

VOTER GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 2016 ELECTIONS

League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area

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The League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metro Area obtained lists of candidates in all races from the Virginia Department of Elections. Questions were formulated by League members. Candidates were contacted by email and they submitted their answers electronically in their own words. No editing was done by the League. Follow up was done by both email and phone to all candidates. If a candidate did not respond, their name is still shown as being in the race.

The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidate or political party. The League is nonpartisan. The League hopes this information is helpful to citizens as they prepare to vote on November 8, 2016.

Richmond Mayor

The Mayor is the City's chief executive officer (CEO). Duties include submitting the annual budget to City Council and appointing a chief administrative officer (CAO) with approval of Council. The CAO, who reports to the Mayor, is directly responsible for day-to-day municipal operations. The Mayor is elected in a nonpartisan at-large election and must receive a majority of votes in at least five of the City's nine districts. Term - 4 years. Salary - \$125,000.

Candidates:

Jon T. Baliles



Party: I

Biographical Info:

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: The city's revenue condition is positive but the priorities where we spend money are less than ideal. We need a mayor who works with the Council and schools to develop the budget instead of ramming it through and using political favors to get votes to keep those misguided priorities in the budget. We must improve our financial reporting. It is essential that we file our reports on time and if not, hold those responsible for doing so accountable.

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: Bolster the Office of Community Wealth Building's workforce training efforts that have stalled in recent months. Dedicate a steady stream of funding to our schools. Schools do four things: they reduce poverty, improve long term health outcomes, reduce crime, and promote economic development. Be a hand-holding mayor with any company wanting to locate in the city and create jobs. Encourage them to come here and hire locally. Working with OCWB we can match skills with jobs. Improve transit options.

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: The mayor should invite the Superintendent and School Board and Council into the early stages of the budget process. Crafting the budget together will produce much less dissent and infighting, which accomplishes nothing but embarrassment. The focus should be on achievement and accountability in the school halls. This will do more than anything to move the needle and build confidence among our parents and children in our schools and in our city.

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: I think the day reporting center should be expanded as much as possible to allow people to remain in society for non-violent offenders. They should also be put to work for the Sheriff on grounds crews and helping around the city pick up trash or cut grass. The city should also partner with non-profits to help those with addictions or substance addiction issues get the help they need to get clean. I will address this as mayor as it is a seriously growing issue for our first responders.

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: I will be a hand-holding mayor with any company wanting to locate in the city and create jobs. There is tremendous opportunity at and around the Richmond Marine Terminal for growth as an inland port for warehousing and distribution centers. A similar facility in Front Royal, VA also run by the VPA, has created 38 such operations in the last 15 years that have created 7,000 jobs and generated \$700 million of investment. We also must look at reducing business taxes to retain and attract businesses.

John F. "Jack" Berry



Party: I

Biographical Info:

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: Accurate financial reporting is essential in managing a large, complex organization. I will expect monthly budget vs. actual reports with explanations for variances. There is no reason for officials in City Hall to announce sudden discoveries of extra money, particularly after Council has already adopted a budget. As a former budget director, I will ensure that the city follows best practices and makes all financial information public. I will adhere to the city's fund balance and debt policies.

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: I will strengthen the Office of Community Wealth Building and collaborate with the non-profit community, particularly the Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network. Concentrating the poorest residents in segregation-era public housing has contributed greatly to the challenges children face. We must begin to redevelop these communities into healthy, mixed income neighborhoods with wrap around support services. We will focus on transportation, job training and economic development.

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: We will unite the community in support of schools. I will bring together our School Board, City Council and Mayors Office to work together on a common agenda. It is the job of the mayor to bring the financial and community resources that our schools need. I will implement a 5-year financial plan, develop a financing plan for facilities, and value teachers. School performance is directly related to poverty so we will work with partners to provide trauma-informed care and support for children.

