

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47  
2023 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

**CANDIDATE PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION**

Full Name of Campaign Committee: Jim Harrity for Council

HQ Address: 2103 West Hunting Park Ave. Philadelphia, Pa 19140

Campaign Manager Name: Tracy Hardy

Campaign Manager Phone: (215) 778-7868

Campaign Manager E-Mail: tshphila@gmail.com

**CANDIDACY INFORMATION**

What office are you seeking? Council-at-Large

If you are running for a district seat, in which district are you running?

Are you the incumbent? Yes If yes, year first elected: 2022

With which party are you registered? Democrat

Please list union leaders you seek input from when developing your legislative agenda:

1. Labor's Local 57
2. CWA

Who are your opponents? To be determined. Petitions begin February14, 2023.

**CAMPAIGN**

1. Briefly describe your campaign's path to victory. What issues will you be emphasizing throughout your campaign and why?

Campaign strategy includes contacting constituents through door-to-door contact, direct mail, social media, digital advertising, and voter identification. We are also seeking endorsements from various political networks to secure reelection. Our platform is on enhancing public safety

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through job creation and opportunities as well as building new schools and supplying competitive resources for underfunded school districts.

**PHILADELPHIA ECONOMY**

2. Do you support raising the Living Wage requirement of employers that do business with the city from its current rate? What would your approach be to promoting a Living Wage requirement for employers not covered by the Living Wage Ordinance?

I support the living wage requirement. I believe the City has to partner with employers to promote the benefits of Living Wage Ordinance by offering incentives, such as tax credits for employers who pay their employees a livable wage. We need employers and employees to stay in the City, however, that is only possible when we are competitive with other counties when it comes doing business.

3. The City requires companies with 10 or more employees to provide paid sick leave. Many states and cities have similar laws with no exemptions. Would you support updating the legislation to put it in line with what other states and cities have passed?

I support updating the legislation regarding sick leave for companies with 10 or more employees.

**PENSION/RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

4. What is your position on the current cap on annual contribution in the defined benefit plan by employees in the stacked hybrid plan of the Municipal Employee Pension system? Should the cap be indexed to include automatic increases tied to salary increases?

There should not be a cap. Pension should be proportionate with salary increases.

**EDUCATION/SCHOOL BOARD**

5. What qualities and experience would you look for in appointees to the School Board? What standards should School Board appointees use to evaluate current or proposed privatization measures (e.g., charter schools)?

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School board appointees must understand the needs of the community and emphasize on community engagement through creating more programs to keep our children off of the streets. Including trade skill programs and understanding that each child is different and not everyone's path is to college, and that's okay. There are professions like HVAC, electrician and many others that make competitive salaries. Academic benchmarks should be evaluated, particularly, where and if they have created out of box solutions to solve problems and whether they have a plan for the future.

6. How would you work to support acquiring fair State funding for the Philadelphia School District? What experience and relationships do you have working with entities in Harrisburg that would help accomplish that?

I will continue to work with members of the State Legislature with whom I have strong relationships with, including State Senator Sharif Street, State Senator Vincent Hughes and others.

### **CITY SERVICES**

7. What are your priorities for funding City and Court services? How would you ensure that these services are provided equitably throughout the city?

City and Court services should be funded by revenue brought in from taxes and courts. An audit should be performed to ensure equitable distribution of services.

8. What level of services should the city support to fully fund and fully staff our Library and Parks and Recreation systems? Please explain your position and how you believe those systems can be funded.

Library and Park and Recreation systems should be fully funded and made priorities in the municipal budget because they are essential to public safety. Taxes can fund these systems and we can propose a partnership with various schools and offer credit based internships which will help relieve some of the expenses.

9. How would you address staffing shortages throughout departments, including those that are a result of unfilled positions? What initiatives would you put in place to help hire and retain current City / Court workers?

I think we have to take a hard look at how departments function and ensure that employees have the tools and support to provide adequate city services to empower constituents and themselves.

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Job fairs in neighborhoods are a practical way to recruit potential employees and once they are hired, each department must participate in training and relay the importance of each department on how it impacts the City.

10. What is your position on the privatization of City services?

I am opposed to privatization.

**ENVIRONMENT**

11. What steps do you want the city to take to address climate change and to shift away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources? Do you support the City amending its investment portfolio to divest from fossil fuel companies?

