The Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Connect Decision ‘20

★ EARLY VOTING DATES ★

October 26, 2020 through November 2, 2020.
7:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Washington County Early Voting Center
17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740
# Decision ‘20

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Decision ‘20 Forum Information

★ Washington County Board of Education
   Date: October 7th, 2020
   Registration Opens: 7:00 A.M.
   Event Begins: 7:30 A.M.
   Location: Maryland Theatre

★ Hagerstown City Council
   Date: October 14th, 2020
   Registration Opens: 7:00 A.M.
   Event Begins: 7:30 A.M.
   Location: Maryland Theatre

★ City of Hagerstown Mayor
   Date: October 21st, 2020
   Registration Opens: 7:00 A.M.
   Event Begins: 7:30 A.M.
   Location: Maryland Theatre

★ Representative in Congress
   Date: October 28th, 2020
   Registration Opens: 7:00 A.M.
   Event Begins: 7:30 A.M.
   Location: Maryland Theatre

Contact Tiffany Dozier at tiffany@hagerstown.org / 301.739.2015 ext. 100
Or register at www.hagerstown.org
All candidates were asked to respond to this question by August 21, in 125 words or less:

Why should someone from the business community vote for you?
*All candidate responses copied exactly how received, no edits were made.

Representative in Congress
(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name)

NEIL C. PARROTT – REPUBLICAN
Washington County Business Owners can trust me to look out for their interests in Congress. I live here, shop here, and have friends here, many of whom own businesses. I will work for policies and projects that help our local economy.

As a Delegate, the Maryland Free Enterprise Foundation has rated me as a legislator with a 97% lifetime pro-business voting record. I have intentionally and consistently worked to support Washington County businesses, including during this Covid-19 epidemic where I worked to reopen businesses.

I understand that government does not create jobs; business owners do. As a local business owner myself, I understand the negative effects that taxes and regulations have on business success. My record is consistent, common-sense, and pro-business.

DAVID TRONE – DEMOCRAT - INCUMBENT
Growing up on a chicken and hog farm, I learned at an early age the hard work and determination that goes into running a business. I used those lessons to start a successful business of my own. In Congress I’m fighting for business owners, the lifeblood of the American economy. This pandemic shows that commitment. As a member of the Joint Economic Committee I fought for programs to keep small business afloat, like Economic Injury Disaster Loans and the Paycheck Protection Program. My record of fighting for policies that support and uplift American businesses was confirmed when I became the only Representative from Maryland to receive national recognition from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
Mayor of Hagerstown
(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)

MICHAEL E. BARNES
Being self employed for 21 years in Hagerstown, I recognize the need for urgency in helping all other Hagerstown Businesses. As mayor, my goal will be to work with the council to get pro business agendas passed so that everyone here has the opportunity to prosper. This is going to be through new business learning courses for burgeoning entrepreneurs, new tax credits to help local businesses recover from the economic impact of covid. Most importantly, it is essential that we solve the issue of crime on the streets to make safe sidewalks to allow everyone to enjoy the gems of business in our town.

EMILY KELLER – CURRENT COUNCILMEMBER
As a business owner myself, I understand the importance of having strong leadership in government in order to attract, retain, and provide an environment for businesses to thrive. With the COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc on businesses, now more than ever we need to have effective governmental bodies working together to do everything we can to help. I will work to ensure our City, County, State and Federal representatives are all working from the same page to do what is best for the greater good and continuing our positive progress. We cannot back pedal on the progress that we have already made. I have a proven track record of building relationships and working hard for our community, and will continue to do so as Mayor.
City Council of Hagerstown

(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)

KRISTIN ALESHER – INCUMBENT - COUNCILMEMBER
I believe the health and promotion of private business is an invaluable component to the success of City effort’s to adequately meet public demand of providing necessary services and infrastructure. This is certainly true for Hagerstown, a City just beyond the metro fringe, wedged between State corridors, competing with external development pressures while addressing internal socio-economic forces. Understanding this, each eligible City voter should support candidates they deem most likely to meet their respective goals. Consideration should be given to individuals that possess some broader knowledge base and comprehensive approach to responsibly navigating issues ranging from daily operations to major community initiatives beyond the politics of party voters are too often enticed to resign.

