

## Full Press Questions for the Reminder 8/27/09:

1. As a mayoral candidate, how do you approach the debate process?

I believe that my work over the last 8 years on the city council has prepared me for the topics that will be discussed. As chairman of the legislative and ordinance sub-committee, almost every aspect of city government comes through this committee. The members of the subcommittee have to be knowledgeable and prepared for every meeting as we recommend to the council at large our action preference. This preference then gets voted on and may eventually be enacted by the city.

2. Do you have a specific strategy in mind?

Clearly there will be certain detail items that I will review to refresh my memory.

Or are you most concerned with getting your message out to the voters?

Part of my message is that the fiscal situation we're in today was directly a result of the mayor failing to work with the city council, department heads and employee unions to prepare our city financially for what in all likelihood are more mid-year cuts and even less state aid in fiscal year 2011. **He was quoted as saying that in the June edition of the Reminder. He said looking back on this tumultuous budget process; he would have done at least one thing differently. "I would [meet] with Finance [Committee] chair and review [the budget] with him first before presenting it to the whole council. That's definitely what I will do if I'm there [in the mayor's office] next year," he said.**

The mayor has prepared two full year budgets – both of which were prepared with no input from the finance committee resulting in a budget in fiscal 2009 that was underfunded by approximately 900,000 dollars and the budget for fiscal 2010 that stripped the expense accounts of over 4 million dollars, essentially setting up a situation where we can pay salaries but not fuel for our vehicles, repair our roads or heat our buildings.

The city council using its ability to cut the budget, corrected the shortfall in the FY 2009 budget and required the mayor to appropriate the money we cut to the school department in order to minimize impact to our children. We also funded the other departments that were left short. When we questioned him on this first budget in 2008 (fY 2009), he said he that he thought he would find the money later in the year. **(June 27 Republican): Boulanger continued to defend his budget preparations that did not include full-year funding for areas such as veterans services. "My intent was to minimize any impact on staff," Boulanger said, adding he intended to use the first part of the new year to locate additional or alternative funding to supplement areas of veterans services, insurance and utilities."**

You may be able to do that in the national guard but you can't do that in city government.

Then last spring when the financial markets began to collapse, I created the ad hoc committee to review city finances to give the mayor, the school committee, the department heads, the unions and the council some guidance as to where and how we should respond.

We came up with a series of recommendations in the fall of 2008, to the mayor to implement prior to the impending mid year cuts that did come in Jan 2009. He ignored our recommendations and it resulted in a mid year cut of almost \$800,000 to the expense accounts.

Most communities around us were implementing similar ideas so that money used to deliver core services to the citizens was spared. Some of the recommendations were simple, a spending freeze, a hiring freeze, and shortened work weeks to save on utilities. My message is real simple, we cannot afford another two years of inexperience or “go it alone” management styles. I have the municipal experience and business background to prepare our city for the future.

3. What are some of the hot button issues you hope to discuss at the debate?

I'll save the specifics for the debate but clearly the key topics are the city's budget, the elementary school situation and economic development.

4. Aside from your experience as a City Councilor, what else would you bring to the corner office?

Well number one, is my business experience. In business, especially in a service business, the client is the number one reason that we stay in business. Over 20 years I have made a living working with clients, helping to solve their regulatory compliance problems, especially in hard financial times.

In government, the taxpayers, employees, and the city's children are your clients if you will. Constituent service has always been my number one priority as a ward councilor and it will continue as mayor. The city's government needs to work for its people.

Additionally, in business, the key to success is your ability to market. Marketing and increased sales, is what provides our employees with their paychecks that provide for their families. Also job satisfaction, at my employer we are employee owned. That means every one of our 200 employees is invested in the company. They are a major part of the decision making so that we ensure we are going in the right direction.

In an era of declining state and Federal resources coming to our city, we need now, more than ever before, to market our assets so that we can promote and attract business that is good for our city and environmentally friendly. Chicopee recently announced the creation of a micro business park at Westover. My opening campaign message in July, that as your mayor, I will use my business experience to begin the process of permitting a micro business park on city owned land on the north side. We need to expand our commercial and industrial tax base so that we can safeguard our future.

When the economy started to go down last year, my company got aggressive and increased our marketing budget to attract new clients and at the same time, focused on retaining the clients we already had. In Westfield, the mayor failed to go on a nationwide search for a community development director as promised in his 2007 campaign and has done nothing to promote the city to industry since then. That needs to change and as mayor I promise that that will change.

5. Have you set goals for the remainder of the campaign?

I have a number of goals for the next 4 weeks. They focus on activities that will get my message to the voters.

I have set up three town hall meetings and invited the other mayoral candidates. This election is too important not to provide the citizens with a forum to ask their mayoral candidates questions. This isn't an audition for American Idol, this is an election to determine the chief executive

officer of a 116 million dollar, multi faceted, very complicated city government that faces numerous critical issues.

We have no more time to waste, our financial situation is dire. We likely will face another round of mid-year local aid cuts in October or November, which our budget cannot accommodate. The mayor has turned a fiscal crisis into a calamity with his “go it alone” management style. This city needs a mayor that has a proven record of working with city departments to solve problems and has business experience that can promote and expand our tax base and can hit the ground running.

**What do you hope to accomplish between now and the preliminary election in September?**

Number one is to continue with my door to door campaign effort. I have knocked on over one thousand doors and have set a goal of knocking on 2500 for prior to the preliminary. If a candidate can't make the effort to get to the residents, then they shouldn't be running for mayor.