

Dorchester Reporter

“The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?

Stephen McBride, 31, Hermitage, PA, Dorchester, MA

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

I currently manage a team of Customer Success Managers at HubSpot.

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

I attended Northeastern, where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Economics. While at Northeastern, I worked at the Dimock Preschool and led a team for the Jumpstart! program, which creates a curriculum for early childhood education to combat the disparities in our educational system before children even enter Kindergarten.

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations and political groups.

I am a member of the Jones Hill Civic Association; a former member of SPARK Boston, a council of people aged 20-35 focused on increasing civic engagement; a United Way volunteer; and I will be serving as a delegate this September at the Massachusetts State Convention for the Boston Ward 13 Democrats.

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?

My professional and personal experiences have shaped my ability to be a collaborative leader who presents data-driven solutions to human problems. As a manager at HubSpot, I motivate a team of employees to hit qualitative and quantitative goals and service the needs of a robust portfolio of customers. I also pride myself on my ability to collaborate and cooperate with others to achieve the best results.

In addition to the civic engagement opportunities I have taken on, I am passionate about building an inclusive, collaborative, and accountable culture. This will extend to the role I hope to play on the City Council. As a

Councilor, I will present solutions that center on the community and what I learn from my constituents first, partnering that with data and a clear analysis of how I plan to deliver results for District 3 and Boston.

6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?

First and foremost, I am proud of the life I have had the opportunity to build here in Dorchester with my husband, Matt, and our dog, Pru.

Secondly, I am proud of the team I've helped build in my professional life at HubSpot. To be able to help them learn, grow, and excel in their careers has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had so far.

Finally, I am proud of this campaign. I am striving to be an accessible leader who advocates for the needs and priorities of the entire community, and hearing from residents across District 3 has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

7. Are you a member of a union?

No

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

Sunrise Boston, MassNOW, Run for Something, UAW Region 9A

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

I am a registered Democrat. I believe that the role of our government is to provide services that help address the challenges we face to better the lives of everyone. An elected official's role in this is to have an ear to the ground to understand the most pressing issues, gather a variety of perspectives, and chart the best path forward.

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

Ayanna Pressley proudly represented Boston as an at-large councilor for nearly a decade before declaring that change can't wait and running for a seat in Congress. Her bold leadership on the national level provided a progressive voice that was badly needed during the Trump presidency.

Elizabeth Warren has tirelessly fought for the greater good. From establishing the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to her continued advocacy for education from universal Pre-K to the current student loan

debt crisis, she has been unafraid to prioritize the needs of working families in the face of corporate corruption and pushback.

Stacey Abrams is at the center of the fight for our democracy. As a public servant, candidate, and advocate, she has worked unrelentingly to protect the right to vote and engaged a new generation of voters in exercising their civic duty.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

I am not in favor of term limits for the Boston City Council. In choosing a City Councilor, I believe the people's will should be fully reflected, including continuing to elect a councilor with broad support. However, elected officials are responsible for acknowledging when they are no longer the best person to lead or represent the people. Incumbency should not be ordainment for re-election but rather an opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to those you represent.

4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting?

We should be doing everything possible to make voting as accessible to our communities as possible. Election day should be a holiday. Declaring it would send the message that voting is one of the most important occasions of the year and remove barriers that currently come with Election Day being during a normal workweek.

Additionally, expanding and making permanent mail-in voting will provide avenues for voting outside of Election Day. This reduces pressure on Election Day polls and further increases the accessibility of voting by providing numerous paths.

I am in favor of lowering the voting age in municipal elections to sixteen. Sixteen and seventeen-year-olds rely on city services and should have a voice in how we improve on and distribute them across the city. Doing so would increase youth civic participation and highlight the role youth have played and will continue to play in advancing solutions to the challenges facing their communities.

5. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?

Yes. Rank choice voting ensures that the candidates with the greatest support are elected by allowing voters to advocate for who they believe should be elected should their first choice candidate not be chosen. This affirms majority rule and increases the efficacy voters will feel in the

Democratic process by providing them with greater choice and influence in the process.

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?

In addition to leading us through an equitable COVID-19 recovery and ensuring everyone is informed on and has access to the resources needed to combat the emerging variants, my top priority, if elected, is to fight for safe, stable, and affordable housing.

As Boston continues to grow, we must view development through the lens of community rather than profit, focusing on improving neighborhoods instead of simply lining the pockets of big developers. I've committed to this through my campaign by not taking campaign contributions from developers. When I enter City Hall, I want to be clear about who I am accountable to - the people.

