



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Beverly Rice
Atlanta City Council
District 10

2017 Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Describe briefly your qualifications for this office. In addition, please identify up to 5 organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy and why you believe their support is important.

I have spent my entire life and career in public service. I am passionate about local, state, and national government, working alongside of many public servants and politicians. With a degree in Government-Political Science, my service to the community has been an unwavering commitment. I have worked many years as a public school educator. I served for many years in urban schools working with under privileged, poor, and impoverished students, while leading others as an advocate for change in communities that are quickly transforming. For the past 8 years, I have served as the Board Chair of Quest Communities Development Organization, serving the homeless, disabled, and veterans. I have also advocated to provide adequate social and supportive services in the various communities.

I have been actively supported in my candidacy by:

1. Leonard Adams, Founder & CEO of Quest CDO
2. John Hope Bryant, Founder & CEO of Operation HOPE
3. Creflo & Taffi Dollar, Pastors of World Changers Church International
4. Dr. R. L. White, Pastor, Mt. Ephraim Baptist Church
5. Terrance Smith, Sr., Founder & Executive Director of Civil Justice Group

Because of my dedication to servant hood to mankind, on many levels, in the City of Atlanta I have been able to garner support of those listed, and so many others.

2. What is your vision for the City of Atlanta and how would you implement it? Please be specific.

My vision for the City of Atlanta is for phenomenal growth and prosperity, especially in the area of Economic Development. I will work with others to implement job training programs using the model of Westside Works for a multiplicity of skills. When companies move into our city, we have trained and skilled laborers prepared for a multitude of task.

I envision a city where boarded, blighted, and damaged homes are transformed into affordable housing for those with low incomes, similar to what we provide at Quest CDO. I will work with city leaders to implement programs to renovate vacant properties that have been abandoned by owners.

In addition, I have a vision for total equity in every district. There is a dire need for us to bridge the gap within our city. I will work with community leaders to implement a “Bridging the Gap” program, encouraging business leaders and owners to invest back into the community, by giving to schools in the community, adopting families, within the community, and help meet the challenges while building stable relationships. Financial literacy and alternative education programs will be vital to our growth, including incentives for continued education.

3. Please identify the three greatest issues or problems facing the City of Atlanta and specifically how you would work to solve them.

One of the greatest issues facing the City of Atlanta is poverty. Over 80% of the students in Atlanta Public Schools live in poverty. There are way too many parents struggling to survive, working on minimum wage jobs. I would advocate for more efficient job training and skill development to help parents be better prepared for higher paying jobs. It is very difficult to secure livable wage jobs without formal training. Poverty can result in homeless, which can be resolved by the renovation of vacant and abandoned property.

The second problem in the City of Atlanta is a lack of adequate public safety. Although the crime rate is now lower for homicides, thefts and robberies are definitely on the increase. People need high-performing jobs. It is almost impossible for people with criminal backgrounds to get employed. Research has shown when ex-offenders are not gainfully employed, criminal behavior will be repeated. I will work with leaders in the community to introduce policy for jobs to be easier to obtain for convicted felons. Everyone need a second, third, or fourth chance; and I certainly feel that way about those who have committed a crime, served the time, placed back into society, and have become productive citizens. Just as we have re-entry programs for life, we need re-entry programs for those who have been reformed.

Twenty-first century policing is crucial. Our society is a technological age of computers, cameras and drones. We require immediate results. We need enhanced technology to make our city safer. Every major street and business should be required to have high-tech security cameras as a deterrent to robberies and thefts. We must also work with residents to build better relationship within the community. A ‘know your neighbor’ program would encourage

neighbors to look out for the safety of others, and send an alert when suspicious circumstances are present.

Thirdly, we need equity within the City of Atlanta. The residents of Atlanta need equal access and equal opportunities. We often hear of the “tale of two cities”. Why? Because the north side of Atlanta is seemingly more prosperous than the south side. The quality of our schools are not equal, the demands of our communities are unbalanced, and the division is visible and speaks loudly to the lack within the community. It is important to work together throughout the city so that we will not only survive, but thrive.