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: I will support comprehensive re-entry and rehabilitation services. Many inmates suffer from mental health and substance abuse problems. We should increase the capacity of the city's network of mental health treatment

programs to serve this population. We should also support OAR and other programs that focus on supportive housing, job training and job placement.

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: Creating a vibrant, culturally rich and creative city has attracted thousands of young professionals who are starting businesses and providing human capital for a growing business community. A continued focus on the creative economy will pay dividends. We also have big economic development opportunities in the corridor near the port, and huge opportunities in the Boulevard area which will become RVA's new "mid-town". I will also support investment in neglected neighborhood commercial corridors.

Bobby A. "BJ" Junes



Party: I

Biographical Info:

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: Evaluate the current up-graded collection procedures to discover what types methods / means / and or accounting entries which reversed the City's initial projected fiscal year deficit status to one with a final surplus standing. Either we are on a solid ground making progress or we are off track. The missing piece to the puzzle should not be that difficult to identify given the overall amount of financial shift. Other steps to be comparing this year's financial report to next year's projections

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: Be very mindful to the fact that many of the City's own non-management employees are or would be subject to impoverished conditions pending their current job status. Support the GRTC regional expansion projects such that many of the local city residents can obtain / keep jobs in the city as well as jobs working in the immediate surrounding counties. Economic partnership plan – match local employees with local employers. This is a win / win situation for both parties not entailing a major effort

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: Attend all city council meetings pushing for a agenda that prioritizes all school / educational related items on the front end of each session. Secondly, attend school board meetings to see where/what/why city school strategy and operations are on or off target. As mayor I would team up with the city's school superintendent (Dr. Dana Bedden) to get the city council as well as the school board on the same page. Secondly, to personally lead any future school rally or protest for school funding at

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: Very open to the Governor's concept of allowing non-violent felons more access to full array of rights and opportunity to gain equal workers certification. Once your time is served you have paid your debt back to society. Certainly question how potential employers can ask on job application if you have been or committed a felony in your past. Many of the first time offenders have learned their lesson the hard way and are ready to become productive members of society. Got to give them a chance.

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: Avenues which facilitate or allow a connection between employers and employees. This seems to be the primary pump which provides the most benefits to all parties involved. Regional co-operation as a priority to be considered first, i.e. local / metro bus transportation system, as many of the lower income / poverty stricken citizens do not have access to automobiles. This also applies to many of the younger (those without drivers licence) and to elderly citizens. Priorities Mixed use development

Joseph D. Morrissey

No response.

Michelle R. Mosby



Party: I

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: To improve the financial condition, I will continue to follow the advice from the bond rating agencies to increase the unassigned fund balance. I will also continue to focus on revenue enhancement opportunities and continue to be strategic in economic development opportunities. I will ensure that we have strong reporting requirements and internal controls.

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: Continue to focus on community wealth building initiative; continue the mayors youth Academy to build on the educational and work experience of youth in the city; continue to encourage new business opportunities for the entrepreneurs; hold classes for small businesses, and assist in the development of long and short term business plans; Focus on community out-reach through education at town meetings on municipal government; and expand vocational programs for technical training.

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: As Mayor I will focus on both their capital and operational needs; I will review the current school's plan to consolidate schools and their plan to repair and build new schools, and I will also review the operational plan from schools and their accountability of their operational funding and have the internal auditor focus on their processes as well as work diligently to begin the School Facilities Campaign to gain the resources for implementation.

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: I would work closely with the sheriffs office and the juvenile justice office to continue the successful program now in place to address the importance of drug treatment programs, educational programs, group and work alternative programs, etc.

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: Build on the port opportunities (even dredging the river to bring cruise ships to Richmond); expand existing business growth; recruit businesses that grow job opportunities for all (including low and moderate residents of the community); identify mix-use redevelopment opportunities and develop a robust public transportation system that is citywide and connects the region.

