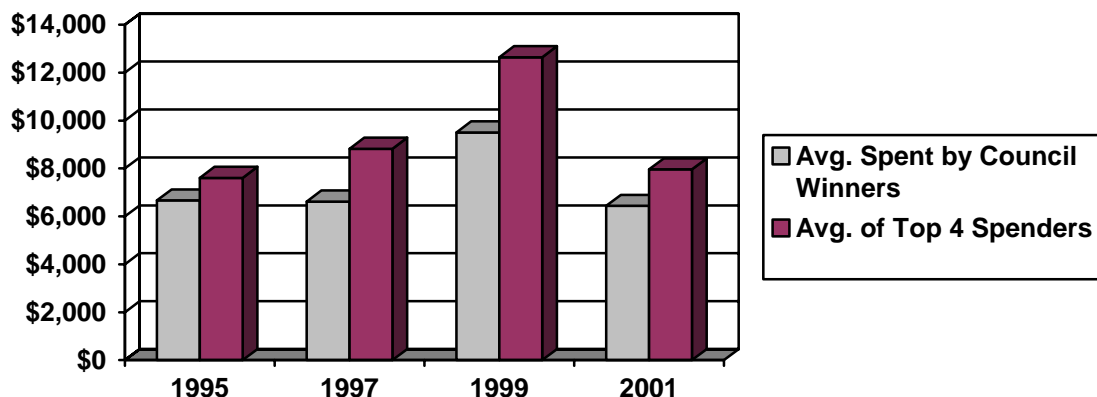
Current Council Trends:

- The current council spent an average of \$7,971 in order to win their seat on the council. The most spent by a sitting council member was \$11,620, spent by Jim Ward in 1999. The least amount spent by a sitting council member was \$4,048 by Ed Harrison in 2001.

Spending Averages Since 1995:

- Spending for the town council unquestionably spiked in the 1999 race, whether looking at the average spent by the top spenders (\$12,640) or by winners (\$9,504). The 2001 race may have been much less expensive because of the historic amount of money spent in the mayor's race (over \$50,000 between two candidates). The lower spending could also be attributed to the \$200 limit on contributions, which the council passed after the 1999 election. Regardless, a council candidate will continue to have to spend thousands of dollars in order to win a seat on the council. *(All figures are in 2001 dollars, unless noted otherwise.)*

- The average amount spent by the top four spending candidates was:
 - 1995: \$7,608
 - 1997: \$8,824
 - 1999: \$12,640
 - 2001: \$7,963
- The average amount spent by council winners was:
 - 1995: \$6,668
 - 1997: \$6,618
 - 1999: \$9,504
 - 2001: \$6,438



1995-2001 Candidates for Chapel Hill Town Council Spending in 2001 dollars:

Elect Year	Last Name	First Name	Expenditures - Inflation Adjusted	Election Result	Incumbent	Funds from Self
2001	Vandenbroek	Diane	\$2,139			\$2,139.00
2001	Bryan	DR	\$11,123			\$1,005.00
2001	Larry	Daquioag	\$1,248			\$1,223.00
2001	Harrison	Ed	\$4,048	winner		
2001	Kleinschmidt	Mark	\$6,610	winner		
2001	Reda	Bob	\$5,886			
2001	Verkerk	Dorothy	\$6,240	winner		\$2,000.00
2001	Everett	Lisa	\$225			\$225.00
2001	Wiggins	Edith	\$8,854	winner	x	\$850.00
1999	Jefferson	Madeline	\$8,195			\$5,793.00
1999	Sweezy	Don	\$3,755			\$2,231.00
1999	Protzman	Jim	\$16,317			\$5,053.00
1999	Andresen McClintock	Julie	\$11,982		x	\$5,597.00
1999	Strom	Bill	\$8,127	winner		\$993.00
1999	Ward	Jim	\$11,620	winner		
1999	Evans	Pat	\$10,641	winner	x	
1999	Bateman	Flicka	\$7,627	winner	x	\$1,595.00
1999	Sinreich	Ruby	\$5,577			
1997	Franck	Richard	\$3,580		x	NA*
1997	Foy	Kevin	\$4,292	winner		NA*
1997	Wiggins	Edith	\$9,188	winner	x	NA*
1997	Pavao	Lee	\$11,194	winner	x	NA*
1997	Brown	Joyce	\$1,799	winner	x	NA*
1997	Jefferson	Madeline	\$10,620			NA*
1995	Slater	Herschel	\$6,325			NA*
1995	Andresen McClintock	Julie	\$7,078	winner		NA*
1995	Capowski	Joe	\$7,866	winner	x	NA*
1995	Radway	Scott	\$1,046			NA*
1995	Evans	Pat	\$9162	winner	x	NA*
1995	Franck	Richard	\$2014			NA*
1995	Chilton	Mark	\$2564	winner	x	NA*
1995	Protzman	Jim	\$5		x	NA*

* Not Available - The 1995 and 1997 information on loans and contributions to campaigns could not be studied because the Orange Board of Elections has destroyed those records.

Odds and Ends:

- Since 1995, the candidate who spent the least money running for council (and still be deemed a meaningful candidate under the criteria of the study) was then incumbent Jim Protzman, who in 1995 appears to have spent only the \$5 filing fee. He finished 6th and lost his seat on the council. Joyce Brown spent \$1,799 in 1997, the least amount by any winner for the town council since 1995.
- The candidate to spend the most money running for council was...also Jim Protzman. He spent \$16,317 in 1999 and finished 6th, failing to regain his seat. Jim Ward spent \$11,620 to garner first place in 1999's council race, the most amount by any winner.

Study Conclusion:

“Candidates for the town council shouldn’t have to go into personal debt simply because they are participating in our democracy by running for public office,” says Peter Walz who conducted the report for Democracy North Carolina. “Without a meaningful alternative, such as public financing, candidates increasingly will turn to spending their own money.”

“The privately financed system is forcing qualified candidates to choose between dropping out, getting beat, or going into personal debt,” according to Walz. “Those are not the options candidates should face when they decide to offer themselves for public service.”

ⁱ The study eliminated candidates who were deemed not to run meaningful campaigns for the town council even though they had filed as a candidate. Candidates who were eliminated did not file a campaign expense report or spent less than \$500 AND received less than 10% of the total possible votes they could receive. Four candidates were eliminated from the study following these criteria.

ⁱⁱ The 1995 and 1997 information on loans to campaigns could not be studied because the Orange Board of Elections has destroyed those records. The information on campaign spending for those years was recovered from area newspaper reports of final spending reports with the Board of Elections.

ⁱⁱⁱ Either quadruple the maximum contribution, \$800, or at least 20% of total amount raised.

^{iv} All figures in the study have been adjusted for inflation to 2001 dollars unless otherwise noted.

^v Candidates who ran more than one campaign in the 1995-2001 study period were counted only once. Thusly, Larry Daquioag and Edith Wiggins were the only non-white candidates to mount meaningful campaigns as defined by footnote i. A total of 26 people have run for town council in 32 campaigns from 1995-2001. Race and party information are based on current voter-registration records.