

Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire Memphis Mayor

Charles Carpenter

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?

I am a native Memphian, product of the City School system, well educated, small businessman, with substantial legal and finance expertise. I believe that my demonstrated experience separates me from the status quo politician. The City needs a visionary leader, not a politician, with direct experience in dealing with complex legal and financial matters that can build consensus and provide leadership that will establish common goals that will lead to success for all of our citizens. For the past seventeen (17) years, I have served as Bond Counsel, as well as, providing legal services as Counsel to the Underwriters for the City of Memphis, Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division, the Memphis Shelby County Airport Authority, and other issuers such as the Memphis-Shelby County Sports Authority and The Health, Educational and Housing Facility Board. Our firm has been involved in most all of the complex legal and financing transactions over the past 17 years. As Bond Counsel, we are familiar with the operating and capital improvement budgets of the City and will be able to begin governance on Day 1.

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

I have thirty-one (31) years as an attorney in private practice having started in one room at the corner of 5th and Chelsea in north Memphis, practicing as a general practitioner. I have continued my education and diversified my practice areas, and over the past 17 years I have grown my firm to become nationally recognized as Bond Counsel to deliver approving legal opinions on tax-exempt municipal bonds and notes throughout the United States. To date, we have delivered approving opinions in over 135 transactions throughout the region totaling over Eight Billion Dollars in volume.

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

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None

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

N/A

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

A New Beginning is my vision for the City. Our priorities will be growing the economic pie, improving the national and international image of the City, and improving on things that we as a City already do well, for example, distribution, cargo and passenger air transportation and music and tourism.

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

(i) **Jobs and Economic Development**

New jobs at every level must be attracted to Memphis if we are to move our City forward. As Mayor, I pledge new, strategic and visionary leadership to accomplish this goal. This new thrust is possible because Memphis is the last frontier of major American cities. Memphis has national and international appeal due to its size, location, national and international access by air, water, rail and ground transportation. These attributes and natural resources have been totally under utilized.

(ii) **Crime and Public Safety**

As Mayor, I pledge to reallocate the existing resources of the Police Division to improve police community relations and public safety. This will be accomplished by replacing the current Police Director, reinstating community policing methods to enhance the image and increase the level of cooperation between police officers and the community residents, and to help restore and maintain the highest levels of morale for police officers within the Police Division. I further pledge to modify the number of special task forces with the Police Division and assign more officers to patrol the streets of the City. Please see our “All For One” crime plan, which simply means “All Citizens for One

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Memphis". The full text of the "All For One" crime plan is hosted on our website at www.charlescarpentermayor.com.

(iii) **Residency Requirements/Tax Equity**

The voters of Memphis have made it clear that residency requirements are good for employees and members of the Boards and commissions of the City of Memphis. As Mayor, I will support the will of the majority of citizens of our great City on this issue.

Again, in my opinion, this is an issue that revolves around tax equity, not where you live. This is America and we as citizens have a right to live where we please, but just as

important, in order to have a thriving and successful community in our American society, everyone must contribute an equitable share of the costs necessary to fund the essential operations and amenities of the City that we all use and enjoy.

Funding for delivery of all of the essential services of the City should be paid from taxpayer revenues. Funding for promotion and growth of the City should be jointly funded with public and private resources.

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

Development of a comprehensive plan that will set goals creating a win-win scenario for our community will be one of the major issues shaping the future of our city. Job creation and economic development will also be essential. The positive assets of Memphis, such as our location, low cost of doing business, distribution capabilities, etc., are totally under utilized. Finally, as Mayor, we will show leadership in the areas of education, community pride and foster a more positive image of our city on a national and international basis.

3. How do you plan on insuring that there is diversity represented in the development of public policy, staffing and appointments, and city contracting?

The city mayor has over 30+ appointments to director and deputy director positions and over 400 appointments to boards and commissions. The city mayor is the sole contracting officer for the City. As Mayor, I will make appointments based on qualifications and experience. We will insure that we have diversity based on the demographics of our City, including race, gender, age and ethnicity. We will insure that

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we will rotate and include all segments of the community on the boards and commissions of the City. Also, we will insure that women and minority businesses have a full opportunity to participate in city contracting.

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?

The public sector has a primary role in promoting economic development for the community. As Mayor, I will be the leading promoter for Memphis on the regional, national and international levels. Based on my experience as a municipal finance attorney, as Mayor, we would immediately utilize the benefits of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly called the federal stimulus program to take full advantage of the Economic Recovery Zone Bonds and the Economic Recovery Zone Facility Bonds, aggregating approximately \$69 million dollars of available funds specially earmarked for the City. We will also show leadership in educating the community on stimulus funds available to first time home buyers, and other citizen benefits. As Mayor, I will show leadership in facilitating public/private partnerships and forge joint ventures between large and small businesses, particularly with local women and minority owned businesses. We will also continue to work to bring in funds from the federal and state levels to promote mixed use opportunities, as well as, other housing opportunities for low and moderate income citizens.

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?