Levar M. Stoney



Party: I

Biographical Info:

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: I will set a goal of becoming a AAA bond rated community during my time as Mayor, starting by hiring high quality talent at all levels of the finance department, instilling discipline and a strong work ethic at City Hall. We need to make sure we can handle the basics, like paying bills on time, while addressing the broader issues, like poverty and education that are now holding Richmond back. My full plan: <http://www.stoneyforrva.com/priorities/transforming-city-hall-providing-premium-services>

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: My goal will be not just to provide better support for students in poverty, but to help reduce poverty itself. When parents are working and economically thriving, children benefit, and so does the city of Richmond's revenue stream. I will support strengthening and making more accessible adult education initiatives as well as the City's workforce development program to help adults access the training they need to get a better paying job.

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: I was the first, and so far only candidate in this race, to release a detailed and comprehensive plan to transform public education & strengthen our schools (www.stoneyforrva.com/education). My plan includes creating a compact between the Mayor, City Council, the School Board, & the Superintendent to achieve shared goals together & prepare students for a 21st Century workforce. My plan also includes giving every child in Richmond access to quality, affordable and enriching after-school programs.

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: I commit to proactively hiring former offenders to incorporate them back into the workforce. Through my work as the Secretary of the Commonwealth, I made restorative justice a hallmark of the current administrative because, as the son of a former offender, I know that re-entering society and having access to a quality job is the best support program there is. I will also use my position as Mayor to be a grand convener and supportive partner with nonprofits and faith organizations.

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: I commit to finding top leads in City Hall for; economic development, community development, development & review & planning. As a city, we need to fix our permitting process so folks can see a return on their dollars faster. No one should have to wait six months for a building permit. As mayor, I will be at the table for every deal and make sure they are the best deals for our city. It's time to start asking how businesses are going to invest in public education and our communities.

Bruce W. Tyler

Candidate withdrew from the race.

Lawrence E. Williams



Party: I

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Questions:

Q: What will you do to address the City's financial condition and to improve timely financial reporting?

A: "I pledge to develop a city government that does not waste your time, taxes, talent and what you treasure, your rights".

"I pledge to increase meetings with staff and a new citizen blue ribbon, financial oversight strategic planning budget committee composed of 9 community professionals from our regional corporate business community appointed by council working in transparent settings that allow citizen formulation, agreement and buy in.

Q: What specific steps will your administration take to reduce poverty in the City?

A: "I pledge to increase meetings with citizens and community organizations in scheduled, real and transparent working committee settings that allow citizen formulation and buy in. A mayor and his staff must see possibilities in places and people that have been marginalized and show in practical steps how to honestly and humbly represent equality, while promoting city growth and equal opportunity. This Mayor/Architect will work to deconcentrate poverty .

Q: What will your administration do to improve Richmond's schools?

A: "I pledge to develop greater funding approaches for our schools and work as an appropriate role model to inspire our youth".

"I pledge to fund our schools adequately reviewing increased bonding capacity without residential property tax increases, utilizing business sector growth, training programs, new and existing commercial development tax zone income, doubling composite index State funding to \$400 million, increasing energy savings contracts and encouraging construction cost savings.

Q: What treatment programs and community re-entry programs for jail inmates do you support?

A: We must explore alternative solutions to mental health disorders and substance use disorders. This candidate supports all regional supports municipal services, non profits churches and new evolving programs that change lives for the better.

Organizations Supported:

McShin

Offender Aid and Restoration of Richmond, Inc.

Boaz & Ruth.

AFOI

Virginia DOC Community Corrections

Region 2000's Career Center.

Wrap around services should include:

Intervention Recovery and Recovery Housing Services

Q: What are your economic development priorities?

A: Priority Projects Include:

The International Center for Social Research and Development, shall supplement and work in concert with the Department of Community Wealth Building.

Expansion of the Bus Rapid Transit

Shockoe Bottom Commonwealth Tourism Zone

New Mix Income Neighborhoods in Marginalized Communities

New North Blvd Multi Use Stadium (See Website) on the Sports Backers Stadium Site

Revised City Master Plan

Revised City Comprehensive Plan

Revised City Zoning Plan