



Candidates,

Thank you for helping us inform our viewers about your positions on the issues. Please return the completed questionnaire as an email attachment to Todd Faulkner at [Tfaulkner@wpsdlocal6.com](mailto:Tfaulkner@wpsdlocal6.com). Your form will be scanned and posted as is, without editing, to our digital platforms. The deadline for return of the completed questionnaire is 5pm Friday, May 22, 2020. Questionnaires returned by the deadline will be posted, simultaneously, no later than 5pm on Wednesday, May 27, 2020. This document was created in Word. The questions should be answered in the space below each question. The enter key will create additional space as you write.

Name:

**1. What should be the top priority for the City of Paducah and what specific action(s) will YOU take to address it?**

- First and most importantly I will operate the City in a fiscally responsible manner. I will focus on basics first, infrastructure, service to residents, improvement of neighborhoods as we deal with reduced tax revenues due to the pandemic. We will cancel the Aquatic Center project and determine exactly how the \$20M in bond funds can best be used.
- I will work to help our economy recover and make it even stronger than it was pre-pandemic. I have decades of business experience working with big industry and this will play to our advantage. I understand well what companies looking to relocate want and how we can attract them to the area. I will work with GPED, the state of Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, McCracken County, the WKCTC Work Force Development team, surrounding cities, towns, and counties, and anyone else willing to roll up their sleeves in order to reemphasize and focus on economic development to recruit new businesses and help our local companies grow. I will utilize economic development incentives when possible and where necessary.

We need our entrepreneurs and small businesses to grow. I will work with the private sector to assist existing businesses in expanding and retaining jobs through all means possible. This includes financial assistance, SBA grants/loans, consulting services, and other means of support for small and medium-sized businesses. I will propose the implementation of a local investment strategy (Community Investment fund-CIF, crowdfunding, angel investing, etc.) to assist local entrepreneurs with the goal of helping them get access to capital and other support services, all in partnership with the private sector.

- I will be focused on increasing the city population in any way possible. With COVID, companies have learned that people can work from home and be productive. They can live in Paducah KY and work remotely. Paducah needs to capture our share of these workers looking to move out of expensive, impersonal areas and that want to be part of a community.

**2. What do you specifically propose to deal with the likely revenue shortfall?**

- Cancel the aquatic center. It is not the time to bring on a large project such as this that we know will lose money. Due to the bond covenant for the aquatic center we are stuck with having borrowed the money and paying the interest for at least 15 years. We should look at using those bond proceeds to take on other worthy projects that will move Paducah forward.
- I am a businessman that has been through multiple booms and recessions. During times like this we will find ways to cut expenses while providing excellent customer service. I would freeze hiring, pull the department heads and commission together, develop a plan and implement it. I will work to optimize our Financial Resources in the following manner
  - By listening to all Paducah citizens from all sections of our community
  - By prioritizing our wants vs. our needs
  - By highly valuing growth and development while balancing that with critical day to day needs
  - By working closely with the city finance department and financial advisors
  - By benchmarking our City with other cities in similar circumstances and of similar size
  - By using my years of experience with leadership, people, and projects to lead Paducah to sound decision making

**3. (a) Please identify specific programs and expenditures you believe may need to be reduced or eliminated if cuts become necessary. (b) Estimate the approximate savings for each item. (c) Estimate the total reduction amount you believe is prudent.**

In order to deal with the effects of the Pandemic on the local economy, the next Mayor will face challenges. Budget short falls have already been projected in the current fiscal year and in the FY20-21 fiscal year. As an example, there have been new people hired by the city over the last couple of years that have been criticized by some as wasteful. These hires along with all initiatives within the city must be evaluated and their value established. Leadership in financial analysis and a commonsense approach matters now more than ever. I am an experienced businessperson and have been through challenges like this many times. We will find ways to reduce our expenses and balance our budget. This will be a complicated process involving the entire commission, department heads and the City Manager. We will prioritize wants vs. needs. This requires strong leadership and expert collaboration skills. I will lead to produce what the city needs and balance our budget.

**4. Is a reduction in force something you would consider? Please be as specific as possible.**

Once elected I will analyze employment levels. There is always the opportunity to make the City more efficient. Duplication of effort from different departments will be analyzed. I would promote a hiring freeze immediately. Generally, a workforce turns over about 3%-5% a year so in a 2-3 time period a substantial change can be affected through attrition. The City provides essential services that cannot be cut but there are always ways to work smarter and more efficiently and we will look for those opportunities. As the Mayor I will look at all means and make any decisions necessary to keep the city on a solid financial footing.

**5. Will you support, propose or vote for an increase in taxes or fees during your term?**

No, this administration just raised our taxes. I am unaware of any true cost savings initiatives the mayor or current commissioners have done during their tenure before COVID-19. Expense analysis and working more efficiently should always be a part of budget planning. If additional revenue is needed it should come from cost reductions.

