

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

CANDIDATE: Wally Erb

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

- Economic Development-disposable income
- Has history at Lockheed Martin as well as 20 years in the military.
- Bring in more contractors to stay close to the fleet, consolidating here could save military.
- Maintain liaison with military.
- Lightning 3 to replace Super Hornets – we should ensure we maintain those here
- Admiral Metz says nobody listens to him on council.

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.

- SSD's are fine if people support it.
- TIF's are fine. Necessary for blighted, underdeveloped areas.
- When #'s support the investment he is for it, but need to see business use.
- Reservations about how this TIF was developed at Town Center, thinks a little too big, money being supplied is coming from non-core, not the core.
- For public/private partnerships if the business case if there.

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?

- Need a 3rd crossing – priority – moving goods and services.
- Virginia Beach has a terrible mass transit. Bus system is bad.
- Light rail may make sense economically but not for transportation.
- Doesn't believe light rail in Virginia Beach has a good business case.
- Port is very important.

- Empathize with the citizen on light rail – listen to them.
 - State needs to help fund the 3rd crossing.
- 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?
- Big yes. If you focus on citizens, not people who work in government, they don't care where the city lines are. We benefit from what is in our neighboring cities. Look at New York as an example.
 - Only city council recognizes city lines.
 - Need regional cooperation to work together on services, water, utilities, trash, etc., for efficiency.
- 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)?
- Any organization that promotes regional cooperation is a good thing. Each city worried about their own rice bowl.
 - Government has to do with the empowerment of the people and protecting them.
 - Need to promote dialogues.
 - Companies don't care about city lines, business is about making money.
 - Government is about protecting people and providing the services to allow people to make a living.
- 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?
- Liaison like himself because of service in military and tenure at Lockheed Martin.
 - I'm hot off the press, have contacts and know who to talk to.
 - Vision; hold on to what you have and work to bring business to the area. We need to save and hold our military.
 - JFCOM is gone. It is not a BRAC matter, it is not a base. We need to work on what we can do.
 - Dam Neck facility has highest paying jobs in the area, lots of GS-15's. Dam Neck is very important.
 - Mayport is losing their frigates; they need to get something so they don't use their congressional power to take from us.

- 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?
- Paid too much for it.
 - Not a priority.
 - Probably are cost overruns.
 - Will not affect congestion, it will mostly be bus riders.
 - Operational costs will be very high, good for developers.
 - Will hurt traffic with ground level traffic crossings. Will hamper flow like at Rosemont and Bonney.
 - Ridership will be overestimated when seeking funding.
- 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?
- Core expenditures should be funded no more and no less than needed.
 - Core services safety and education need to be funded adequately.
 - Virginia Beach keeps a nice reserve fund.
 - Economic Development is not a purpose of government, but must provide infrastructure.
- 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?
- Almost 80% of corporate America still provides pensions.
 - If we rely on the individual to contribute, they will not do a good job and may never retire.
 - In favor of not changing.
- 11) Do you feel there is waste in the city budget? If so, please site specific areas where you would reduce funding.
- Yes, pay too much to support sweetheart deals.
 - Animal shelter for \$12 million unnecessary. Should have been used for education.
 - Veterinarians compete with veterinarians in private sector.
 - Excess schools funds going to dog palace and recreation facility and then we turn around and raise the price of school lunches.
 - We have excess spending.
 - Recreation Center addition not needed.

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?

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

- Absolutely not. BPOL is ridiculous.
- Private doctors pay 58 cents per 100 on gross receipts. Sentara doesn't pay but private doctors do.
- Bond for doctors.
- Medicare/Tricare not being accepted, eliminate tax on doctors that accept them.
- Move to eliminate BPOL
- Machinery and Tool Tax is unfair

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

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?