



**Rise Up West Virginia**

[www.RiseUpWV.org](http://www.RiseUpWV.org)

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## **Charleston City Council Candidate Questionnaire**

**Candidate Name:** John Kennedy Bailey      **Ward:** At Large

1. "Housing first" is an approach to homelessness that prioritizes providing chronically homeless people with affordable housing and providing them with social services, rather than requiring social services as a precondition to accessing housing or criminalizing homeless populations. It has proven effective in dramatically reducing chronically homeless populations in other cities. Do you support a "housing-first" model for dealing with homelessness in Charleston?

Yes    No    Don't know

Please explain your position.

Yes, I support a housing first model for combating homelessness in Charleston. However, people need more than just help with a deposit and a month's rent. I have seen many people get rental help, keep an apartment a month or two, and then end up right back out.

People in the program need continuing assistance in paying rent and utilities and, in some cases, help avoiding behaviors that will just get them evicted. Improved Coordination between agencies that offer immediate help, (such as Covenant House) and those that provide long term housing is necessary.

2. As a city council member, will you commit to hosting town halls in your district to solicit community input on redevelopment plans and other municipal issues?

Yes    No    Don't know

Please explain your position.

Yes I would commit to hosting or co-hosting town halls. Obviously the more citizens and council people discuss issues, the better our policies will be.

3. Do you support the CURA Commission following and funding the West Side Community Renewal Plan (2008)?

Yes    No    Don't know

Please explain your position.

While I need more time to study the plan in greater detail and to hear from people more knowledgeable than I am, Yes, I support following and funding the West Side Community Renewal Plan. The new school and the improvements to the Boulevard are good signs of progress, as is the redevelopment of the “Elk City” area of Washington Street. Much more needs to be done in providing room for new housing and attracting more business to the area.

4. In 2016, the Charleston Police Department committed to an eight-point plan to begin combating racial disparities in policing and arrests [<http://wvmetronews.com/2016/10/04/charleston-police-announce-plan-to-improve-race-relations-community-engagement/>]. What are your specific ideas for building on and expanding this effort?

I am unaware of how much progress the department has made in actually implementing its plan, but I would want to see follow up. How often has it held the De-Escalation training and Anti-racism training talked about in the plan? Do we yet have the Youth Advisory Council? How often has it met? I would want to set some deadlines for these items to happen – or if they have – increase the frequency of training.

5. What services are you aware of in our community that provide activities, recreational facilities and after-school programs for young people? What would you do to support and expand such programs?

Right now I am aware of I am aware of after school programs and rec programs at the East End Neighborhood Center and the King Center, as well as Third Base afterschool care provided at some Kanawha County schools. I know that the Shoenbaum Center near Patrick Street offers a wide variety of services, as well as a day car.

I would do what I could to increase funding for what we have. Also, I think we need a summer work program for high school age kids that would offer direct summer employment with the City. Kids could work alongside City employees – both in office jobs, and in labor and construction jobs. The kids would learn more about a trade and would provide additional labor to the City during the summer to help with events, beautification, plantings and other activities.



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6. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know about why you are running for Charleston city council.

Why am I running?

I really like living in Charleston, and I want to see it improve. I am a multi general West Virginian and have lived in Charleston half my life - always someplace in the East End. I grew up in Fairmont and attended public schools. I went to Yale for college, where I worked in the Teamster-organized dining halls to help pay for school. I graduated from WVU law school in 1995 and have lived here ever since. For the last 10 years I have run my own solo law practice, also in the East End.

I have lived in New York, Connecticut, Washington DC, and briefly in France - so I have some perspective about how different cities compare. This is a great place to live, but I also see how much better it could be. I have kids, and I want Charleston to be a place that my kids would consider living as well.

If elected I would want to work on two primary goals: Increasing Charleston's population by making it attractive to new residents, and improving life as much as we can for people who are already here. These goals are not at odd with each other.

I would support an "Office of Moving to Charleston" in City Hall that would help people seriously considering a move here by connecting the with landlords or realtors, giving tours, setting up school visits and the like.

As stated above I would like to see a summer work program for at risk high school students, to give them a chance to learn more skills, as well as a chance to earn money while helping make the City a better place.

Some other areas that interest me are:

- Improving our recycling program with dramatically increased efforts to educate the public about the program. We offer a very progressive, single stream program, but very few take advantage of it, and we ship it all out of town. We need to increase participation and move the program back to Charleston.

- Continuing our investments in public amenities like the West Side Boulevard Improvements, Boat slips at the Levee and expansion of the Civic Center.

- Continuing efforts to make it easier to park downtown, such as moving monthly parkers up in buildings and leaving lower levels for metered or hourly parking, and experimenting with a privately run valet parking for Capitol Street diners on busy weekend. A company could rent spaces in the Summers Street garage and parkers could drop off their cars on Quarrier Street by the library.

- Improving the visitor experience at the Town Center Mall by increasing police presence - on and off duty - inside the mall and in parking garage to make visitors and shoppers feel safer. We should also work with the stores to set up a parking validation plan for short term parkers

who make a purchase there. Personally I have always felt safe at the mall and think \$1.75 for parking is reasonable, but we have to compete for customers who might feel differently.

- Exploring ways to help our poorer residents get around better - including making certain bus routes free, or looking at possible partnerships with Uber, Lyft, and our local taxi service C&H where we would partially subsidize certain kinds of trips, as has been done in some other cities.

Thanks for taking the time to read my replies.