



Staff Report

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Discussion and potential planning for how the city informs the public about 2024 candidates for Alderperson and Mayor

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Department:

Administration

The city shares information with the public about candidates for office on the city's website and pushes that information directly to residents through all standard communications channels. Candidates are provided the same set of questions and word limits. Per the city's linking policy, we do not link to any political or campaign sites. The questionnaire is:

- Contact information (phone and email only)
- Occupation, work history, and volunteer positions (in bullet format, no more than 7 bullets, no more than 175 words)
- Why are you running for Alderperson or Mayor? (175 words)
- What issues would you pursue if elected? (175 words)

In 2020, the Common Council directed staff to hold a candidate forum to allow the public an opportunity to learn more about candidates for office. Candidates were provided the list of question in advance of the event, but not told which questions the facilitator would select from the list.

If the Committee is interested in holding a candidate forum for the April 2024 election, staff needs direction to do so and also if the content of the forum should remain the same or if the Committee would like to make changes. The format of the 2020 candidate forum is described below.

Candidate forum

Aldermanic Candidates

- Two-minute statement from any aldermanic candidate interested in participating in the event.

Mayoral Candidates

- Will be asked the same question about the role of the Mayor (question one below).
- Will be asked the same three questions selected by the facilitator from the list generated for aldermanic selection (questions outlined below).
- Three-minute time limit for response to all questions.
- There is no time allocated to rebuttal or response.

Candidate meet & greet

- Immediately following the candidate forum, the public will be invited to speak to candidates in the Lower Civic Center.
- This portion is anticipated to begin at 8:00 pm.

Online viewing

For residents who opt to participate digitally, the city will live-stream the candidate forum portion of the event through the meeting portal and promote it for viewing through Election Day.

Questions

The elected body as part of the Aldermanic Selection process prepared these questions. The facilitator will select three questions from the list of optional questions to use for the Mayor candidates and will ask the first required question.

Required question

1. Wauwatosa has a weak Mayor system, which means that the Mayor runs Common Council meetings, appoints citizen committee members, represents the city to external groups, and serves as spokesperson. The Common Council has largely delegated the day-to-day management of the city to the City Administrator. Why are you running for Mayor and what do you see as the role of the Mayor given how the position is defined by Wauwatosa's ordinances and operating structure?

Optional questions (facilitator picks three from this list)

2. What role should the Common Council play in economic development? What goals and priorities should the city set for encouraging or discouraging different types of economic development? What role do you feel our Comprehensive Plan and TIF funding should play in economic development?
3. Some in our community speak about traffic concerns in Wauwatosa. What do you think? How would you mitigate those concerns or change the situation?
4. How do you plan to further involve residents in the decision-making process in Wauwatosa?
5. Please speak specifically on what you love about Wauwatosa. What are your favorite places in Wauwatosa to spend time? Why?
6. As Mayor, what three steps would you take to maintain and improve our city's financial footing?
7. What would you change in our zoning code?
8. If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in Wauwatosa (road, bridge, etc.), how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?
9. If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city in any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?
10. Do you think Wauwatosa's commercial districts are healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change them?