The City needs to look at modernizing vehicles and machinery that depend on fossil fuels. Yes, the City should divest from fossil fuel companies.

**TAXES**

12. What measures would you support to make sure that wealthy non-profits pay their fair share to support City and Court services?

Create a enforcement committee that will partner with the wealthy non-profits to pay their fair share on a quarterly basis.

13. Would you support any changes to the city's property tax abatement program? If not, please explain why. If so, please explain how?

Tax abatements should only be used when necessary to incentivize development for vacant and/or dilapidated homes and properties.

14. How would you reform city taxes to increase revenue? What is your position on the Net Income and Gross Receipts Tax and on the Wealth Tax legislation? If you have other ideas to increase revenue, please explain them.

We need to police the tax rolls to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share. I agree with the Net Income Gross Receipts Tax on the Wealth Tax legislation. Job Development will increase revenue in the City. However, we need to streamline the process for businesses to do businesses here. A challenge in doing business in the City is that the various departments are not

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communicating to each other and/or they are not consistent in communicating all the requirements to business owners from the beginning which delays projects and are very costly.

**PHILADELPHIA HOUSING**

15. Do you support increasing revenue for the Housing Trust Fund to help residents avoid displacement in communities currently facing development pressure?

I support the increase of revenue because people should not be displaced from their communities.

16. As a city elected official, what steps will you take to ensure local government plays a proactive role in expanding permanent affordable and workforce housing in Philadelphia?

I'll vote in favor of affordable and workforce housing in Philadelphia.

17. Do you support extending good cause eviction protections to all residential leases? Do you support rent control measures to protect Philadelphia tenants?

Yes and yes.

**PHILADELPHIA RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

18. Do you support revising the Memo of Understanding between the Philadelphia Police Department and Philadelphia School District to close the school to prison pipeline? If yes, explain how you would accomplish this. If no, please explain why?

Yes, we have to be mindful about employing constructive methods for constructive rehabilitation. I will support trade skills to be taught in schools and partner with other institutions to provide jobs after graduation.

19. Do you support additional funding for programs that are alternatives to incarceration for drug addiction, mental health treatment, and other issues? If yes, how would you measure the effectiveness of those programs? If no, please explain.

Yes, I support funding 100% . All programs differ in their approaches, but overall funding is paramount to rehabilitation. Effectiveness is measured by relapse and recidivism rates.

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20. What community policing initiatives do you support or propose? Please explain.

Community policing is crucial to public safety because it instills trust, communication, and empathy. Officers should be walking in the community and encouraged to form relationships with the residents that they are sworn to protect. In addition, we need to be sensitive to police assignments and which officers are going into which community because of language barriers and experiences. We need to ensure that all officers are understanding cultural differences.

21. What funding and staffing proposals would you support to enhance probation and parole services for Philadelphians under supervised release?

Plain and simple, funding and staffing levels must be met to work with offenders to ensure rehabilitation. Funding must be prioritized in the budget.

22. What funding and staffing proposals would you support for the Department of Prisons to ensure incarcerated citizens are best prepared for return to the community from incarceration or from alternative detention programs?

The Department of Prisons should prioritize preparation for return to the community such as job training, conflict resolution seminars, and counseling. Returning to the community should receive as much attention as incarceration. Moreover, the department must utilize grants that are purposed for rehabilitation.

23. What steps do you believe the City can take to reduce the availability of guns in Philadelphia?

Gun violence continues to plague our city. We must keep pressure on federal legislators for a universal gun bill that stymies guns being bought in states and then trafficked to our urban centers.

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24. Do you have any plans regarding programs that support and protect victims of crime and other affected members of the community?

I support programs that protect victims of crime.

**PHILADELPHIA CORPORATE POWER**

25. Do you support publicly financed campaigns for all City elected offices? If no, please explain.

Publicly financed campaigns are a good idea to curb influence of special interests.

26. Do you support legislation that enables the City to recover subsidies from corporations or other businesses that fail to provide jobs or other benefits to city residents as a condition of the subsidies? Please explain.

Yes. Businesses must honor their agreements with the city, especially if those agreements are aimed at helping residents.

**RESIDENCY ISSUE**

27. What is your position on City and Court employees having the option to live outside the city? Please explain.

City and court employees should reside in the City, as they understand the needs and wants of the residents that they serve.

28. Are there any other issues you'd like to mention about which we have not asked you in this questionnaire?

None at this time.