**6. Do you believe there should be a reduction or elimination of any current taxes or fees which are set by city ordinance?**

I would like to roll back the increase in the insurance premium tax and will continue to explore how that might be able to happen. It appears that it tied in with the bond language so we may be stuck with it for now. Along with the next commission, I will have to find savings to fund any tax decrease.

I promise to look at everything to run a more efficient government. Recently we have sunk \$800,000 into planning for the aquatics center that will likely not be recovered. My administration will be very careful to avoid wasteful spending like this. The use of consultants is sometimes necessary but over the years many taxpayer dollars have been wasted needlessly on out of town consultants. I will put a stop to the unwise use of consultants. Any use of a consultant will be evaluated diligently and wisely.

**7. What is your position on the city use of “no bid” professional services contracts as permitted by the Kentucky Model Procurement Act?**

I think no bid contracts have their place in certain situations, particularly where the amounts are not substantial and if it gives an opportunity to support a local tax paying business that provides the needed service or if there is an over-riding urgency. But that should be the exception and not the rule. There have been times the City goes outside of our area and hires firms when there are local companies that could do the work for the same price. It is important to do seek out opportunities with local companies to do business with as long as they have the capability to perform the services and price their services competitively.

**8. What is your specific proposal, including expense and timeline, for fixing the flooding and storm water problem?**

The City of Paducah paid consultants over \$1M to develop a stormwater master plan that has not been implemented. After public meetings in 2017 and 2018 a plan was provided to the Mayor and Board of Commissioners which outlined 23 problem areas for flooding and selected ten of those areas to be priority projects. It was later proposed that each residential parcel pay \$6.13 per month. Calculations were more complex for non-residential parcels as businesses would pay a monthly fee based upon the square footage of pavement and sidewalks that generate water runoff on their property. This was not looked at favorably by businesses and little or no work has been done on the plan since. Instead the focus turned to building a \$20M Aquatic Center that has divided our community while parts of the city flood periodically. We must revisit the long-term stormwater master plan. Using bond proceeds to kick start that plan is the right thing to do but we must start now.

**9. What is your position on the use of “consent agendas” for commission business? Please be specific about parameters, if any, for their use.**

Transparent government is at the forefront of my campaign. While I believe that meetings must be run efficiently, I don't think we have so much business to attend to that we can't review items individually and allow citizens to ask questions and become more knowledgeable of how their tax dollars are being used. An individual review of items offers the opportunity for the mayor and commissioners to comment and even object to particular items without rejecting a package of unrelated items. Transparency is important even if it make the meetings a little longer.

**10. What is your position on “public comments” at City Commission meetings? Please be specific.**

I believe public comments should be allowed on items that are not on the agenda. It is important to allow our citizens to have a voice. At no time should we attempt to extinguish the voices of our most important asset, our citizens. It is the Mayor's job to control the commission meetings and that includes public comments. Once all sides are heard on a topic, repetitive comments aren't needed. As Mayor I would move the meeting along or move to adjourn. It's the job of the Mayor to control the meeting while ensuring that we hear from our citizens even if it is uncomfortable.

**11. Yes or No. Should the city continue with the recreation and aquatic center facility as originally proposed?**

An emphatic no.

**12. If you answered “yes” to question 11 please explain your position. If not skip to question 13.**

**13. If you answered “no” to question 11 please explain specifically what you believe should be done about the recreation and aquatic center facility proposal. If you answered “yes” skip to the next question.**

The City should shelve the entire project. If a private entity would like to build and manage it then the city could support the effort by providing the planning documents and study. I would not relook at any project of this nature without widespread support from the community, significant private investment, and a collaborative partnership with the county that included a long-term plan for all athletic facilities including ball fields and soccer fields.

**14. Should the city continue with the proposal for downtown development including the development of a “Hotel” at the site of the parking lot at the end of Broadway as envisioned by the “City Block” project? Please elaborate.**

We have a tremendous amount invested in our convention center and we have a large number of vacant commercial buildings. The city should support hotel development closer to the convention center and business space development in our vacant commercial buildings. Any downtown development project that includes retail, residential, and mixed use must consider these factors. That block which now is a parking lot is the only open space in the downtown corridor and the most valuable and iconic piece of property the city owns. It should eventually be redeveloped for more efficient parking and an attractive green space ensuring that major events downtown like Barbecue on the River have sufficient space to operate in.

**15. Should the city continue with the proposal to create a downtown TIF district which has preliminary state approval? Please give specific reasons for your answer.**

Tax increment financing is a sometimes controversial, often misunderstood economic tool a city has at its disposal. The city designates a TIF district and then restricts all of the property tax revenues for development within that district for a defined number of years. Any incremental increase in property values or new construction (which results in new taxes) goes into the TIF fund. The collected money is designated for public or economic development projects in that area. Some say TIFs restricts money that could go toward other areas of a city. A TIF keeps tax money and investment focused on development of a particular area which can have a positive impact on that area. However, as the effort is successful it may prevent the growth in revenue from being used in areas of the city.

