

Jacksonville Beach Candidate Written Questions

1. How will you address the budgetary shortfalls caused by the loss of the Better Jacksonville Plan, as well as the proposed amendments that change property tax exemptions? What is your plan to preserve the levels-of-service for Jacksonville Beach residents?

To start with the possibility of voters approving the purposed property tax exemptions, Jacksonville Beach would be reducing the total taxable value roughly by \$142 million. This puts us losing close to \$600,000 in revenue annually. However, Jacksonville Beach has our 2019 budget calculated for the loss of this revenue. Even with the loss, we will still be able to offer our residents our high quality of service. Part of this reason is due to new construction and an increase in home values of almost 8% helping offset the possible decrease of property tax revenue. However, if voted to maintain our property taxes we can increase our quality of service. For example, we can update sidewalks, better maintain our parks, and add bike lanes. Next, the Better Jacksonville Plan will be ending in 2030. Our city has done an excellent job with allocating these funds. We have used the Better Jacksonville funds for its intended use, which was for infrastructure updates and pay down of debt. Jacksonville Beach will still be able to maintain the quality of service for years to come, as current financial planning has our city debt free by October 1st of 2020. With the Better Jacksonville Plan continuing for almost a decade after, we will have the ability to use those funds as a cash basis for our city's improvements rather than borrowing from taxpayers. Even with our outstanding financial security, there are ways to bring in, additional revenue. We can collaborate with the private sector and search for public grants that could help alleviate any spontaneous expenditures.

2. What are Jacksonville Beaches' infrastructure needs when it comes to sea level rise and resiliency and what would you propose to address these issues?

This is not just a Jacksonville Beach issue, rather a global issue. But some things we need to consider when discussing this topic Jacksonville Beach is not just a coastal city, but we are also a barrier island. We need to understand what that means. Barrier Islands are created through natural or manmade and used to slow down and protect the mainland. This is a risk we take for living in paradise. However, there are a few things we are currently doing to help ease the destruction of our island. We are in the process of updating our drainage allowing water to move off the beach and back into the waterways quickly. Along with updates of our drainage we have our dunes and a concrete seawall. The dunes and the seawall are our first defense with the drainage coming in a close second. Furthermore, we have amazing resources here in our community with the U.S. Navy studying the rise of the sea levels here in Mayport, and we have two great universities. Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida having highly sought after marine science programs. I personally do not have the know-all answer on preventing the sea levels from rising, but we can reach out to the Universities and the Navy to see what they have. We can also collaborate with other cities that are facing these issues. I know in South Florida; the cities have formed a board to come up with ideas and methods. They have also worked on setting and enforcing environmental changes in their cities. An example is recycling bins alongside public trash cans. As a city, we could do more for environmental factors and upkeep of our current and future drainage. This will be an issue that we will have to pull in from outside sources, work with surrounding cities, state and local government.

3. Do you agree with the current parking solution? Why or why not?

Something you can expect of me is clarity and direct communication. I do not completely agree with the current parking solution. Specifically, about residential parking in district 1. We have left current homeowners behind due to the code for parking, and it needs to be audited. Our district has new development that has occurred, leaving current residents not being able to park in front of their home due to old municipal code. Our district has a large population of renters and AIRBNB's, which is great but due to the cost of rent at the beach and our town becoming a destination to visit, we are not meeting the visitors and residents need for parking. Two parking spaces per household with a possibility of eight renters, all with cars, per unit is not enough.

With downtown parking, I think we could provide a solution that starts with decrease of parking requirements. We frequent downtown by foot or bike and always see half-empty parking lots. There is an exception when it comes to holidays, festivals, and other significant events. However, this is to be expected when you attract more than your population. We can take inspiration from other coastal and tourist towns like ours and encourage foot and bike traffic in our downtown district. There has been a discussion for adding a parking garage downtown; I would be in favor of seeing the parking garage located outside of our downtown. I believe that the additional parking spaces provided by the parking structure will encourage people to walk through all of Jacksonville Beach and explore everything we have to offer. This would serve a dual purpose by decreasing the amount of motor traffic which would reduce the safety concern we have for cyclist and pedestrians.

4. Please explain what personal and/or professional community service experience has prepared you to serve as an elected official for the citizens of Jacksonville Beach?

This is a simple answer for me because I enjoy participating in ways to make our community great. Over the past three years, I routinely attended city council meetings, worked on implementing improvements to the Carver Center, and have volunteered with the local Jacksonville Beach police, even completing the Citizens Police Academy. Additionally, through my job in Finance and IT development, I also participate in community services throughout Jacksonville, such as beach cleaning, mentoring elementary children, and helping out at homeless shelters. A lot of these activities involve just a few hours for my family and me to get out and continue to stay involved in the community, but our frequent participation certainly provides us with more and more experience. When elected to City Council, I expect to continue these activities and enact ways to highlights the benefits of community service.

5. What differentiates you from your opponent?

I have children, and they are growing up here, affected by every decision that is made, I am actively and consistently involved in decisions that benefit my community, and I'm a homeowner. My family has deep roots into the Jacksonville Beach community, and I am fully invested in making this a safe place for my family, my neighbors, and local small businesses. While I understand that both I and my opponent work and are busy, I made an effort to coordinate with my family to attend city council meetings each month for three years to gain a stronger understanding of the problems brought forth by constituents in my district. Speaking with homeowners and other mothers and fathers, I know the problems of our community, and this is a significant strength, as our beach community is only as strong as our weakest link. Over the last three years, I have fought on behalf of my district and my home and helped add another officer to our police force, earned our carver center a water fountain, and advocated higher quality of life for homeowners in district 1.

During this campaign, I have also gone door to door, and district one residents consistently echoed my platform, which gives me comfort in knowing that I'm acting as a voice for the community and that I'm focused on high-priority initiatives within the community. Our residents want everything that I have been fighting for and will continue to fight for: keeping our city finances in order so that we can increase public safety, ensuring a high quality of life and plan for strategic growth. After being elected to the city council, I have scheduled monthly chats and open forums for residents to be sure I am representing our communities most valuable initiatives.

Finally, my family and I own a home west of 3rd street, so I understand east of third problems and west of third problems - such as speeding because I speak with my neighbors. Knowing the issues of both sides of the district, which are vastly different but equally as important, and for the reasons already mentioned, raising a family and being actively involved in the community, is what separates me from my opponent.