

Mayoral Candidates Forum
February 25, 2019
Responses from Mayor Jim Langfelder

1. What is the biggest challenge facing the City of Springfield? Explain how you would use your office and leadership as Springfield mayor to address this challenge.

Changing disparity east of the 10th Street Corridor is our greatest challenge. As mayor, my focus is a holistic approach in terms of Community Economic Development/Community Wealth Building. Connecting our community resources (private and public) is paramount to having the transformational change in the physical landscape, but more importantly, individual's lives throughout the entire area with true, living wage jobs.

Under my administration, we received grant funds and put in place an agreement with IDOT for the 10th Street Corridor that will transform Ash, Laurel, Madison and Jefferson Streets access points. These will mimic the Carpenter Street Underpass and dramatically improve pedestrian and vehicular mobility. We laid the groundwork for the Intermodal Hub to be built on both sides of the rail tracks. Springfield is the first city outside of Chicago that instituted a local resident hiring ordinance, whereby the goal is hiring Springfield residents, as 50% of the workforce for public projects, like the Intermodal Hub.

We have taken the Poplar Place owner to court to institute change. We are in the process of a \$20+ million development that will transform the rundown, high crime area into single family housing units and the new developer will partner with B.O.N.E. Training Institute on South Grand Avenue for employment opportunities.

In partnership with local taxing bodies and the State Legislature, we extended the East Side TIF and are in the process of expanding the boundaries to include the 11th Street and South Grand Corridors. The new TIF boundaries will encompass the "Neighborhood of Hope" plan boundaries so TIF resources can be leveraged with private sector funding to put the plan into action.

We partnered with Pastor Doss and the King's Court Revitalization Project.

In partnership with local banks, we created the Justine Peterson Micro-Loan Program that has provided approximately 80 small business loans totaling nearly \$1 million. We also completed sewer work along 11th Street and are continuing around the Cook Street area. These infrastructure improvements insure the capacity for residential and business development.

Another CORE (Connecting Our Resources Economically) area is focusing around Comer Cox and Chamberlain Parks. This underutilized space bordered by the Boys and Girls Club and Salvation Army's Community Center would be the focus for rec, tech, business and art activities to fully engage our young people. Similar to the Salvation Army's Community Center establishment, we will work in collaboration with the public, private and community sectors to transform this CORE area.

2. As Mayor, what would you do to improve diversification of the Police and Fire Departments?

Under the leadership of our Police Chief Kenny Winslow, the Springfield Police Department diversification has improved since 2012. Eighty (80) officers have been hired and retained, of which 32.5% were minorities. Since becoming mayor and through my administration, 47 officers were hired and retained, of which 34% were minorities and female (8 African Americans; 2 Hispanics; 1 Asian and 5 Caucasian females). These results are due to a combination of actions including our continuous outreach efforts in partnership with many individuals and organizations like the NAACP, NOBLE, Frontiers International and Ministerial Alliance. The Chief's Interview Review Panel for new applicants includes members of the public. In addition, we have instituted an updated recruitment policy that includes annual training of our diversified recruitment team and outlined recruitment efforts. We are reinstating the Explorer Program that was cut prior to 2012. We will continue to build our personal relationships to continually improve our level of public trust and recruitment and retention efforts.

Under the leadership of our new Springfield Fire Department Chief Allen Reyne, the Fire Department has promoted its first female Commander. Chief Reyne has met with Chief Winslow to glean the Best Practices for Minority Recruitment that has proven successful. The Fire Department does have an Explorers Program that draws from School District 186.

Due to State regulation, Fire Department agility testing is done at test centers. The closest center to Springfield is in Decatur. Because the department would previously test on agility first, my administration changed the process to do the written test first. In doing so applicants know that they passed the written part initially before incurring cost associated with the agility test. We are in the process of assessing how minority candidates move along the testing process to identify any obstacles. We have identified that the most successful candidates have come from rural volunteer fire departments and these department unfortunately lack minority participation. Consequently, we are determining training factors for applicants that do not have the opportunities afforded through rural fire departments. We have also implemented residency points.

3. Would you direct the Police and Fire Chiefs to create a Diversity and Inclusion Team within the departments to be used to reach out to people of color and to the low-income population in our city? Or, what would you do to improve relationships between the Police and Fire and low income and persons of color?