4. As a City Council member, how would you manage collaborating with your colleagues on difficult citywide issues versus representing your own constituents?

As a City Council member, communication is important when it comes to discussing difficult issues on the council. While it is true, I must represent the constituents in my district, I must also work for the betterment of the city as a whole. I believe we all want what is best for the City of Atlanta, it does not matter where we live or who we represent. The understanding we have for each other’s concerns may be diverse in nature, but the passion for our city and the needs of the people we represent should remain professional and respectful. I believe as we collaborate together as a team, our knowledge and love for Atlanta will be a priority over personal needs and the districts agenda.

5. How do you view the City of Atlanta’s financial position? Should the City of Atlanta have additional tools in place to ensure financial management going forward?

As we take a look at the current financial state of the City of Atlanta, we have a \$175 million dollar surplus. The Mayor and the City Council should most certainly be commended. However, to ensure financial management and the stability of our city, we must utilize additional tools to regulate the budget and the propensity to over spend. Online public viewing of all expenditures will ensure the transparency of our city. Since city government is a public entity, all spending and purchasing should be available for public viewing. In addition, the bidding of contracts, projects, and programs should be a part of open records in order to develop trust within in the community.

6. Please describe your philosophy regarding property tax assessments and municipal taxation.

My philosophy on property tax assessments and municipal taxation is the only way we can have a successful city is to use our tax base as a resource. The property tax or millage rate tax is an ad valorem tax on the value of property, usually real estate. These taxes make up an important revenue source for our state and local government. We all know that property tax increase is vital for our city to thrive, it is equally important to know that as the city build and repair damaged roads and infrastructure the need will become even greater. While local sales tax growth and tax rate increases has helped to postpone and offset some growth in property taxes over the past few years, it is obvious this trend will not continue. Data clearly shows that there will be a renewed and increased dependence on the local property tax in years ahead.

7. What is your opinion of Atlanta's MOST, and what approach do you support to fund long-term water and sewer operations?

The 1% Municipal Option Sales Tax is applied mostly to retail sales of tangible personal property delivered to customers within the city limits of Atlanta and retail sales of taxable services performed within the city limits of Atlanta. These funds allow visitors and business people who use the City's water and sewer infrastructure but do not pay City water/sewer bills to help pay for upgrading and maintenance of the infrastructure. This tax has provided over \$700 million dollars to help ensure the City of Atlanta has clean, safe drinking water and environmentally sound waste water treatment. I would be supportive to fund long-term water and sewer operations, and encourage the constituents in the district I serve to support the tax, as well. In order for our environment to remain healthy, there will always be financial sacrifices we must make for the well-being of everyone.

8. Would you change the current procurement process to protect against “pay to play”? If so, what changes would you support?

Recent scandals involving government contractors have focused public attention on the practice of contractors contributing money to government officials, candidates, and political parties who, in many cases, are either responsible for evaluating and awarding government contracts or in a position to influence such decisions. Of course, we know that this regulated environment presents a very real danger of corruption in the contracting process. I would support reform in the process that would include laws, promulgated regulations, or issued executive orders with the goal of not only maintaining integrity of the contracting process, but also prevent a ‘de facto’ regime whereby bidders come to believe that it is necessary to make political contributions in order to obtain government contracts.

In an effort to curtail criminality contractors should disclose all reportable campaign contributions, or not be allowed to make political contributions. The punishment for bribery threatens the integrity of the local government and should be taken seriously.

9. If elected, describe your role in ensuring ethical and transparent management of City resources by City employees?

When I am elected Atlanta City Council member for District 10, my role to ensuring ethical and transparent management of City resources by City employees will be to lead by example. I would support a policy that would require all City expenditures be placed online in view of every resident. I would encourage the community to hold every council member accountable by giving monthly financial reports through newsletters to dispel any act of impropriety, and record all spending related to any city office in an open record.

