

MEMPHIS CHARTER COMMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE 2006

NAME: _____

1. Describe briefly your qualifications for being a member of the Memphis City Charter Commission.
(Please answer in the space below, but you may also attach a resume or other description to provide us with additional detail.)

Being the Business Manager and Assistant Business Manager of a large and diverse Union for over ten years I have vast experience in studying complex legal documents in the form of labor contracts and company policy manuals. My duties have involved the administration of over twenty different labor contracts and over the years and I feel that I have gained the experience necessary to be able to study documents looking for inconsistencies and for possible improvements. I have also participated in the process of gathering information from our membership and listening to them when it comes to improvements they desire to enact in their labor contracts. As I see it these are basically the same duties that the Charter Commission will be charged with and I already have the experience necessary to carry out these duties.

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2. What events or experiences caused you to decide to run for this office?

As the process of having the Charter Commission put on the ballot unfolded I became more and more interested in seeing that the studying of our charter for possible changes be done in a responsible manner. I witnessed groups that seemed to have motives other than the improvement of the charter as a motivating factor. I felt that if we were going to vote to study our city charter that we needed people on the commission that did not bring a preconceived notion of what changes they felt were best for our charter. I decided to run for the commission because I believe that I can carry out the duties we will be charged with without letting emotions or the dislike of certain politicians get in the way of making improvements to our charter should it be proved that improvements are needed.

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3. Some of the charter changes you'll consider will require detailed knowledge of how city government works today and how it might work better. How would you propose that the Charter Commission educate itself about these things?

First they would need to have a basic knowledge of what is contained in the city charter. Next they would need to attend the meetings of our city government and also review the operations of the various departments within city government.

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4. How will you personally prepare yourself for the Charter Commission's work? What kinds of information will you seek on your own about the government and where will you get this information?

I will make myself familiar with the basics of the charter. I will seek out information from the rank and file city employees and from the department managers as to what they perceive are the major inefficiencies within the city government.

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The Charter Commission will make some important decisions about the city government. What will you do to make sure you've reached the best possible answers?

I will carefully weigh any proposed changes and further I will seek out information from our municipalities to see if these changes have been attempted and what the results were.

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5. City governments face new issues and challenges all the time. What major issue might the city government face in the future that's different from those it faces now? How could the City Charter help the government deal effectively with this issue?

I do not have an answer to this at this time.

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6. Are there opportunities in this charter-revision process for encouraging greater collaboration between the city and other governments, such as Shelby County or the school systems? If so, what are the two best opportunities?

There may be opportunities, but as of now I do not have a deep enough knowledge of the charter to make an educated decision.

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The Charter Commission may make decisions that affect the roles of mayor and city council. In general, what do you think are the most effective roles that the mayor should play? What are the most effective roles of the city council?

The mayor should act as the Chief Executive Officer of the City.

The council should act as the Board of Directors with final control over the mayor's actions.

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The Charter Commission may make decisions affecting how public money is budgeted and spent. In general, how do you think the city should manage its finances so that taxpayers' money is spent most effectively, most efficiently and with the greatest degree of accountability?

Place provisions in the charter that would make the request and approval process completely transparent.

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At present, there are seven district council members and six members in two “super-districts.” If you could create any system you wanted for electing council members, what would it be? Why would you favor this system?

I am satisfied with the current system.