

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living (WNYIL). Our guest today is Todd Vaarwerk, chief policy officer of WNYIL. And I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell. Welcome to the program, Todd.

00:00:15 Speaker 2

Always great to be here.

00:00:17 Speaker 1

You're here because you're a person who knows about all things, governmental, political and whatnot, and this is a very exciting month that's coming up for the agency.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

And that all three of the major offices of WNYIL will host Meet the Candidates days to give people with disabilities an opportunity to hear those running in their areas have accepted our invitation.

00:00:48 Speaker 1

Why is it important that people with disabilities hear their candidates?

00:00:53 Speaker 2

Well, you want to be informed about the people that you're going to vote for before you go into the booth and we're going to provide an opportunity for people that want to talk about disability issues in running for office to come to our center locations for Meet the Candidates that you're going to get an opportunity to hear them, listen to them, ask them questions. If you're physically with us and get comfortable with those candidates so that you know who to vote for when you go in to vote.

00:01:24 Speaker 1

Would it be safe to say that unless they've been working with us are and other disability rights advocates that most candidates will not be that well informed on issues of importance to people with disabilities.

00:01:38 Speaker 2

Ah, but that's our little bit. That's our secret. We kind of know that. So, when they come in, before we put them on stage in front of people, they get a few minutes to talk with the advocates. We actually will give them the same question list we provide for folks for

examples and asking questions. And we'll answer the questions for them to help them be better prepared.

00:02:02 Speaker 1

Ah, and I believe that all three of the Meet the Candidates days, Buffalo, Batavia and Niagara Falls, I'll have the option of people joining by Zoom, correct?

00:02:15 Speaker 2

Absolutely. We're going to be streaming them so you can watch them live and they'll also go to our YouTube page after the event is finished so that you can tell your friends so that they can go and find that on YouTube and watch it at their convenience.

00:02:28 Speaker 1

Do people need to pre-register in order to connect to Zoom?

00:02:34 Speaker 2

I don't think so.

00:02:37 Speaker 2

But always check all social media feeds for details on that stuff. They'll have the most up to date information.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

Based on past experience, would you say that, especially in Buffalo, that there's a pretty decent response from candidates?

00:02:57 Speaker 2

Yeah, we get 10 to 12 candidates a year who will talk for, I don't know, somewhere between 10 and 20 minutes each.

00:03:07 Speaker 1

And they're only scheduled for 10.

00:03:10 Speaker 2

Yeah, we're only scheduled for 10, but always leave somebody on until the next guy comes on, right?

00:03:16 Speaker 1

Sure. Why have the guests in the room simply twiddle thumbs waiting for another candidate to show?

00:03:23 Speaker 2

Absolutely. And we always get some people despite the fact we ask the candidates to pre-register, always get some people that show up on the day of the event.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

Right. So, you never can tell what's going to happen.

00:03:37 Speaker 1

It's just kind of a continuing wave of excitement. Well before we're totally out of time, could you please give the dates, times and places?

00:03:48 Speaker 2

Buffalo's date is October 16th, that's a Wednesday from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The next one is Independent Living of the Genesee Region, held at their offices in Batavia. That's the 22nd from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

And the last one is at the Niagara Falls location on Thursday the 24th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

00:04:10 Speaker 1

And to make sure people know which places we're talking about. That's WNYIL in Buffalo, Independent Living of Niagara County in Niagara Falls, and Independent Living of the Genesee Region in Batavia.

00:04:23 Speaker 2

Correct.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

If people have questions, how can they reach you?

00:04:25 Speaker 2

They can always give me a call 716-836-0822 ext.101 or email tvaarwerk@wnyil.org

00:04:39 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for being with us Todd.

00:04:40 Speaker 1

Always a pleasure.

00:04:42 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of WNYIL. Our guest today was Todd Vaarwerk, chief policy officer of WNYIL, and hopefully everyone listening will take advantage of the Meet the Candidates Days. Thanks, and have a great month.