

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

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

- Jobs
- Economy
- Transportation

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 31st 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.?

- Supports TIF's and PPP's. Lessens burdens on citizens.
- Supports looking into all financing options, future of Virginia Beach depends on these.

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?

- Making sure main corridors are able to handle growth.
- Looking at transportation option.
- By growing city through economic development it creates support for funding this priority.
- Lower tax burdens on citizens, cut other budget items to pay for transportation.
- Where can we cut expenses.
- Transportation should be a priority.
- Main roads, Indian River, Princess Anne, General Booth, to be able to move traffic.
- Alternative transportation methods should be explored, like light rail.

- 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?
- Absolutely, key.
 - Need to attract businesses with good paying jobs.
 - High paying jobs help expand existing business.
 - Help small businesses grow.
 - Want to bring in large companies, small companies, and international companies.
 - Need a stronger role to attract international businesses.
- 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)?
- It's not us against them.
 - Regional approach to workforce development.
 - Feels that regionalism is the future.
 - Sits on the Virginia Beach Economic Development Commission that also may go regionally.
 - Regionalism is a very important issue. Cities are inter connected. The military also connects us all.
 - Benefits to creating affordable housing.
 - Regionalism is our future.
- 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?
- Inclusion, making sure military is included in decision process.
 - The military knows their needs better than we do. Be sensitive to their needs.
 - Also, key to have incentive to keep Virginia Beach retiring military and exiting military.
 - Strong work ethic among military citizens.
 - Retention of retirees who are major contributors to our workforce and have good work ethic.

- 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?
- Need alternative transportation but light rail may not be right option.
 - There are other options to light rail but, it is a priority.
 - It is a priority as far as a source for transportation. We may put bus BRT there in the interim.
 - City will have to subsidize, we need to minimize cost and use economic development to pay for it.
- 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?
- Adjust revenues to balance spending priorities.
 - Does not like philosophy of taking away savings.
 - Need to think about budgets differently.
 - Adjust to meet priorities, if you didn't spend it, didn't need it shouldn't be the attitude.
 - Need to stop the budget idea of "use it, or lose it".
 - Don't penalize those ending under budget by assuming funds are not needed.
- 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?
- General Assembly should allow the cities the flexibility to implement these (defined contribution) plans. It is a way to keep our city competitive.
 - City should be able to decide what to do.
- 11) Do you feel there is waste in the city budget? If so, please site specific areas where you would reduce funding.
- We do not spend money wisely, too many studies. Expertise may exist right in the city.
 - Big proponent of technology, billing for water/sewer could be combined.
 - Discount potentially offered to e billing customers.

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?

- Yes, believes commission would be helpful.
- Look for experts in budgeting to be on committee.
- Good to get citizens involved, citizen input is good.

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

- Would change the BPOL tax.
- Would like to see it phased out or make it fair.
- Always room for improvement.
- Phase out BPOL or go to flat fee.
- Been in business 6 years and has to pay the tax regardless of tax.
- Unfair as a gross receipts tax.

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

- Believes he is doing his job.
- What he is doing is sufficient.
- Don't know him personally, he seems to be doing his job efficiently, a lot of good things have occurred under his leadership.
- Never recall him doing anything egregious.
- Meeting the qualifications.

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?

- No. A huge mistake on council's part. Need to support business. Can regulate but don't ban.
- Does not buy that at all. It increases the tax revenue in the community.
- They attract customers.
- We should be helping business to improve tax revenues.
- Absolutely not, they work.
- Create regulations to make the signs work.