

Detroit Free Press City Council Questionnaire

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2/11/63

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Police Officer / 13 years

High School: **Murray- Wright 1981**

College: **Wayne State University 1995**

Eastern Michigan University 2004

1. Explain, in 50 words or fewer, why you are seeking a seat on the Detroit City Council.

I'm a candidate for Detroit City Council because I see a need for honest, principled leadership. Leaders that's committed to serving the people the right way and who will place the citizens of Detroit ahead of any personal agendas. My work and experience as a police officer, and the founder and operator of the Detroit Uncovered website, has brought me into direct and daily contact with Detroiters and their problems, at the neighborhood level. And I have witnessed, first hand, the rapid deterioration of city's service delivery processes, from street lighting and police response, to the failure to deal effectively with illegal dumping, a proliferation of foreclosed, vacant and abandoned homes, and the lack of retail businesses, especially food stores, in around Detroit. As 13 year veteran of the Detroit Police Department I've had the opportunity to see up close and personal the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies of failed leadership. As a Councilmember I plan to set the tone for cooperative government and leadership at the table and across all boundaries.

2. Describe any professional, educational or civic experience that has prepared you to play a constructive role on the city council.

I hold a Bachelors Degree in Public Affairs and a Master in Public Administration in addition I've spent the last 13 years as an employee of the city of Detroit. That educational background and my public service experience has allowed me to have a front seat into city government; what works, what doesn't work and what our best practices should be. I've been able to study government on a daily basis and drill down into what our problems are and what the solutions are. One of the biggest issues

facing the city is crime. Detroit won't be able to attract business and developers if crime and the image of an unsafe city exist. We have to do a better job with the resources we have within the police department well ahead of the possibility of help from the federal government for law enforcement. I've patrol the streets I know what we need and I will bring that knowledge to the council table.

3. What do you anticipate spending on your campaign? How much have you collected so far? How many people have contributed?

We have collected roughly \$10,000 not including the \$12,000 I gave to my campaign. We've had roughly 200 small contributions thus far. I anticipate spending in excess of \$100,000 before this election process is over.

4. Please list what you consider to be the three most important core functions of city government.

- **Planning**
- **Staffing**
- **Budgeting**

The city has never had a real plan that we've stuck to. Before we can move the city forward we have to look at budgeting and staffing. A forensic audit will allow us to find out what the true deficit is and from there go forward and make the staffing and budgeting changes that are needed.

5. Please identify three governmental departments or functions you would be willing to eliminate.

- **The Detroit Department of Health. This could be eliminated because Wayne County has a Department of Health. Two departments of health, in the same county, probably represent an expensive duplication of effort.**
- **DDOT Detroit and the metropolitan area need a mass transit system which could be a major saving for the city. The \$80 million dollar subsidy is choking Detroit general fund budget.**
- **City Airport is an asset I would consider selling IF expansion was not a real possibility.**
- **The Detroit Department of Public Lighting needs huge capital investments that the City of Detroit cannot afford, however my concern is what will happen to the many jobs held by city workers that could be in jeopardy.**

6. What changes in staffing, compensation, benefits or work rules do you believe will be required to assure Detroit's continued solvency?

Compensation levels are already uncompetitive, especially in technical areas like engineering and finance. The best way to deal with the budget crisis would be through targeted layoffs, based on assessment of service levels in all departments, and changes in work rules, mainly for unionized employees. Also, with contracts up for negotiation, finance employees like Senior and Principal Accountants, get paid overtime. As professionals, cutting out overtime should be on the bargaining table, in lieu of layoffs.

7. With money available to tear down only 3,000-5,000 a year, how would you speed up the demolition of the estimated 80,000 abandoned homes and buildings in Detroit?

In addition to that estimated 80,000 abandoned homes there are another 10,000 in foreclosure. I have 15 vacant homes on my block. Detroit needs to (a) get these homes into the hands of someone who wants to purchase the ones that can be saved. This would increase a declining tax base (b) Use the neighborhood re-stabilization fund and any other federal dollars available to tear down as many as possible. (c) I propose an emergency tear down police for those burned out homes that are beyond repair. They should come down first because they are a danger and an eyesore.

8. Detroit's dwindling population is distributed over a geographical area many times the size of other cities. Do you support efforts to concentrate residents in a smaller portion of the city? If so how would you facilitate this, and what short and long term uses would you envision for vacated neighborhoods.

I'm opposed to "shrinking", which is moving residents out of sections of the city and fencing off those areas. However, Detroit does have an abundance of unoccupied space. So if there was a development offered I would consider the idea much like we had with the Poletown plant. With the auto industry re-tooling there may be opportunities to build battery plants etc. in urban areas. This would be beneficial to the city in terms of filling that green space and providing jobs. Also I'm not opposed to urban farming if its going to train residents and provide employment.

9. Do you support the agreement the Cockrel administration negotiated to transfer the ownership and operation of Cobo Hall to a regional authority? If not, how would you propose to finance the expansion and operation of a convention center that costs Detroit \$20 million annually to support.

I did not support the agreement that former Mayor Cockrel negotiated because my concern was over the loss of the preference for Detroit workers and contractors. That said I agree an authority is probably the best route especially with a junk bond rating, and failure to prepare timely financial reports and get audits completed on time, the city would not have much success going to the capital markets to get funds, at a favorable rate, to finance an expansion of Cobo Hall. So, the optimal solution would be what Mayor Dave Bing is supposed to be working on right now: a plan to transfer Cobo to a Regional Convention Authority, for equitable consideration, along with a provision, based largely on Detroit's 23% unemployment rate, which is over 80% higher than the state 12.9% unemployment rate, to protect the jobs of Detroit employees and the contracts of Detroit based businesses.

10. How important is it to you to improve relations between the city of Detroit and the rest of the metropolitan region?

Relationships with the region are the highest priority because Detroit cannot sustain itself any longer and it's going to take regional cooperation to figure out how municipalities can share services and save money. First on the list of priorities is regional mass-transit. This will take close cooperation between the city of Detroit, surrounding counties and organized labor.

11. How can the city provide better bus service?

A regional mass transit system seems to be the most feasible route to go. Detroit's bus system and County system are both failing. An effective mass transit proposal for SE Michigan could help Detroit solve its DDOT problem. Without such a plan, the city would have to continue to subsidize a money-losing operation.

12. Which if any of the city's assets should be put up for sale to raise revenue or reduce expenses? How would you evaluate proposals to sell any such asset?

Selling any of the city's assets is a conundrum. We're all passionate about Detroit's "jewels" but there may come a day where passion will have to take a back seat to prudence. At this point the one asset I believe we must take a hard look at is City Airport. As I stated before IF expansion of the runway is not an option and there is no real economic benefit in its current state selling to developers maybe a path we should consider.

13. Is it a good idea for the city to raise money by selling for an up front cash payment its revenue from such sources as public parking or Detroit-Windsor tunnel tolls?

Whether it's a good idea or not is secondary to the reality that we are in such bad shape financially that we need to sell revenue for immediate cash. I'm opposed to selling the city's portion of the Windsor Tunnel. The parking revenue may be unavoidable and a little less distasteful.