10. What economic development strategies would you prioritize to ensure the City of Atlanta captures its fair share of future job growth?

The first priority to ensure that the City of Atlanta captures its fair share of job growth is job training. When companies come into the City, it is important to have skilled laborers to fulfill the need of the company. This strategy is vital for economic development in that there are jobs available, so people must be employable. Companies will not move to a city where the people are ill-trained without skills or education.

Secondly, affordable housing is critical. When a company moves into the city, and housing prices are too high, the chances of attracting employees that are willing to relocate or come to work in a city that they cannot afford to live in is, minimal.

11. What strategies would your administration implement to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing?

One of the strategies I would implement to ensure an adequate supply of housing is to revitalize houses and apartments that have been damaged, blighted, boarded up, and damaged for years. Many of these houses have been no known owner, or the owner has died, or simply walked away. After sending letters to the possibly owners of these properties, if no one responds, I would encourage the City to take ownership, renovate the property, and rent the homes out to low income families.

Secondly, I would require property owners to reserve a certain percentage of properties purchased with City grants to be reserved for low income families. I believe that the quality of life will improve in the City of Atlanta when we adequately supply affordable housing for all of our residents as they live, work, and play, in the community they call home.

- 12.** What workforce development strategies should the next administration prioritize? How will these strategies address and improve economic mobility among low-to-mid skill workers?

Workforce development should be available in every community. Just as skill sets are diversified in nature and need, economic stability and prosperity will continually transform from year to year. Workforce development has evolved from a problem-focused approach, addressing issues such as low-skilled workers or the need for more employees in a particular industry, to a holistic approach considering participants' many barriers and the overall needs of the city. Programs must be flexible, so that they can change when the market or work force conditions change. One marker of adaptability is the presence of mechanisms to listen to what the community is saying, evidenced by the close ties with community stakeholders and nonprofits.

- 13.** What are the three most important transportation/infrastructure projects that should occur in the City of Atlanta? Please rank them by importance and urgency and explain your reasoning.

The extension of MARTA into the suburbs is critical to the city's transportation infrastructure. As we look at the future of Atlanta, there's no question that battling our notorious traffic and sprawl is key to the metro's potential vitality.

The second important transportation project should be to extend MARTA buses within the City. Many residents are walking as much as 2 miles to get to a bus stop, even alone at night after getting off work. It is time to restore the frequency and routes cut significantly during the recession.

With the \$300 million T-SPLOST, lastly, we hope to soon see improvements in streets, sidewalks, traffic signal optimization, and other improvements that will make our roads safer and smother.

14. What strategies would you pursue to improve the safety – both real and perceived – of all residents, visitors, and workers in Atlanta? What partnerships are needed to realize these strategies?

The acronym used in my campaign for Atlanta City Council is:

R- Revive our communities with:

I-Integrity

C-Commitment

E-Engagement

We must engage with each other in our community by getting to know our neighbors, business owners, the local police, and our leaders. We must also create a sense of pride in our community, by coming together to express concerns, and encouraging others to keep our community beautiful. A neighborhood watch program can assist with crime prevention. We must build strong relationships with everyone in the household by creating initiatives to bring the community together. We must look out for one another, and be brave to speak out when we feel that something is amiss. Warning others of danger in areas that may not be safe is a strategy for visitors who are not familiar with our community and introduce them to people who can serve as guides to protect them.

15. Georgia ranks 49th among states for per-capita arts funding. What actions would you take to ensure our arts and culture organizations have the funding they need to thrive and enrich our city?

One concrete way we can infuse the arts and culture into our city is cultural planning, a community-wide process of creating a vision for cultural programming and development. Another way to ensure the health and vitality of cultural facilities in communities. The cultural planning process assesses the current community culture and creates and implementation plan to achieve a community's vision. This cultural planning committee will include various ways of securing funding; including capital campaigns, foundations, and donations. In order to obtain the funding we need to thrive and enrich our city, we will need leaders willing to facilitate a network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts both financially and physically.