



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

John Eaves
Mayoral Candidate

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.

As Chairman of Fulton County's Board of Commissioners for the past 10 years, I have led the largest local government in the State of Georgia. In that time, Fulton has become the role model for local governments nationwide. Just recently we were named the best county in the nation for transparency and ethics in government. There has been ZERO corruption or scandal at Fulton County. Also whereas the County was once mired by division along racial, partisan and geographical lines, I have unified the County's Democrats and Republicans, residents from the South and the North and Atlanta in between. During my tenure, I have kept property taxes low, reduced crime and the recidivism rate, saved Grady Hospital and rebuilt our library system.

I enjoy the support of many leaders, without whom, together we cannot make Atlanta better including:

- Rev. Jasper Williams Jr., Senior Pastor, Salem Bible Baptist Church
- Rev. Nathaniel Bronner Jr., Senior Pastor, Ark of Salvation Church
- Rabbi Peter S. Berg, Senior Rabbi of The Temple
- Commissioner Emma I. Darnell, Fulton County Commission
- Mayor Rusty Paul, Sandy Springs
- Rep. Roger Bruce, Georgia General Assembly
- Andrew Evans, CEO Atlanta Gas Light
- Frank Blake, CEO, Home Depot

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

I will lead a city that is compassionate and prosperous; with a government that is trustworthy, values community, promotes safety, and operates efficiently and effectively. We will accomplish this by putting the best people in place; enacting the highest ethics policies (with zero tolerance for corruption) while keeping a keen eye on the city's finances and working to provide as much tax relief as possible to residential and commercial taxpayers. Community-driven development will be attained through partnerships with to drive future (smart) growth.

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

HOUSING AND GENTRIFICATION – Under the John Eaves Administration at City Hall, affordable housing will be a top priority—it will be more than just small set-asides while developers rake in big bucks using public money to finance their construction projects. As Atlanta's next mayor you can count on me to build a city in which firefighters, police officers, teachers and others can afford to live. We will look to the state and federal government to create innovative tax credits and exemptions (for seniors and others) to ensure they will not be priced out of Atlanta.

TRANSPORTATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE – The City won't grow if people spend all their time stuck in traffic. We cannot prosper unless we can move people and goods throughout the city efficiently and effectively. The first order of business is to eliminate gridlock and improve our transportation system. The Eaves Administration will invest in roads and bridges; add bicycle lanes and sidewalks; and of course, support MARTA's continued expansion both inside the city and throughout the Atlanta Region. We will not wait until the next overpass collapses to act. "A stitch in time saves nine"—and saves lives.

SAFETY AND SECURITY – I support a pay/class study to ensure our officers, jailers and firefighters are justly compensated and that we can find other incentives to have all our employees live where they work—in Atlanta. Also, as I did at Fulton County, I will ensure Atlanta invests in the best technology and techniques—cameras, community oriented policing—so that our officers have the tools they need to succeed in their mission. The same holds true for our Fire Department and city jail. I will also prioritize the hiring of new safety personnel to return the city to optimal numbers. Last, but not least, we will put a major focus on youth programs. I know we cannot arrest our way out of all our crime problems. We must provide ways for youth to be productive and put their energies toward positive activities. If we do this, juvenile crime will subside.

4. As Mayor, what would be your goals for your first 100 days in office and what would be your approach to achieving them?

On Day ONE, I would do three key things: 1) launch an analysis of the City's financial condition to provide real data on the next best steps to achieve our overall goals and how to fund them; 2) Empanel a Mayor's Commission on E.T.H.I.C.S. (Ethics, Transparency, Honesty in City Services) to begin a complete review of policies and procedures to end the taint of corruption on City Hall which will include EVERY department or division in the City Government; and 3) Launch a 100-day "Listening Tour" of neighborhoods to learn of the benefits and challenges each of our diverse neighborhoods face. By doing this, we would put in place a neighborhood-mobilization plan that would entail a comprehensive approach to bringing all neighborhoods to quality standards—to include access to better transportation; retail shops and grocery stores; affordable housing and quality schools.

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?

There is always room for improvement--especially when it comes to a government's financial picture. I will take my experience as Chairman of Fulton County and replicate that success at the City. We have successfully had multimillion dollar surpluses every year the past ten years and a solid reserve fund that tops \$100 million annually. We have done this without any significant tax increases and by trimming the fat and better allocation of resources. We can do that at City Hall too. As mentioned above, first thing I will do is launch an analysis of the City's financial condition to provide real data on the next best steps to achieve our overall goals and how to fund them.

