

Public Safety Alliance

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City Council Questionnaire

1. **Name:** Scott Matheson
2. **Occupation:** Financial Advisor and Certified Financial Planner®
3. **Civil and Professional Group Memberships:** I am a member of the Financial Planners Association and serve as the Government Relations Director for the Hampton Roads chapter. I have contributed time and/or financial resources to of The Noblemen, Habitat For Humanity, Boy Scouts of America, United Service Organization (USO), The UP's Center, Faith Works Coalition, Pop Warner Football, the Reading First Program, and the Southeastern Virginia Food Banks, among others.
4. **Please rank the below listed city services in priority order and explain why?**
 - Education/Schools
 - Human Services
 - Libraries
 - Public Safety
 - Public Utilities
 - Public Works

While all are important, I believe Public Safety and Education are two of our greatest assets and should be protected and fostered. Without them, we could not be successful in our efforts of attracting new families and businesses to Chesapeake—thereby expanding the tax base which provides more potential funding for Public Safety and Education.

5. **On a scale of one to ten, ten being outstanding, how would you rate the performance of City Manager William Harrell; list (2) things he has done in his tenure that have caused you to rate him this way and based on that rating are you in favor of his services to the City? Why?**

Because I have not yet worked directly with Mr. Harrell, I feel it would be premature to rate him at this time. However, as a potential City Council Member, I would want an excellent relationship and communication with our City Manager.

Under Mr. Harrell's leadership, our general obligation bond rating has been upgraded from AA to AA+. This accomplishment helps put Chesapeake on a stronger financial foundation. Essentially, our credit rating is higher thereby making the cost of borrowing less expensive for the City. In addition, Mr. Harrell has improved the transparency of local government with clear communication to City employees and Public Safety officials.

- 6. Currently the city has numerous city supported community activities (i.e. Jubilee, Jaycees Christmas Parade, Fourth of July Parade, Visitor's Center) that it supports with tax dollars. With the current budget crisis facing the city would you be in favor of continued support for these events understanding that the city is considering laying off and freezing public safety positions?**

Such activities are important to a community, and should be revenue generating opportunities for the City. We can look to our neighbor city, Norfolk, for an excellent example. Norfolk's Festevents produces an average of \$20 million per year for Norfolk businesses, with nearly \$4 million per year returning to the City in taxes, parking, etc. ([Virginia Pilot, June 28, 2009](#)). If the Jubilee and other activities are not producing revenue for the City or at minimum covering the production costs (including the compensation of the Public Safety Professionals managing these events), we should a) explore ways of more efficiently managing these events, and b) work to secure more corporate and private sponsorships.

- 7. Are you willing to raise taxes? If not, how do you plan to maintain municipal service at their current level? Explain in detail.**

When you consider the fact that Virginia is ranked #6 in the nation for tax burden on our citizens (only Maryland, California, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are higher), I would hesitate to create any additional burden for our citizens—especially for our families and senior citizens. I believe there are innovative ways to fund critical programs. We've seen several successful examples of innovative revenue generation in our City. Consider the private-public partnership formula used by the Sheriff's department to fund programs for the citizens. The Senior Support Services program and the Children Today, Leaders Tomorrow mentoring program are two great examples of how we are funding programs without taxpayer money.

- 8. With the proposed budget cuts submitted by the Governor to Schools, do you endorse bridging the gap with monies out of the general fund or other city financial resources? If so, give exact details of this plan.**

At this time, the Commonwealth's budget is still being deliberated. Therefore, we're not certain of the shortfall which may impact local education. Regardless

of the amount, I would promote the use of creative revenue generation programs to help bridge the gap. My campaign has several specific ideas that will be made public at a later date.

- 9. The city has adopted a new pay plan. However, due to the current budget crisis it has not been completely funded. Do you support funding this plan completely as soon as the budget allows?**

Yes! We should keep our promises to our Public Safety Professionals.

- 10. A recent study ordered by the City Manager concluded the Police Department is short staffed and has been for many years. The Sheriff's Office and the Fire Department are in the same situation. Almost every area of all three departments is in need of additional manpower. What is your solution to remedy this situation?**

Unfortunately, these are unique economic times. We are ALL having to do more with less. Though our Police Department has been short staffed for many years, Chesapeake is consistently ranked by the FBI as one of the five safest US cities with populations over 200,000. In order to staff our Public Safety Departments to recommended levels, we must continue to focus on economic development— attracting businesses will expand the tax base and provide potential funding for the resources our Public Safety Professionals need and deserve.

- 11. Public Safety facilities are ageing and are in need of major remodeling or replacement. The Public Safety Training Academy, which is utilized by all three public safety departments, is a facility built during the 1940's and the Police Headquarters building was built in 1971. What is your plan to replace these ageing facilities?**

In this difficult economic environment, our first priority should be fully implementing the promised pay plan for our Public Safety Professionals. As the economy improves, we can then address the issue of facility improvements.

Please note:

I have a previous business commitment on March 24th, 2010 which requires me to be out of town. I am happy to meet with your committee to discuss these critical issues at another time. Otherwise, my wife Dawn Matheson will attend the forum on my behalf. Thank you for your consideration.

***You can provide your answers directly on this questionnaire and email back to Glen Strathmann at chesapeakepsa@hotmail.com.