The City currently has over 400+ established neighborhood associations. As Mayor, we would better organize this network of concerned citizens under the Division of Community Enhancement. We would coordinate meetings, request input on establishing priorities and utilization of public resources and provide guidance on how all of the neighborhood associations could work together to the total benefit of our community. The current barriers are found in the lack of organization and a

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comprehensive plan, which would be remedied under our administration. We propose to address blight by cleaning our City up! As Mayor, we would accomplish this task by enforcing the laws that are already on the books. As Mayor, we would insure that building and anti blight codes are fully enforced in all neighborhoods. Prior administrations have not done a consistently good job in enforcing property owner responsibility in connection with removing abandoned and junk cars, abandoned residential houses and apartments, and high weeds and trash. This action is already supported by laws on the books and will go a long way to promote neighborhood stabilization and civic pride.

6. Discuss the current administrative structure and do you have a 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?

As stated in response number 3, the city mayor has over 30+ appointments to director and deputy director positions and over 400 appointments to boards and commissions. The city mayor is the sole contracting officer for the City. As Mayor, I will make appointments based on qualifications and experience. We will insure that we have diversity based on the demographics of our City, including race, gender, age and ethnicity. Being a small business person for over 30 years, my management style is "hands on". I will meet regularly with my division directors as a whole so that all divisions are aware and can be supportive of the total initiatives of the City for each fiscal year. We will establish specific goals and timetables for all projects, of which projects, each will be spearheaded by a designated division; thereby increasing accountability and allowing for better tracking of outcomes and efficiency. We will review the City's current organizational chart for any revisions that will need to be made to enhance oversight and better management of City resources.

7. Give us your thoughts on a metro form of government and/or consolidated services.

As Mayor, my position is that I am opposed to a consolidated form of government as currently proposed. We have reviewed the organizational structure of the largest 30 cities in America and only one-third have a consolidated form of government; therefore, consolidation is no golden cure. As proposed, with Arlington, Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown, Lakeland and Millington being taken off the table for discussion, with the Shelby County and Memphis City Schools being taken off the table for discussion, there

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is nothing remaining but the tax base of the citizens of Memphis. The citizens of Memphis are already paying a disproportionate tax burden and under the proposed structure, we see no benefit for city residents. The current form of government that we have in Memphis and Shelby County, while far from perfect, is a functional structure to govern the affairs of our community whether you live in the City, County or suburban areas. In my opinion, the key issue revolves around tax equity; that is whether it is equitable for some citizens in our community to bear a disproportionate tax burden for providing essential governmental services to support the amenities of the community that we all enjoy, such as our parks, museums, infrastructure, etc. If you use it, you should have responsibility for assisting with the funding of the amenity or service. As Mayor, we will lead the discussions on sustainability with all of our regional partners.

8. What is the City's responsibility to Memphis City Schools? How should the relationship between the City and Memphis City Schools be structured?

Although the prior city administration has voluntarily funded the Memphis City Schools and there is currently a lawsuit pending adjudicating the future funding obligations of the City, under Tennessee statutory law, funding public education is the legal obligation of the State and County governments. As Mayor, we will show leadership to ensure that Memphis City Schools receive maximum funding from the State and County government, including advising the community on the importance of improving attendance and graduation rates, and how that relates to funding. Additionally, during the pendency of the litigation, we will ensure that the City continues with a sufficient level of funding for schools; thereafter, we will follow the final orders of the Court. In addition, we will show leadership in providing unique programs for remedial and gifted students within the Memphis City Schools. Also, I will promote literacy and vocational training for older students, parents and adults. Also, as Mayor, we will establish a structured relationship between the City and Memphis City Schools, including the Memphis Education Association. Currently, the City administration appears to focus on the Memphis City Schools only when it comes to the City Council for funding. We will implement a year round program to better understand the needs and challenges of the Memphis City Schools and seek viable solutions before a crisis emerges. Also, as Mayor, we will show leadership by assisting in educating the community on important educational issues on a regular basis.

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9. 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?

We believe that everything as CEO begins with communication and transparency and ends with leadership consensus building and decision making. As Mayor, I pledge to reallocate the existing resources of the Police Division to improve police community relations and public safety. This will be accomplished by replacing the current Police Director, reinstating community policing methods to enhance the image and increase the level of cooperation between police officers and the community residents, and to help restore and maintain the highest levels of morale for police officers within the Police Division. We further pledge to modify the number of special task forces with the Police Division and assign more officers to patrol the streets of the City. Please see our "All For One" crime plan, which simply means "All Citizens for One Memphis". The full text of the "All For One" crime plan is hosted on our website at www.charlescarpentermayor.com

10. State your position regarding residency restrictions for City workers, including police officers.

The voters of Memphis have made it clear that residency requirements are good for employees and members of the Boards and commissions of the City of Memphis. As Mayor, I will support the will of the majority of citizens of our great City on this issue.

Having stated the above, in my opinion, this is an issue that revolves around tax equity, not where you live. This is America and we as citizens have a right to live where we please, but just as important, in order to have a thriving and successful community in
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our American society, everyone must contribute an equitable share of the costs necessary to fund the essential operations and amenities of the City that we all use and enjoy. Therefore, once an appropriate tax equity initiative is implemented, we pledge to revisit the residency requirements at that time.

11. Are you familiar with the current budget and what would be your major budget priorities?

We are familiar with the current operational and capital improvement budgets for the City. The budgets themselves appear to be solid balanced budgets. Our major budget priorities would be to provide a better value to the citizens of Memphis based on the tax dollars that we are currently spending through increasing efficiencies, accountability and work ethic for all city employees.

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

Yes.

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