

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?
 - Transportation to include highway network and alternative forms of transportation.
 - Keep the city well managed (taxing issues/infrastructure)
 - How will the city lead through this economy to assist small business (have appropriate personnel to assist in this regard).
 - How to survive the current economy – well trained employees.
 - Help keeps folks employed.

- 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.
 - Supported bonds for construction.
 - Time as Chair at TRT helped knowledge of transit and light rail.
 - Have voted for real estate taxes when appropriate.
 - Purchasing Norfolk Southern Right of Way was important.
 - Support economic development initiatives (considers this important).
 - Fiscal responsibility to get AAA bond rating.
 - Helped developed a reserve fund as cushion.
 - Very supportive of funding needs for transportation.

- 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?
 - Yes – supports public-private partnerships.
 - Supported TIF at Sandbridge and Special Service District.
 - TIF is important at Town Center.
 - Strategic Growth Areas are unique and important to the future of Virginia.
 - Special Service Districts creates so much money we barely need the TIF.
 - Town Center generates additional funds that would not have been here without the TIF.
 - Have to look at the big picture and need to educate the public better about the benefits of the TIF.

- Overall would need to analyze each option before making a decision.
 - Open to proposals.
- 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?
- Touchy because we need approval from General Assembly for just about anything Virginia Beach does.
 - When we don't have federal funding source, we are in trouble.
 - May have to consider a bond referendum.
 - Fund \$4 mil a year for road maintenance.
 - Nimmo/Princess Anne most congested, were moved up on the list.
 - When current money runs out, we're in big trouble, if we get desperate enough, we may have to consider bonds.
- 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?
- This is discussed at each year's retreat. With a global economy we probably need to continue working with partners; continue to monitor to see if it is worth the cost.
 - Need to monitor to determine benefits.
- 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)?
- Very important, yes we have to.
 - Certain issues affect more than us, they don't stop at the borders.
 - When spillover issues arise we must be prepared to address them together. JFCOM is an example; most employees live in Virginia Beach.
 - We need to study sea level rise through ODU.
 - Hurricane preparedness/evacuation is a regional issue.
 - Drugs, homeless, and gangs are regional issues.

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?

- Have been recognized for work with Oceana relative to BRAC as being more responsive, better land use planning.
- ItA needs to be compatible with military needs.
- Maintain communication channels with military.
- Work together on issues involving police responding to issues on base.
- Need to retain military retirees, make it a place where there are good paying jobs for them, a good place to live, a good place to educate their children.
- Retaining military retirees with well paying jobs.
- Need to support our military reservists.

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?

- We need solutions to transit issues.
- We will need state money. Feels state will participate.
- City will have to subsidize.
- We need to do a better job of educating.
- Need a feeder bus system.
- Feels we need to have transit but wants to see results of the study, hopes that it is positive.
- Can't rely on single vehicle transportation.
- Transit is a priority.

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?

- Blend both depending on the issues.
- This economy has required re-evaluation of the budget.
- Have looked closely at spending.
- We may have needs that are under funded, need to bring in more revenue.
- Real estate assessment will decline again.
- Economy influences our process.

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?

- Just received report from benefits committee that couldn't come up with a conclusion.
- We need flexibility and are asking for it from GA. This is going in legislative package.
- Virginia Beach had new employees now contribute 5%, other localities did not. Competitive issue (regional cooperation would help in this regard).
- Don't want to train employees and then not be able to keep them.
- Need to treat all employees fairly regardless of the services they provide.
- Need good benefits to retain good employees.

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

- Sure there is waste but difficult to pinpoint.
- Expect City Manager and staff to evaluate this. Balancing act.
- Now have auditor that reports to Council.
- Use of credit cards/country club.

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. Managers and councils' job.

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

- Fairness is an ongoing question with taxes.
- Machinery and tools tax is an inhibiting factor for attracting business. Needs to be examined.
- Been talking to Phil Kellam about options.
- BPOL tax is a large source of revenue, could consider increasing threshold.

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

- Has done a great job.
- Financial healthiness is a reflection of him.
- Understands city government.
- Gets upset with him at times.

- Has a good grasp at the city and what we need to do.
- Good manager for the city.
- Doesn't like to be blindsided by things we didn't know about that he did.

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?

- Yes, hasn't been a proposal that is better than what we've got.
- Supports it, not to say she won't change her opinion.