Paducah awaits official approval of its TIF from the State of Kentucky. COVID-19 has changed the urgency around any development project for now. As Mayor I will lead the new city commission in analyzing the long-term value of our TIF district, if approved by the State of Kentucky, and how it should best be utilized.

**16. How can the City most effectively develop the riverfront?**

The city has a riverfront master plan that kicked off in 2012 under Mayor Paxton's leadership. Now eight years into that we have just received a BUILD grant that Leader McConnel helped deliver. Under this BUILD grant we will finish out the Riverfront Common area and develop a riverboat excursion pier and plaza. Our riverfront continues to develop under the long-term master plan and certainly is an important connector for downtown and the convention center. However, I believe the primary focus should be developing revenue from new job creation and business growth that can drive other improvements.

**17. Please identify any specific plans or proposals you have for economic development, infrastructure improvement, housing rehabilitation or development for the Southside.**

There is plenty of good housing stock as well as vacant lots that can be developed on the Southside. There are a number of commercial buildings that must be demolished, and areas cleaned up. Some initiatives require more money than others, but all will be prioritized. I will promote and entertain any and all development/redevelopment initiatives for that part of our city. A hotel on that side of the city should be explored.

At one time Paducah was nationally known for neighborhood development. It started in Lowertown and the Fountain Avenue project was started 12 years ago. Since then little has been done to develop other neighborhoods. As Mayor I will get back to basics and focus on redeveloping neighborhoods. The Southside of Paducah is an important gateway to our city. Traffic flows from I-24 to downtown. As such we should focus on the look and feel of that entry point of the city.

I also believe we are losing population because many people want to live in a new home. Specific areas in the city should be targeted for new home development as well.

**18. What do you propose to address the economic issues of the city and its residents? Including:**

**1. Attracting new industry-**

- a. I am a businessperson with extensive corporate experience. I understand business and can speak to any level business executive. The Mayor is a member of the Board of Directors of Paducah Economic Development (PED) and I will be an active participant of the board and in the recruitment of industry. Attracting new industry is my top priority.
- b. The City has an Investment Fund which is restricted to economic development, community redevelopment, and capital and infrastructure investments. This fund, generated from a portion of the city payroll tax, approximates over \$5M annually. This fund must be used more strategically in the future. I will use more financial economic development incentives for recruitment than ever before, and we will use them in the right places.

**2. New living wage jobs creation-** I will have a multi-pronged approach on the creation of more living wage jobs:

- a. I will support industry recruitment through PED (mentioned above)
- b. I will support the growth of local businesses both with financial and mentoring support incentives.
- c. In partnership with the private sector, I will implement a local investment strategy to assist local entrepreneurs to help them get access to capital and other support services
- d. I will work closely with WKCTC to develop more targeted and effective workforce development initiatives
- e. I will support the new INNOVATION HUB to help develop the right skills for our youth to better prepare them for the work force

**3. Population decline-** Plain and simple, it's job creation as I have addressed above. In addition to job growth created by new jobs we will prioritize the recruitment of individuals who can work from anywhere and who would be attracted to Paducah's quality of life and low cost of living.

**4. Aging population -** Plain and simple, it's job creation. Younger families move to improve the quality of life through financial gain. Translated, they move for better jobs. Driving living wage job growth helps bring younger people to our community.

**5. Disproportionate poverty and economic disadvantage-** Although job creation is the quick answer it is a much more complex issue than that. I have a 20-year history of working with the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club, so I understand well the poverty and economic disadvantage issues in our community. I will engage with Paducah leaders to develop more engagement with communities in our city where these issues are most prominent.

**6. Appropriately educated job force-** We are fortunate to have excellent schools in both the City of Paducah and McCracken County. WKCTC is a valued member of our community and makes a major contribution in workforce development. We have an underutilized Murray State University Paducah campus that must be promoted more. We have all the tools here to successfully educate a work force that will fill the needs of current and new employers. We just need to understand how to utilize those tools better and make that more of a focus.

**19. What is your position on the role of GPED?**

I am very supportive of PED. Not only should they be focused on the recruitment of new industry but also on the expansion of current jobs within our local businesses. 2/3 of job

growth across the U.S. comes from existing business so we should sharpen our focus on this as a priority.

- **What is your position on a “Metro” form of local governance, consolidating City of Paducah and McCracken County governments?**  
It has been 8 years since McCracken County rejected a city county merger with 70% of voters against the idea. It is important to ask citizens for their insights, effectively listen to their input, and recommendations. If there was widespread interest and a group of both county and city residents who wanted to discuss I would always listen. But we would need townhalls and forums throughout our community to determine the real level of interest and to hear concerns. The residents of both the city and county will have the ultimate and final say. It’s not up to the Mayor to decide this but the voters. My focus will be totally on growing the city and providing increased value to city residents.