

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Winnie Eke

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

Public Education, Healthcare, and Housing.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I live in the community, have strong policy background to understand the balance between policies, finance and legal responsibilities of the city, good communication skills that have made it easy to communicate and work with my neighbors.

Executive/leadership skills that have made it possible to chair department and organizations in the community. I am empathic and caring. Working for people requires being able to empathize and be attentive.

3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see Boston adopt?

The plan to end "Exclusionary Zoning Policy" in Berkeley, California and Portland.

4. Which of the following groups have you chosen to reject / would reject campaign contributions from? (For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers)

For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers. Corporations

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(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

- 1. Name three accomplishments you've been able to achieve to advance racial justice or equity.**

Taught, with a focus on the needs of all the students in my classroom, planned and coached church members about saving strategies, and as a member of African Community Health Initiatives, planned and organized logistics for minority populations to access health care.

- 2. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Boston in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?**

First, send out information about activities that I will be engaged in. If the council has a schedule of policies to work on for the year, I will disclose this to the district. I will send out frequent reminder notices to district through social media. I will plan to schedule meetings/hearing in different Wards to focus on each community's issues.

Past actions: As a member of the Park Way YMCA, I was involved with all activities of the organization. I participated in its Thanksgiving and Christmas programs to help the needy. As a member of Healthy Roslindale, I was responsible for tracking health and environmental concerns of the area close to Forest Hills, reported to Neighborhood office until dangerous materials were cleared away.

I am my congregation's council chair and do work with my team to get out small church work.

(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

- 1. What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?**

[This question was left blank]

- 2. The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

4. Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office of Mayor in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

5. What, if any, other changes to the City Charter would you like to see?

[This question was left blank]

(D) Revenue

1. Do you support the PILOT Action Group's recommendations for a standing PILOT commission with community representation? YES/ NO

Yes. Transparency is important. Citizens should know what the big universities are contributing annually. At this time their contributions have dwindled from 48% in 2012 to 23.4% in 2019.

2. Given state law, Boston is limited in its taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?

Increase tax/contributing ratio on institutions, continue to request meal and hotel accommodation tax increase from the state.

(E) Education

1. What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Boston Public Schools?

I will suggest monthly stipend for poor parents for a limited number of years. Mandate work at only one job or work part time to participate in their children's education. To qualify for the stipend, mandate skill training or education for parents without any or limited education. The city should plan education grant for those who want to complete college.

Have a commission to look at employment of people of color. It is difficult to see a minority with a graduate degree and yet not employed. It disillusion others from considering making such investment.

Hiring of minorities must be purposeful. There should be ordinances passed to enforce city hiring, contracts etc.

2. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes. Each Boston child that goes to a Charter school takes the money from the city. If the state caps the amount or completely funds Charter, then I have no objection.

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- 3. Do you support a change in BPS governance to allow Boston voters the right to elect school committee members, like every other city in Massachusetts? YES/ NO If so, what would your ideal structure be? If not, why not?**

Yes. Each of the nine districts should have an elected committee member like District councilors. That will be a fair representation. The position should alternate between communities. For instance, if there is a term limit, persons running should come from West Roxbury, the next time from Jamaica Plain etc. This will make representation equitable.

- 4. Do you support removing police from Boston public schools? YES/ NO**

Yes. This will remove the change of students getting onto the legal system at an early age.

- 5. Do you support making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's exam schools? YES/ NO And if so, what would your proposed alternative system be?**

Yes. First, there should be advanced work class (AWC) in all elementary and middle schools. This way a pipeline for exam schools is established. I will suggest still taking the ISEE. However, admission should be based on classroom work, grades, and attendance. I will like to see the inclusion of an essay by the students done in the classroom and certified by teachers.

The ISEE should be secondary, should a student miss a large portion of the academic year.

There should be equity in representation in race, district (Ward) based on number of student applicant.

