

# Selectmen's seat to see contest

**-WARREN-**

By Jennifer Robert  
*Quaboag Current Reporter*

The seat on the Warren Board of Selectmen that has been filled by current Chairman David Delanski for over 20 years is about to be vacated, and two candidates have entered the race. James Gagner and Michael Baril have both returned certified papers to the town clerk and will be vying for the open seat at the annual town election to be held Tuesday, May 5.

"A lot of people have been telling me for years that I should run and I was going to wait until next year," Gagner said. "Mr. Delanski has been a selectman for over 20 years and while I don't agree with all he has done, I do respect what he has given to the town so if he wanted one last hurrah, I wasn't going to try to get in his way." Delanski did not, however, pull nomination papers and Gagner decided to go for it. A resident of Warren for 14 years, with two children in the school district, Gagner said that he has a large investment in the town - his family.

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"I want to make sure that this town continues to be a great place to live and hopefully with my help gets a little better so that when my kids are ready to pick a place to move they might choose Warren," he said. Although he has no prior experience on a town board or committee, he has served on the Warren Fire Department for the last 13 years and worked as a first responder on the ambulance for the last seven. He has a tremendous amount of experience in negotiation through his sales job, which he said he feels will be especially beneficial when dealing with the town budget. This year's school budget, for example, was shocking to him when he first saw the numbers but he said that that he also considers that the school is doing the most important job

there is, educating children.

"I feel there is absolutely some room for negotiation in what they are asking for and I am more than willing to get into those negotiations with them to find a solution that is mutually beneficial," he said. While Gagner said that he has solid relationships in town already, he recently held a meet and greet so that he could get feedback about what voters want in town leadership. Gagner said that the event was fantastic, and that he found out that there are a tremendous amount of people that are not able to go to selectmen meetings, Planning Board meetings, any of other various meetings, because they have kids, yet still want and need their voices heard.

"One of my top priorities is to get people more involved in the meetings," he said. "To do that, I would really like to see some type

of daycare set up in the basement of the municipal building where the kids can go play and we can get the honor roll students who have to do community service to come down and watch the kids and the parents can then come to these meetings." This election is not about "me," Gagner said, but about "we," as in the whole town. Getting together as a community, having the community care about the town they live in, is the way to move forward in Gagner's eyes and he believes that if people begin by caring about their own little corner of the town Warren will begin to move in an upward direction.

"The people, in any town, make the town," he said. "We need to help more people start caring about the town again."

Baril declined to interview about his candidacy.