

**2010 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
Prepared by the Virginia Beach Roundtable

CANDIDATE: John Moss

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1) What do you believe to be the top three most pressing concerns to the business community in Virginia Beach?

- Cost structure of local government, system didn't work.
- Change strategy-once 78% residential/22% commercial, now, 85% residential-strategy failed. Need level playing field. Abolish BPOL and machine tool tax.
- Transportation – choices based on science not emotion. Last decade Council spending grew 92%. Rebalance our CIP and focus on improving local interior roadways. Public doesn't trust council to spend money well.

2) For incumbents, do you think the votes you have taken during your service on Council have addressed or contributed to those concerns? Please give examples.

N/A

3) Do you support or oppose the use of public-private partnerships such as those created to develop Town Center, the Sandbridge Beach restoration, the 31<sup>st</sup> Street Hotel and as have been suggested for future projects in strategic growth areas? If yes, what public financing options do you feel appropriate for such projects? Financing tools might include: Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Districts, Enterprise Zones, Innovation Zones (technology) and BID's?

- Don't support TIF's or PPP's.

4) What do you believe should be the City's transportation priorities for the near term and assuming the General Assembly's continued unwillingness to provide sufficient funding resources for these projects, how do you suggest the City fund critical transportation needs?

- Roads within the city. Half our citizens live and work within the city.
- Use modeling to determine where to invest.
- Rather than \$30 million for Laskin Road for benefit of 31<sup>st</sup> Street hotel, spend money where we need on roads.
- A public referendum should be asked to approve a new tax to fund roads.

- 5) Should Virginia Beach continue to participate in the regional economic development alliance to increase our ability to reach out to national and international companies?
- We should pay for results, not per capita. Look at what we got out of it.
  - Look at 3-5 year period. Where are expenses going? Where is the oversight?
  - Our participation should be proportioned. Formula should be looked at. We should not subsidize the other cities.
  - Results for Virginia Beach have been limited – his oath of office is to our citizens.
  - Who has oversight, especially of lobbyist?
- 6) How important is regional cooperation to the future of Virginia Beach and do you support participation in such regional initiatives as workforce development (Opportunity, Inc.), military infrastructure (HR Military and Federal Facilities Alliance), regional policy development (Hampton Roads Partnership), and regional planning (Hampton Roads Planning District Commission/MPO)?
- I believe in regional partnerships.
  - Return to each based on investment. We should not share revenues unless they are equitable.
  - Look at the business case for each of these. If they are valuable to the city of Virginia Beach, I will support it. If not, I won't. My fiduciary responsibility is to the city.
  - My alliance is to the city.
- 7) What are the most important steps the City can take to enhance its relationship and communication with the military and ensure retention of military commands in Hampton Roads?
- Surprised at the ignorance our Council has about the Navy.
  - I worked for the Navy.
  - Need to track federal hearings, understand how it functions, predict, and respond.
  - No need to be surprised by JFCOM closing. Appalled that our Council was so surprised by JFCOM. Navy is working on FY12 and our leaders should have known.
  - We need to understand how Navy budgets and look ahead.
  - Change fundamental tax policy so can attract business/industry where retirees can work.
  - Need to make us a low cost place to do business.
  - Military is not a growth industry.
  - Need to speak the military language and stop taking them for granted.
  - To maximize our potential, we have to be geographically mobile.