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

I believe we must provide taxpayers fair and appropriate assessments of their property on an annual basis, so they don't get zapped with the sticker shock we saw this year. This is why I led the successful effort to provide real tax relief by freezing the assessments at 2016 levels to give most residential taxpayers time to adjust to elevated valuations of their property. Quite frankly, we have become victims of our own success. In Fulton County, over the past 10 years, the quality of life has improved in many areas and as a result our real property values have gone up too. Property-tax assessments are based on those values. When the value goes up, taxes go up. But we have another mechanism we must use, which is what we have done at the County, we control the millage rate. I have voted to keep the millage rate low—so taxpayers can keep more of their money. We have done that by operating a more efficient and effective government and that's exactly what I will do as Atlanta mayor.

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

Atlanta voters last year gave their approval of the reauthorization of the 1 percent Municipal Option Sales Tax to help fund water and sewer infrastructure improvements. I support the wishes of the public on this matter. How many times have we driven down an intown road during a heavy rainstorm only to see our streets flooded and backed up? This poses not only a nuisance but health problems too. MOST is a four-year fix, but we must put our best minds together, and utilize our brain belt of colleges and universities to develop a real 50-year plan to overhaul our water and sewer infrastructure, especially considering the predictions of future growth of the metro region.

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

At present, our city is in a crisis of corruption, potentially the most corrupt city government in the history of the City of Atlanta. Since voters overwhelmingly elected me Chairman of Fulton County 10 years ago we have had zero corruption at the County—ZERO! Meanwhile, my opponents at the City and in the State Senate, have sat on their hands, neglecting their oversight responsibility, all while City Hall became a cesspool of scandal and corruption.

As mayor, I will change that on day one. In addition to my E.T.H.I.C.S. Commission noted above, I am committed to reviewing all our rules and regulations to ensure they are up-to-date and there are no loopholes. We cannot allow elected officials or city employees to use their positions to profit. I will also require lobbyists to register with the City and report spending on government officials.

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

The city I lead will have a culture at which everyone knows we value the public trust and one where we will work every day to ensure we maintain it. The tone is set at the top, and in the spirit of transparency, as mayor, I will annually disclose all sources of income and release my tax returns. I will urge all elected officials to do the same. Under my leadership at Fulton County, Fulton was just named the most transparent and ethical county in the nation by the National Association of Counties. We earned that by putting in place best practices of openness and rooting out any scent of impropriety. I will do that at City Hall. Further, we will post city financial records and contacts on a portal to allow public access in a simple, clear way. I will create regular opportunities for residents to bring their issues to me and staff.

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

As I have done as Fulton County Chairman for 10 years, as Atlanta’s next mayor I will be laser-focused on creating and bringing good-paying jobs to the city. We will grow our contingent of Fortune 500 companies, adding to the nearly 20, that currently make metro Atlanta home by well-balanced tax incentives and other amenities to attract large companies. But it’s not enough just to help the big corporations; we must make sure we help small business owners too. The Office of the Mayor and other city agencies will aid startups by helping attract venture-capital investment in local projects and in our emerging entrepreneurs. The city has a collection of tools at its disposal to attract investment, including Community Improvement Districts (CIDs); Tax Allocation Districts (TADs); Housing Opportunity Bonds, as well as the city’s development authority, Invest Atlanta. We will maximize these tools to make job growth a top priority in my administration.

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

Atlanta's prosperity risks pricing-out many who want to own a home in the city. We must work hard to attract investment but remain vigilant against forcing out the city's middle-class and underemployed citizens through gentrification. As Atlanta's next mayor you can count on me to build a city in which firefighters, police officers, teachers and others can afford to live. Under the John Eaves Administration at City Hall, affordable housing will be a top priority—it will be more than just small set-asides while developers rake in big bucks using public money to finance their construction projects. We will redouble this effort with our development authority, Invest Atlanta, which now only requires developers who use public money to set aside about 15 percent of their units as affordable housing. Further, I will insist that the Atlanta Beltline development live up to its promises to produce affordable housing, which so far has been less than dismal at best.

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?