Boston needs a comprehensive zoning overhaul and updated master plan - the first since 1965. Only with a forward-looking vision and strategy can we make meaningful progress in addressing the housing shortage without driving prices up simultaneously. We must raise the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) percentage above 13%. Increasing the IDP % is feasible, and these changes will not result in a halt to development. We should not allow developers who are making money off our broken policies to hold those policies hostage. The status quo has not been working for the vast majority of the city, and we must seek to change it.

2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

All of our neighbors deserve to feel safe in their communities. The first step in any plan will be to hear from my neighbors and understand their concerns. I will partner with local organizations like the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute to identify where our city's resources can be of the most value. We must continue to invest in our schools and provide more work and community engagement opportunities to break the cycle of violence. Only together can we develop people-oriented solutions that will meet the needs to help reduce violence across the city.

3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

Across the city, residents are concerned that there is insufficient transparency or accountability under the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA). As the cost of living continues to rise, traffic worsens, and Boston's climate resilience is in doubt, the BPDA has continued to favor those who understand its complexities and have the connections to navigate the bureaucracy. The agency's reach is unclear and has inhibited residents from navigating city planning processes.

We should continue the work started by Mayor Walsh after audits in 2015 revealed the level of disorganization within the agency and push to create a zoning process that is predictable, understandable, and transparent. I will also push us to bring core functions of the BPDA back under the authority of the city council, as it currently operates as an autonomous agency without a sufficient level of accountability.

4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

Boston is an expensive city - we should not require individuals to live in a city that they cannot afford. I believe that you can still effectively serve the city even if you live outside of it. Increasing our commitment to and investment in workforce housing is a prerequisite for a worker residency requirement.

5. The city of Boston presently owns and manages the historic Strand Theater in Uphams Corner. How would you seek to program, market and utilize this asset?

As someone who lives around the corner from The Strand, I would love to see it revitalized for various functions that provide for our community. Over the past year, I have been proud to see it serve as a place for early voting and a central location for COVID testing and vaccinations.

Looking ahead, I hope to see the theatre revitalized as an anchor point in the community alongside the planned new Upham's Corner Branch Library. I will seek a new operator for the theatre, working closely with local organizations and leaders to identify programming to engage the diversity of Dorchester. Together, we can engage residents from across the city to attend a variety of shows and performances and share the beauty that is Upham's Corner with all of Boston.

6. What is your position on vaccinations? Should students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 to attend school in Boston?

I strongly encourage everyone who has not yet gotten vaccinated from COVID-19 to go and get their vaccine today! Getting vaccinated is the best and easiest thing we can do to protect ourselves and each other.

For Boston students over the age of 12 and in line with CDC guidance, we should require vaccination to attend school in person. We know that this is the most effective way to keep our students healthy, happy, and learning. Similarly, once the CDC deems it safe for students under 12 to receive the vaccine, they too should receive it to protect their health, their family's health, and their education.

7. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

I believe that a portion of the School Committee should be elected. I favor having over 50% be elected so that a majority of the committee is responsible to the people. To ensure that partisan politics aren't the only factor, retaining an appointed component will keep the committee grounded. I also believe that the student member should have a vote as the rest of the committee does.

8. Do you support the recent decision of the BPS and School Committee to alter the admission plan for the city's three exam schools?

Yes - there will never be a perfect proposal; however, what we've been presented with is data-driven and equitable for the students of Boston. The committee spent a full year investigating potential alternatives and determined that this was the best plan for our schools.

However, the focus on the admission plan covers a more significant problem - that the rest of our schools are not of the same caliber as the exam schools. We should prioritize improving the caliber and quality of all of our schools so that each student has access to a high-quality public education.

9. Do you support the citywide ballot question that would hand new budgetary powers to the City Council?

The role of the City Council is to advocate for the needs of every Bostonian. The ability to do so should extend to increased budgetary powers for the City Council. The Council has the capacity and insight to play an important role in crafting the budget for the city. I believe with proper procedures the City Council can effectively use such powers to the benefit of the people of Boston.

10. The city of Boston is presently without a permanent police commissioner. What should the next mayor do to fill the position and what type of person should be selected to lead the BPD?

When selecting the next police commissioner, priority should be given to someone who has proven themselves to be a servant of and for the people of Boston. The next leader of the BPD should be someone who has earned the trust of the community and comes with the experience and knowledge to lead it into the future. We need this position to be filled by someone who knows the challenges both the BPD and the city have faced and has a clear vision for the department.

11. Do you support the redevelopment of City Hall and City Hall Plaza?

Yes - the work to make the plaza more accessible and green will re-establish the plaza as the gathering place that connects and engages residents and visitors alike.