- 6. What steps would you take to make universal pre-K a reality in Boston?**

1. Birth register should be compiled.
2. Inform parents when and how to prepare their child for pre-K
3. Use data on births to create seats
4. Notify parents 6 months before the age to state pre-k
5. use similar school choice process and plan to help parents choice sites
6. Provide manpower to contact parents to make sure they are preparing/help with the process
7. Placement preference should be close to home.
8. provide transportation voucher for parent to use share-ride to take and bring child back from center.

(F) Public Safety

- 1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies or military equipment? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 2. Do you support the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with such low-level offenses? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support closing the loopholes in Boston's Trust Act which allow BPD to inquire about immigration status or pass information along to ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes. This will prevent and lesson trauma on families and children.

- 5. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database? YES/ NO**

Yes. This will reduce the stigmatization of persons who happen to be family members or friends of persons in gangs.

- 6. Would you support a hard cap on overtime for individual officers? If so, what percentage of an officer's salary? YES/ NO**

Yes. 10%. police department overtime budget of \$60 million is a lot.

- 7. What changes to the 2017 Boston Police Patrolman's Association (BPPA) contract would you advocate for in the latest round of contract negotiations?**

Putting more patrol officers on the street due to increasing population. Hiring more patrol officers, which will help decrease the overtime budget.

- 8. What current functions of the Boston Police Department should be transferred to agencies under civilian control, and what governance would you propose for them?**

Responding to health issues, especially mental health issues, domestic violence, traffic signs, expired stickers/licenses and minor personal offences like shop lifting or bad checks/currency.

1. will propose a two-tier system-a 911 for emergencies-health and felony issues and

2. Second number for mental issues, personal offences, etc. managed by health professionals, may be supported/ escorted by police officers.

3. Propose officers or workers such as meter maids to tag expired plates and report on people in the car etc.

9. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Boston Police Department budget to reinvestment in communities? YES/ NO If so, how much?

Yes. With a \$60M budget for over time, I will start there and then reduce budget for non-emergency items, that will be taken over for professional to work with health issues.

10. Which of the following would you support banning the use of by the Boston Police Department? (Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs)

Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs. It is cruel and unjust, especially as used on BLM.

11. Do you believe that affiliation or sympathies with white supremacist organizations among officers is a problem with BPD? YES/ NO If so, what measures would you take as mayor to combat that issue?

Yes. Use fact-base retraining. if it does not work, relieve of position.

12. Do you support safe consumption sites? YES/ NO

Yes. It provides a dedicated and safe environment.

(G) Environment & Transportation

1. Do you believe Boston needs to reduce its dependence on cars, and if so, how would you propose to do so?

1. Encourage car pooling

2. More bike routes (needed in some communities like JP)

3. More walking areas

4. Make public transportation affordable

5. Provide vans for community transportation-grocery, doctors, pharmacy etc.

2. What are your top three policy priorities for making Boston a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?

1. Use of flood barriers that can provide recreational areas as well as developed land.

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2. Build effective storm water system-having storage units in different parts of the city while preserving gray storm water system.

3. New building should have high ground floor ceiling that can be elevated in times of flooding/ rising sea levels.

3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes.

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? What steps would you take to achieve this goal? YES/ NO

No. Funding public transit is already a problem. If there are no revenue for it to operate, those that we want to help will suffer the most. Currently people over 65 and the person with disability have reduced fare. The amount should be considered as many poor people, especially people of color depend on public transit and do spend a lot of their income (about 22%, Business Insider, 2019) on transportation.

5. Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? YES/ NO

Yes.

(H) Housing

1. How would you expand affordable housing in Boston and ensure development without displacement?

1. Uses buildings not in use like old schools building and build more affordable units.

2. Reduce the use of exclusionary rules-to build more units.

3. Support use of proposed City of Boston housing vouchers/ and other programs.

4. Preserve current affordable housing.

5. Tenant protection through rent control

6. Just cause to evict.

7. City should designate/ acquire land for affordable housing.

2. What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding affordable housing?

It reduces paying others for land. City can determine how many units needed for the area.

There will be zero displacement. It could encourage other developers in the area to build.