I will support using Atlanta's technical colleges and the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency to make sure our residents have the skills they need to get and keep good-paying jobs. Another critical element to our prosperity is education. We must have first-rate, safe, public and private schools. Atlanta's graduation rate hovers around 70 percent, well below the state average of 79 percent. The result? Hundreds of children are falling through the cracks every year. Working with our schools and their leaders, we will create programs to turn this around. I envision impactful afterschool/community programs, including a project by which we partner with students during their freshman year of high school to map out their future whether that means college, the military or entering the workforce.

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.

MARTA EXPANSION - Regional transit is paramount to the success of Atlanta and the region. If studies are correct, the population will continue to rise. That equals more cars, more traffic, more gridlock. We must find creative ways to fund and build more transit stations, light rail and bus service so that more people will feel comfortable using rapid transit to ease up on congestion and the adverse health effects that come with cluttered roads and highways in Atlanta.

ROADS AND BRIDGES REPAIR - It's been more than a decade now since Mayor Franklin unleashed her "Pothole Posse" and Atlanta's roads, streets, and bridges are now in need of major repair unlike never before. It shouldn't take I-85 collapsing before we begin to do something. We got lucky this time, that no one was hurt, but we may not be so lucky next time. I will put together a task force with the job of coming up with a 50-year plan (similar to the water/sewer 50-year plan) that aims to overhaul all our major roads and bridges that currently do not meet state and federal safety standards.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - We've seen a surge of redevelopment in the Downtown and Midtown areas but staggered development in the city's neighborhoods. Atlanta has become a tale of two cities! Downtown and Midtown development in businesses, housing, restaurants and entertainment facilities is going strong and moving those areas in the right direction. However, we need sustainable urban and community development, good educational opportunities, jobs, job training, housing, and blight remediation for our neighborhoods. We need our neighborhoods to thrive with the same energy that is transforming Downtown and Midtown. It is my plan to spur economic development through rebuilding the infrastructure of our neighborhoods that have been left behind, and left out. We will rebuild neighborhoods, brick by brick, block by block. And, we will do it without gentrifying seniors and others out of their neighborhoods.

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?

I know that Atlanta cannot prosper unless its residents, visitors and workforce feel safe. Communities only grow and prosper if they are secure. Here's a preliminary list of what I would do:

PAY and BENEFITS - Pay is an issue in public safety both in the attraction and retention of employees. I support a pay/class study to ensure our officers, jailers and firefighters are justly compensated and that we can find other incentives to have all our employees live where they work—in Atlanta.

EQUIPMENT - As I did at Fulton County, I will push through legislation that provides funding for Atlanta to invest in the best technology and techniques—cameras, community oriented policing, shot spotters and predictive algorithms for a start—so that we arm our officers with the tools they need to succeed in their mission. The same holds true for our Fire Department and city jail.

RECRUITMENT and RETENTION - The number of police officers has fallen off in recent years. We now have about 1,850 officers, well below the proposed number of at least 2,000. As your mayor, I will prioritize the hiring of new officers to return the city to optimal numbers. Further, and unlike the rest of the candidates for mayor, I will redouble our effort to retain those we hire by focusing on retention to ensure we do not continue to be a training ground for other public safety agencies. My administration would come up with a strategy to ensure officers stay with us, after we have invested in their training.

PARTNERSHIPS - As Atlanta's next mayor, I will support the fine work of the Atlanta Police Foundation as it works to make our officers the best trained, best equipped in the country. We must always partner with groups who have mutual objectives and goals to keep our city safe, including civic groups, NPUs, the Atlanta Public Schools and Atlanta's private schools and organizations that specialize in youth programming, i.e. Boys and Girls Clubs of Atlanta. We also need more activities like those offered by the Police Athletic League. But this only happens when you elect a leader with a track record of doing this. As Fulton County Chairman, that is what I did with the expansion of several youth programs like our Youth Commissioners and my establishing the Global Youth Leadership Program.

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?

Past experience indicates future success. I would take the extraordinary steps we have taken at Fulton County in funding (providing millions of dollars over my ten years in office) and prioritizing the Arts, and bring the successful implementation of our County program to the City. The Arts community and industry provide considerable and necessary contributions to the well-being of communities across greater Atlanta. Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities. I believe it is important that we continue to support the Arts and Arts culture both on the national and local levels. The Arts community plays a major role in Fulton County; employing people locally, purchasing goods and services from local merchants, and driving tourism and economic development. The strength of every society is shown by its facilitation and support of the Arts.