

Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire

Memphis Mayor

1a. Please describe your background and your qualifications for this position. What experiences caused you to run for this office. What previous experience qualifies you more than your opponents to lead on Day 1?

1a. I was born and raised in Memphis. I am a proud graduate of the Memphis City School system. I have worked and now own and operate a Successful Business in Memphis. I served the City of Memphis as City Councilman for eight years. The culmination of my life experiences, citizen, family man, home owner, Business Entrepreneur, city councilman, caused me to run for Mayor. Serving for eight years as city councilman qualifies me more than my opponents, because I have been in the trenches making the right decisions, and policies that have moved the city forward.

1b. What previous experience do you have running a business, managing employees or controlling a budget?

1b. For eight years, as City Councilman, I made the decisions to implement policies that facilitated a growing and vibrant city, I also made the tuff decisions when it was necessary to make cuts for a more efficient government. Each year I made decisions on the management and distribution of millions of City Funds. I fought tirelessly to control the Memphis city Budget.

As a business owner I manage approximately 20 employees during the week. I have to make the decisions on the budget to obtain the most efficient operation possible in my business every week.

1c. Beginning with the most recent position, please list all public offices you have held. Please include positions on appointed boards or commissions.

1c. City councilman eight years, (January 2000-December 2007)

1d. If you have previously run for elected office but were not elected, please list those races below.

1d. N/A

2a. What is your vision for the City? How would you use this office to achieve the vision?

My vision for the City of Memphis, is that each and every Memphian can be educated, employed and reside in decent homes. I would use the office of Mayor, to be the lead facilitator in obtaining the proper funding for the Memphis City Schools.

I would use the office of Mayor to first stabilize the business that are presently in Memphis. Additionally, I would use the office of Mayor to bring more businesses to Memphis, as means of expanding our employment base.

I would use the office of Mayor, to work in conjunction with our State, and Federal Governments, to obtain every possible dollar that the City of Memphis qualifies for, for better housing and economic development.

2b. What are the three greatest issues facing the City of Memphis today?

2b. The three greatest issues facing the City of Memphis are:

1. The unemployment rate.
2. Safety (crime).
3. Communication (City Government employees, Memphis Citizens & their concerns)

2c. What issues do you believe will shape the City over the next few years?

I believe the above three issues will play an important role in shaping the city in the next few years

We must decrease our unemployment rate, we must insure that our citizens are safe. We must make sure that our Citizens reside in decent accommodations. The elevation of these three will act as a magnet to draw others to our wonderful city.

We must maximize, our natural positive attributes, such as our place Internationally, as a distribution city, our presence on the Bluff of the Mighty Mississippi River (continued River Front Development), Tourism (Beale St., Graceland, The Home of The blues, and numerous recording artists) Improvement all of these will shape Memphis Positively.

3. How do you plan on insuring that there is diversity, (including race, age, gender and socio-economic) represented in the development of public policy, staffing and appointments, and city contracting?

3. America is the “Melting Pot” and Memphis is the “Southern Blender”. Memphis has always been a city of diverse backgrounds. As Mayor I will make sure that my office is number one in the implementing and facilitating of policy, staffing and appointments, that reflect the various races, age, gender and socio-economic background of all Memphis citizens. I will put in to place incentives and policies, to enhance diversity with city contracts and city services.

4. What role should the City of Memphis government play in promoting the economic development for the community? What specific initiatives or actions would you promote and/or support regarding both large and small businesses?

4. The City of Memphis government , must be the “number one” promoter of the economic development for the community. As Mayor of Memphis I will promote economic development of the city of Memphis and all its citizens.

I would review the current PILOT (Payment in-lieu-of -taxes)Program to attract new jobs to see if we are making progress and what can be done to improve or develop alternatives.

I will work tirelessly to ensure both large and small business are involved in the development economically of Memphis, We must have the minority and major businesses working hand and hand to continue to grow Memphis. As Mayor I will make sure that minorities, women, and major businesses are represented with our city contracts and services.

5. How would you strengthen and support existing neighborhoods that are within the City of Memphis and what barriers to community redevelopment do you see in these areas? How do you propose to address the neighborhood blight in a proactive manner?

5. Neighborhood Associations, are a vital part of strengthen our neighborhoods. As Mayor I would increase the communications with the Neighborhood Associations, so that I could ensure that each neighborhood’s concerns are addressed.

As Mayor I would implement community dialogue with the Neighborhood Associations through community town hall meetings. “Working Together, We Can Do Better”.

I propose to address the blight of our neighborhoods, by enforcement of the codes, that are ready in existence, and developing any new policies that will assist with removal of blight.

Cleaning up our neighborhoods, through city and citizen concern will enhance, our neighborhood, through pride and empowerment, of our citizens and our neighborhoods. I will be proactive by calling on all citizens to get involved in the redevelopment and cleaning up of all our neighborhoods.

6. Discuss the current administrative structure and do you have vision for altering this structure? How would you strengthen a culture of accountability and outcome based on performance standards for divisions of City Government as well as appointed positions?

6. As Mayor I am aware that I am the sole contracting officer for the city, and that as Mayor I would have the responsibility of appointing over 30 director and deputy director positions, with an additional 400 appointments to boards and commissions.

I will immediately review city government from top to bottom to make any adjustments that will make city government more efficient and effective.

As Mayor I will expect the citizens of Memphis to hold me accountable as to the office of Mayor and the progress the city will make. Likewise, all members of city government will be held accountable from the directors down through the ranks of the city government.

I will meet as often as necessary to make sure all divisions and its employees are operating as efficient as possible.

7. How can the Mayor effectively contribute to the reduction of the crime rate in the City of Memphis? What current strategies would you continue to support and what changes would you propose?

7. As Mayor of Memphis, I will first meet with the Police Director and Police Officers to see what their concern is, to increase their morale.

We must do what we can to raise the morale of our Police force, because they place their lives on the line everyday.

I would institute more police visibility in all our communities to deter crime.

As Mayor I would also work to enhance the image of the Police Officer in all our neighborhoods, with communications between our citizens and our Police department which is a winning situation for Memphis over all.

I would continue to support more Police Officers on the streets of Memphis.

I would change anything that inhibits the communication between my office of Mayor, the neighborhoods and the Police Department.

8. Are you familiar with the current budget and what are your major budget priorities?

8. I am familiar with the current budget. As Mayor my priorities are to make sure that the Memphis Tax dollars are spent as efficiently as possible.

No tax dollar can be wasted. The Mayor, the Council and all city employees, must be held accountable. Accountability starts with the Mayor's office, as the number one citizen of Memphis.

9. Would you be willing to submit to a background check and allow the results to be published?

9. YES