

# Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire Memphis City Council

Paul Shaffer, District 9, Position 1

1. Please describe your background and your qualifications for this position? What experiences caused you to run for this office? What unique qualities would you bring to this position and what differentiates you from other candidates in your race?

For the past fifteen years I have served as a Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 474 and as such I have broad experience in the functions of government as well as private industry. For the past nine years I have served as the Principal Officer of IBEW, Local 474 which has over two million dollars in yearly revenue. For these fifteen years I have administered as well as negotiated labor agreements with the local city and county governments and private industry. This work has given me valuable experience in building management and labor coalitions that work in the best interests of the group as a whole. My business experience with developing a budget and supervising a staff of eight employees along with my work with local government gives me the qualifications to be an effective city council member.

My years of involvement in the community led me to seek public office. I have lived in varied communities in my years here, from Midtown to Binghampton, to Whitehaven and once again Midtown. Having lived in varied communities I have a unique perspective of what all of the citizens of Memphis want and need. I have a proven track record of being able to bring groups of people together to build coalitions that work for the best interest of the group instead of an individual viewpoint.

## MEMPHIS City Council Questionnaire 2011

Name: Paul Shaffer

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

I believe that we need to attract new industry and citizens and I want to see Memphis once again become the destination of choice for others as it was for me when I choose to make Memphis my home in 1972. I want Memphis to be a city whose citizens have good job opportunities, safe neighborhoods and a quality school system. My decisions on the council will always be based on these ideals.

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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 and government?

Memphis is a very diverse city and the city council must insure that all segments of the community are properly represented. The council has many opportunities when approving public works projects and approving appointees to various boards to set standards that give equal access to all segments of the community and I will work towards seeing that those standards are set.

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

Economic growth and attracting new and responsible industry.

Crime prevention and creating safe neighborhoods

Providing a quality education to our youth

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5. 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?

The city government must play a major role in promoting the economic development of our community. The city government should be developing incentive programs that will attract meaningful new industry which in turn will provide good paying jobs with a future to the citizens of the community and strengthen our tax base. I will look to the regional success stories that have attracted major industry to other cities and work to develop incentives to make Memphis more attractive to business.

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6. How would you strengthen and support existing neighborhoods that are within the urban core and what barriers to community redevelopment do you see in these areas today? How do you propose to address the current blight in many of these areas?

The council should develop incentive programs that make these areas attractive to developers and that would promote neighborhood revitalization projects. We should take advantage of any federal funds available for these projects as was done with some of the public housing facilities. The city should vigorously enforce the existing codes to combat blight and look for new avenues to make the property owners clean up or forfeit their properties.

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7. What do you regard as the greatest obstacle or barrier to growth in the City today?

The shortage of quality jobs which is directly tied to our educational system. To attract new industry we must have a well educated and capable workforce. Our school system must make every effort to provide an education that will not only prepare the students for college but also teach them the basic skills necessary to be productive members of the workforce.

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8. What is the role of the City Council? What do you think about the relationship between the Council and the City Mayor; as well as other elected or appointed bodies, such as: Shelby County Commissioners, State of Tennessee Shelby County Delegation, MLGW, Greater Memphis Chamber, Downtown Memphis Commission, etc.

The city council is the legislative body that enacts ordinances and resolutions that set the guidelines for the operation of the city. The mayor is charged with administering the city within the guidelines set by the council and the council should work closely and collaboratively with the mayor to insure that the city is run properly. The county commission has legislative authority over the entire county and the council should work in harmony with the commission. The council should work with the Shelby County State Delegation to insure that the interests of the city are being promoted in Nashville. The city council has certain authority over MLGW and should exercise that authority in such a way so as to insure that they are operating properly. The council must work with the Chamber and the Downtown Commission as well as other civic groups to promote responsible growth in our community.

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9. With regard to the crime rate, what current strategies would you support and what changes would you propose if any?

The Blue Crush program has produced positive results and based on my knowledge of the program it should be continued and possibly expanded. We must also make sure that the Police Department has the proper level of staffing and all of the tools necessary to provide a safe and secure community for all of the citizens of Memphis.

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

Yes.

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11. Do you support the local ethics ordinance? Is the Ordinance sufficient, and if not, what changes would you recommend?

Yes. If it is administered properly it should be sufficient.

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12. What are your ideas with regards to the City's responsibility for funding Memphis City Schools?

As all of the community is well aware the issue of school funding and administration is in the hands of the Federal Courts and there are many aspects that are yet to be decided. The primary sources of funding should be the state and county governments but I will remain open to some form of continuation of funding by the city should the facts prove it is warranted.

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13. What are the Council's responsibilities for making the City contract bidding process more equitable and transparent?

The council is entirely responsible and must enact guidelines that leave no doubt as to whether the bidding process is equitable and transparent.