

# The Patriot Ledger

## NEWS

# 'I will question the mayor.' Quincy's Kathy Thrun announces bid for city council seat



**Peter Blandino**

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### Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

- Kathy Thrun, a chemist, engineer, and community activist, is running for Quincy's Ward 3 city council seat.
- Thrun's campaign focuses on fiscal responsibility, criticizing the city's spending and borrowing practices.
- She opposes the approved pay raises for the mayor and council and plans to repeal them if elected.
- Thrun promises increased public engagement and more frequent public hearings.

QUINCY – As a chemist and engineer, Kathy Thrun traveled the globe cleaning up various messes, both environmental and political. In retirement, she became a community activist focused on preserving green space and keeping a watchful eye on the city's finances.

Now she wants to bring her activism into government as Ward 3 city councilor. Thrun announced her candidacy April 1, the same day sitting Ward 3 councilor Ian Cain announced he will not seek reelection.

Some will recognize Thrun from the campaign to save Pageant Field's Ruth Gordon Amphitheater, which the city once considered repurposing, or her vocal opposition to the raises proposed by Mayor Tom Koch for himself and the councilors in 2024, which the council approved.

Thrun's early campaign messaging focuses on the impact of the city's spending and borrowing on the taxpayer.

"As city councilor, I want to be the one that seriously pulls apart the budget," Thrun said. "And I don't see any of our current city councilors doing that."

**Controversial Quincy raises:** Imagine getting a 79% pay raise. That's what the Quincy mayor is requesting

**'Ruth Gordon is Quincy':** Residents unite to save amphitheater amid demolition threat

## 'I've had a wild career.' Who is Kathy Thrun?

Thrun has lived in her home between Forbes Hill and Wollaston Hill for 50 years. Its walls and shelves tell stories of family and far-flung travels.

It's where she and her late husband, George Nason, a Vietnam veteran, raised their adopted son Kurt, who arrived from South Korea in 1985 at just eight months old. He's now a lieutenant with the New York City Police Department.

Thrun's remarkable career is traced in photographs from Benin to Belarus and beyond. As a principal with Arthur D. Little Inc., then as vice president of ICF Consulting International, she traveled widely, advising governments on how to dispose of military weapons and manage environmental hazards, to name just a couple of her responsibilities.

Asked for career highlights, Thrun cited her work in Belarus in the 1990s, where she worked on denuclearization following the dissolution of the former Soviet Union.

"The objective was to remove 81 ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles)," she said. "In return we gave them equipment and training to do everything for the environmental management."

Through diplomacy and technical assistance scarcely imaginable today, Belarus

disposed of the missiles.

"I remember the joy of that," Thrun said. "It was like celebrating the end of the Cold War."

## **Thrun's campaign issues: the raises, spending and debt**

In June 2024, the council boosted their own salaries by about 50% while hiking the mayor's pay by almost 80%. Koch has not received a raise since 2014.

The mayor and councilors later deferred the raises after the State Ethics Commission launched a conflict-of-interest inquiry, but they remain on the books, taking effect in 2026 for the councilors and 2028 for the mayor.

Thrun said she'd move to repeal them. "That would be one of the first things I do," she said. "Hopefully there will be other like-minded people elected to the city council."

**Controversial raises:** Why the State Ethics Commission raised concerns over Koch's huge pay raise

**Raising salaries, and eyebrows:** How much new raises will be for mayor, city council

For Thrun, the raises are a symptom of a larger problem, an executive whose spending goes unchecked by the council.

"I will also question the mayor and his administration like he hasn't been questioned, except by Anne Mahoney," Thrun said. Mahoney is the former councilor-at-large who gave up her seat to challenge Koch unsuccessfully in the 2023 mayoral election.

As an example of overspending, Thrun cited the \$175-million public safety headquarters, set to open in October on Sea Street, which overran its budget by \$23 million.

"There was no effort to cut costs, not even to cut \$3 million worth of copper and slate roofing," she said. "And then, without letting the public know, we got those statues." Thrun referred to two 10-foot bronze statues of St. Florian and St. Michael that will adorn the facade of the headquarters' main entrance.

She also cited the new animal shelter, which could open as early as this month.

In 2017, the council approved an initial \$7.1 million for the project. But inflation and the detection of asbestos on the construction site (a former dumping ground) increased the cost to more than \$25 million.

"I adore animals," Thrun said. "Don't get that wrong. But have you ever looked at the Milton Animal Shelter?"

She said Milton's new animal shelter cost around \$4 million, which was paid for through private donations, according to the Milton Times.

The city's recent spending on projects like the animal shelter and public safety headquarters, according to Thrun, have increased the city's debt, which stands at around \$1.6 billion, to unsustainable levels.

"It's going to hit us hard," Thrun said, referring to expected increases in debt service. "It is going to hit us hard starting next year."

If elected, Thrun said she'd view big spending requests with a skeptical eye.

"I'm certainly going to step in if (Mayor Koch) wants to borrow any more money," she said. "Pull back already. We don't need any more pocket parks and statues."

## **Thrun promises more public engagement**

Thrun vowed to always answer the phone for constituents and respond to all written communications.

"I don't know everything," she said. "I very much depend on the constituency to

tell me what the issues are, and I'll figure out how to help them. I spent an entire career doing that."

Thrun also promised to hold more public hearings than the current council. "I'm going to try for at least one public hearing a month" she said.

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