12. What is your assessment of the Climate Ready Boston initiative conceived and executed to date by the Walsh administration? Is this initiative a sufficient response to prepare for the anticipated climate change in coming years and decades? What else might you do to build climate resiliency in the city of Boston?

The Climate Ready Boston initiative provides an excellent foundation for us to tackle climate change, but there is much more work to be done. The current plan focuses mainly on climate resilience. I believe we must take steps to expedite resilience measures while also refocusing on what we can do to slow, stop, and reverse the effects of climate change.

I propose that we continue to make investments in our waterfront to protect it from rising sea levels while simultaneously working to increase waterfront access for our communities and improving green spaces across Boston. District 3 exemplifies the necessity of these infrastructure upgrades. Roads such as Morrissey Blvd already regularly flood, posing a threat to local homes and community access to what should be shared and sustainable public resources. Additionally, we must prioritize public transit as a means to confront climate-related threats to our city and improve the quality of life for all Bostonians. This begins by reimagining public transit as a public good that is free and reliable for all. Finally, we must work to improve our buildings' efficiencies as they are currently the largest source of carbon emissions in Boston.

13. A millionaires tax is expected to be on the statewide ballot in 2022. How do you plan to vote?

Yes. In a time of unprecedented challenges both locally and nationally, it has never been more important for everyone to step up and do their part and that includes millionaires paying their fair share in taxes so that people can access high-quality government services across Massachusetts that will improve our collective well being and success.

14. Should gig workers be considered company employees, rather than independent contractors?

Gig workers deserve the same protections as company employees. I am in favor of steps that will elevate them to that status and ensure them the same protections. In the meantime, we must work to close legal loopholes that have allowed for the exploitation of gig workers and ensure their rights are protected.

15. A report commissioned by the Walsh administration found that just 1.2 percent of city contracts awarded between 2014-2018 were awarded to Black or Latino-owned businesses. What would you do to change that?

After dedicating city resources to identify this problem, the steps we've taken to fix it have still been insufficient. To ensure the distribution of our city contracts is more equitable, we must hold departments across the city to a higher standard. Moreover, we should work to facilitate connections between these city agencies businesses owned by people of color. Building these connections will help agencies more easily identify businesses to which they might award these contracts.

These efforts should be tracked in annual reports to increase accountability and to identify areas where we may better support city agencies and local businesses in the process. These efforts will be most effective if done in collaboration with the Office of Resilience and Racial equity.

16. In 2018, the Walsh administration set a goal of creating 69,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester?

We're at 36,000 - we should continue to reevaluate and make sure the goals we've set for ourselves will be right for the city a decade from now.

Updating our zoning code for the first time since 1965 will ensure that we have a master plan in place for that development - to understand the impact of any proposal and ensure that it is done intentionally in a way that prioritizes the ability for our neighbors to continue to live where they choose. I am committed to putting people over profits and only supporting plans that have broad community support. The face of this city will change continuously, but we can make sure that we, the people, not those who seek to profit, are the ones controlling that vision.

17. What is your assessment of the Walsh administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

Pass - Mayor Walsh was dedicated to remaining connected to the community throughout his tenure. Mayor Walsh truly made every effort to let people know that he was there to serve them and make the city a better place, reflecting this sentiment through his policy. In putting forward the Climate Ready Boston Plan, he laid a foundation for us to tackle the effects of climate change on our city. This reform, while bold at its introduction, can be improved upon by our next mayor to take on this fight with greater speed as we uncover new methods to combat the changing climate.

18. What is your assessment of the acting Mayor Kim Janey's performance since taking office in March 2021? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

Pass - I commend Mayor Janey on taking on this role and leading the city through such an unprecedented time. While every Council President knows they may one day have to step into the role of mayor, few rarely do. As a Boston resident, I've been pleased to continue to see her expand on the work Mayor Walsh did to lead us through a recovery from the pandemic.

19. Will you seek to expand or change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

I am in favor of adding members for the Zoning Board of Appeals that have expertise in areas not currently represented, such as climate resiliency and equity and inclusion.

20. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

When I'm not out knocking doors and talking to D3 voters, I enjoy taking my dog, Pru, for a walk around Victory Park. Matt and I also try to maintain a regular date night, be it an evening out for dinner (our favorite spot is the original Yellow Door) or just a night at home catching up on the latest Drag Race.

21. If you were not a candidate, who would you support in this election for either Mayor or City Council?

With so many amazing candidates in our mayoral race, I'm excited to see what the September 14 preliminary brings and look forward to the opportunity to work with our next mayor, whoever she may be.

Thank you for participating in the Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to newseditor@dotnews.com by Fri. Aug. 8, 2021.