- 8) Is the extension of the light rail system from the planned terminus at Newtown Road east to the Beach District a priority and how should it be financed?
- HRT is a bloated bureaucracy. Look at who could effectively operate it. Don't want them to operate it.
  - Right-of-way is a sunk cost. We'd already made the Purchase Agreement. Acquiring it made sense, but we overpaid. Reasons not communicated well to the public.
  - Big question is where will the money come from.
  - Don't know if it is a priority. Need to make good business decisions. Need to see the report and see if it makes sense.
  - Public spoke, need 2<sup>nd</sup> referendum.
- 9) Do you believe the city's budget process ought to budget expenses to meet revenue goals or adjust revenues to meet budget and spending priorities?
- City Council should provide fiscal policies.
  - Fiscal policy guidance should be given to City Manager with priorities and then he builds the budget.
  - Shouldn't be immuned to the law of productivity. City spending has 3 times as much as private industry with only 1.8% growth.
  - We have to generate internal cash flow. Our spending curve grew faster than wages.
  - We spent a lot on wages and benefits.
  - Our spending is out of alignment with the economy as a whole.
  - Should have privatized cleaning the Pavilion.
  - City police should not be the first responder to Oceana and Little Creek.
  - Should have E-ticket for police.
- 10) Should the General Assembly empower localities to: provide defined contribution plans in lieu of defined benefit plans, give flexibility to modify retirement service and age qualifications, and to require employee participation in benefit packages as may be deemed appropriate by the local governing body? Why or why not?
- Absolutely. This is a big issue for me. I was disappointed when Governor put amendment in to restrict this.
  - Need to go to defined contribution, cap financial risk.
  - Make sure employers appreciate their compensation package.
  - Worked as Admiral Harvey's Deputy in OpNav and studied this for military as well.
  - Should do better job in showing public employees the value of the benefits they already get.

- Leaders at top should take 5% cut as moral example-like private sector.
- Jim Spore is one of the people reluctant to do it.
- Bonuses and raises at the top were wrong.

11) Do you feel there is waste in the city budget? If so, please site specific areas where you would reduce funding.

- Some projects that are low in priority should not be funded.
- Should privatize permits and inspections. City's only vested interest is compliance with code.
- Why do we clean our own building, why not shift to outsourcing, and reduce labor costs of city and debt service.
- We are going to have significant retirement over next 5 years or so, give us a chance to get out of some of these businesses.
- Planning office could be private sector, keep needed management.
- Need less regulation.
- Could outsource trash collection-3 zones, one operated by government and other two by private enterprise.
- Dog pound.
- Credit card abuse, no accountability.

12) Do you concur with the recommendation of the City's Blue Ribbon Tax, Fee and Spending Task Force that a "City Budget Study Commission" should be established to assist in the development of the annual budget? If yes, what should be its composition and mission?

- No. Council has a job to do. They just need to do it. There ought to be a consequence for wasting people.
- Okay to have Commission to recommend services to eliminate, and then have to be voted on.
- Only use Commission if it leads to a vote.

13) Do you believe business is fairly taxed in the City? If not, what specifically would you change?

- Whoever consumes these services.
- We need to make our money off of transactions, like sales tax.
- Go more to fee-based systems, so those who consume the service pay for it. Requires a 5-10 year transition process. Federal spend is going to shrink.
- We need to reform our appetite for government in order to reduce spending.
- I'd like to privatize economic development. Our representatives are being outsmarted and out-performed. Private sector could do it better.
- Phase out BPOL.
- The machinery tool tax needs to be revised.
- Need to ask businesses what they can privatize for city.

14)What is your opinion of the City Manager and the job he is doing?

- Poor leadership. Doesn't deliver labor productivity.
- Should not give him raises.
- I would replace him; give him credit for dedicated service.
- We need to look at hiring the Manager we need for our future.
- Team that brought us here can't take us where we need to go now.
- Parks and Recreation leader demanded salary increase. He should have let her go.
- Disagree with how he handled the Police Chief.
- He plays divide and conquer with council and shares information selectively.
- City Real Estate Assessor is also not performing well.

15)Do you support City Council's outright ban on all LED signs for future consideration or use by private business, schools, churches, non-profits and others?

- Support current policy, need some time before you revisit the issue.
- Council lacks broad public support, needs to find common ground.
- Once votes are taken, we should all support it.
- I'm a real 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment person, so it's an interesting question. I think Council made the right choice for this community. I think it has some legal vulnerability. I also think it could be reconsidered.
- Communication is important to find common ground.