Under Police Chief Winslow's leadership, the Springfield Police have initiated successful outreach initiatives including Coffee with a Cop, Cops and Bobbers and non-profit partnership activities. Through continuous training, we are changing the culture within the department so there is a clear understanding that each officer is our first point of trusted contact with the public. We are also one of the first cities to implement body-worn cameras, which have helped build the level of trust between the police department and public.

In addition, we have a senior staff person in the Office of Public Works who helps coordinate diversity and inclusion efforts across departmental lines.

The Springfield Fire Department has utilized building up the public trust with the neighborhood Smoke Detector Installation Program in partnership with the American Red Cross. In addition, the Fire Department has participated in public activities for neighborhoods and School District 186 involving student outreach. Under the leadership of Fire Chief Allen Reyne, the Springfield Fire Department will continue to explore and implement best diversity inclusion practices that have proven successful for our Police Department and other Fire Departments.

4. Please share any additional ideas or your vision of how you would diversify the City of Springfield workforce.

When I became Mayor, we implemented a review process to help insure qualified minority candidates were not overlooked. We also expanded job applicant outreach efforts to include an overview of the online application process. Currently the minority workforce is 13% compared to 10% four years ago. There have been 289 net hires (employees that remain active) within the last four years, over 24% or those hires are minorities. As our workforce diversity becomes more reflective of our city's makeup so will the management structure as we improve the succession planning process. For the first time, the City's Purchasing Agent is an African American female and CWLP has two minorities in senior management. In addition, minorities oversee the CWLP's commercial office and the Public Works Housing Department. With regards to the 10 Director positions I have appointed, 4 are female (1 of which is African American) and 1 is a Hispanic male.

We will continue our outreach efforts and continually review processes to assure diversity equality in the City of Springfield workforce.

5. Describe the partnerships, such as UIS, you are willing to pursue to improve city resources and outcomes.

We have partnered with UIS on a number of initiatives including a three-year commitment to fund Innovate Springfield, assisting with their expansion to a vacant lake club property, implementing a Bike Share Program rolling out this spring and community surveys.

Through the Police and Fire Departments, the city has worked with the medical community and Enos Park Health Initiative. As a result, the initiative was expanded to the Pillsbury Plant area and a Homeless Outreach Team (H.O.T.) Officer was funded in this upcoming fiscal year's city budget. We have also partnered with Helping Hands and the Continuum of Care to provide a low barrier shelter that this year provides counseling assistance with SIU School of Medicine. We have also partnered with Fifth Street Renaissance to provide Homeless Veterans Housing.

The city is partnering with Memorial Health Services, Enos Park and the YMCA for the new Downtown YMCA. The approximately \$30 million project will connect Downtown with the Medical District and Enos Park. In addition, we helped fund the Springfield Art Associations Visual Art Center and creative place making initiatives, and Downtown Springfield Inc. initiatives.

The City of Springfield is a funding partner in the Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation and the Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. We are also collaborating with local banks with the Justine Peterson Micro-Loan Program, Calvin Pitts owner of B.O.N.E. Training Center to provide construction craft and solar training to high school students and adults, and other entities on community economic development efforts.

6. As Mayor, what actions will you take and/or what policies will you promote to desegregate Springfield?

We will continue to expand our Community Economic Development/Community Wealth Building efforts as highlighted above. We will also continue our infrastructure improvements. Since 2015, we have completed over \$160 million in sewer, street and sidewalk improvements that created over 1,200 jobs and impacted over 2,000 other jobs. With our local hiring and job training initiatives, we have and will increase better job opportunities for local residents. With our strategic plan utilizing TIFs and Opportunity Zones, we are putting plans into action to increase housing and business development.

7. Describe specific ways in which the City could create mentoring programs for people to gain skills in the trades, computer skills, administration, accounting, secretarial, etc, under your leadership.

As Mayor, the City has created mentoring programs through our summer youth initiatives with the Springfield Urban League and the Outlet. We have also instituted an AmeriCorps program that provides job opportunities and post-secondary opportunities for young people providing services via the Boys & Girls Club, Computer Bank, Goodwill Good Guides Program and Salvation Army youth mentoring initiatives. The city, in partnership with Sangamon County and Hanson Professionals, have continued the "Grow Our Own" program for minority outreach for future engineers. We will expand on these efforts to collaborate with public and private sector entities to expand opportunities for disadvantaged people, especially our youth. A high priority during the next for years is outlined in question 1.

We have also improved our processes with regards to contracts that positively impact local companies, especially minority contractors, to take advantage of these opportunities, especially for grass cutting and boarded-up properties.