- 3. Do you support a real estate transfer tax for commercial and residential sales, with the revenue going to an affordable housing trust? YES/ NO What exemption threshold, if any, would you advocate for?**

Yes. 2%. Increasing the threshold would mean more funds for affordable homes. However, for those renting at market price, the landlords would pass on the tax to them, making rent even more higher than it is already-5th highest in the country.

- 4. Do you support rent control? YES/ NO If so, how would you structure such a policy? If not, why not?**

Yes. I would raise or support a proposal place a percentage cap on rents periodically based on cost of living.

- 5. Do you support the renewal of Boston's condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 6. Would you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 7. Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. Do you support increasing this number? YES/ NO If so, to what? Please List %**

Yes. I would support an increase to 18%. Going higher would be beneficial but it may deter developers from building.

- 8. Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 9. Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? YES/ NO If so, how will you make it happen?**

Yes. Have two separate departments-a planning department that would create a master plan for the city and its zones. Then a second, a development department.

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10. Do you support increasing the number of units that are ADA compliant in projects that receive City funds? YES/ NO

Yes. We have an aging population as well and many have health issues that make it hard to use buildings.

(I) Economic Opportunity

1. What steps would you propose to reduce Boston's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?

1. Skill training
2. minimum wage of \$15.00
3. Equal pay for equal work/positions
4. Mandate companies to release compensation packages or file with the city clerk.

2. Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? YES/ NO

Yes.

3. Do you support ending subminimum wages for tipped workers in Boston? YES/ NO

Yes. There should be a base pay. The idea of hopping and waiting for tips is scary. Stifles progress and planning of ones' life.

4. How would you *enforce* the hiring goals set forth in the Boston Jobs Residency Policy (which requires that least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to *Boston* residents, at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color, and at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women)?

1. Collect annual data
2. Use data to enforce the policy
3. Disclose data to the public
4. Have hearing
3. Correct deficit.

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5. What targets in city contracting would you commit to for minority-owned businesses as well as Black-owned businesses in particular, and what steps would you take to realize such targets?

I will support and commit to the target of \$2 Billion set for Black-owned businesses by 2025.

a. Will you commit to immediately directing all City departments and quasi-city agencies to unbundle large contracts that are set to become available in 2021 and beyond in order to facilitate this? YES/ NO

Yes. There should prioritization and equity in contract from City Hall.

b. Will you commit to regular reporting to track progress toward and beyond this goal? YES/ NO

Yes.

6. The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?

1. Remove restrictions on Black people with felony based marijuana. 2. Provide funding for people of color.

7. Would you support the creation of a municipal broadband network? YES/ NO

No. I am concerned about personal information. If technology people could tell us how to disaggregate the information and safeguard individual information that will be good. If creating municipal broadband network is to provide equity and accessibility, which many families and students, especially minority students and the poor did not have this past year, I will work hard to have that passed in the council.

(J) Democracy

1. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO

Yes. I support the fact that they have legal status and do pay their fair share of taxes. My concern is about the resource that will be use to produce separate processing to make sure that legal but non-citizens persons are not included in state and federal elections, pursuant to the constitution.

2. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO

Yes. They are concerned citizens and it would be fair for them to participate in the decision-making process about their lives, such as school, transportation, environment, and healthcare.

3. In 2022, Boston will engage in redistricting on the municipal level. What would an equitable redistricting process look like to you?

First, we should not allow politicians to do the redistricting. We should list to residents, especially minority populations. We should use criteria-driven civil servant approach (Iowa). This involves using non-partisan civil servants who would draw up a map according to the city statute. Then the city councilors would vote to adopt the maps without amendment. Another option could be visiting all districts and learn their issues, then districts with same interest could be grouped together after hearing from the constituents. This way there is a decentralization of both elected offices or appointed offices, like in school committee.

4. Would you support the redrawing of Boston's wards and precincts ("reprecincting"), which has not happened in more than 100 years -- and which happens decennially in other MA cities and towns? YES/ NO

Yes. I hope if the redrawing happens, it would consider proximity and similarities of communities.

(K) Additional Comments