BOB BRUCHEY - CURRENT MAYOR
In the 14 years and 8 months I have served the Hagerstown citizens, I have constantly fought for business, both small and large. I instituted incentives to assist redevelopment of buildings by creating the Revolving Loan Fund and the Upper Floor Revolving Loan Fund, as well as kept stifling regulations from over taking redevelopment efforts. I have been the voice of reason behind the scenes to facilitate redevelopment for new business. My Administration created the Invest Hagerstown Grant programs that facilitate and support small business. I will continue to fight for economic development through incentives, infrastructure, and controlled regulations. Government has 2 major functions, public safety and facilitating growth and economic development through infrastructure. I will continue to support these functions.
TIARA BURNETT
Over the past few months, I have met with several local business owners and proprietors from the community. During that time, I have obtained an understanding of the permit process for new businesses. However, I have also noticed a theme of businesses being delayed in the permitting process through no fault of their own. As a City Council member, I would be able to research the process within the City Administration to see how we can prevent those delays. As a supporter of small businesses and entrepreneurs, I will facilitate growth by working to promote diversity and to encourage new businesses to come to our city. My hope for the future is that we can be a thriving and inviting city.

BROOKE GROSSMAN
As a citizen of the City Center my goal is for the business community to thrive. A thriving business community leads to the economic and community development that will make Hagerstown an attractive destination for tourists and new business. I will offer support to our local businesses in the way of education about the financial incentives to operate a business within the City. I will advocate for flexibility in the zoning and permitting process when appropriate allowing operations to open and grow with ease. I will address social concerns; like homelessness that present a challenge for businesses. Above all I will be available to listen and do the work alongside our business community to develop and implement solutions to our challenges to help Hagerstown thrive.

AUSTIN HEFFERNAN – INCUMBENT - COUNCILMEMBER
Resident of Hagerstown since 2005. Own and manage an FAA Certified Repair Station at the Hagerstown Regional Airport, specializing in aircraft restoration, structural repair and painting. Intimately familiar with the complexities facing small and medium sized business owners, and the overwhelming need to reduce excessive bureaucracy and inconsistent interpretation / application of rules that hinder progress, create unnecessary delays and increase operating costs and overhead for business owners. Appointed to the Hagerstown City Council in January 2018 - focused on promoting business and employment growth. Serve on the Board of Directors of the Hagerstown / Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization, and serve as a member of the Washington County Community Coalition. Veteran, U.S. Army’s Rapid Deployment Force, and graduate of Vanderbilt University – BA and MBA.
TEKESHA A. MARTINEZ
For business owners, it’s all about service to the local community, and it’s the same for me. Whether it is an event, fundraiser or gathering, I show up and I want to serve—serving the community is a common denominator that business owners and I share. For this reason, I understand how vital small businesses are to Hagerstown, and I am committed to continuing to ensure that our small businesses get what they need out of the local government. Every candidate will agree on the importance of businesses, but my primary focus is first and foremost on nurturing our local businesses in order to build a thriving community in Hagerstown.

SHELLEY MCINTIRE – INCUMBENT - COUNCILMEMBER
My experience as a current city councilwoman has made me familiar with the issues in our City. I understand, and know how to manage, the obstacles that can get in our way. As a small business owner, I am a strong strategic planner & have experience managing budgets, thinking creatively & I know the importance of working together to achieve maximum success. My priority remains our community’s social issues & finding realistic solutions to address them. I will continue to collaborate with multiple agencies & community-based organizations to improve neighborhood safety, reduce crime & provide more opportunities for our youth. A community that is socially healthy attracts new business & provides a fertile environment for our existing businesses to grow.

PENNY M. NIGH
I believe that the city should be very supportive of the current businesses and owners. The Department of Community and Economic Development needs to continue and even become more aggressive at looking “outside the box” drawing new ideas and businesses to our city and to provide assistance to the current city businesses. My previous record reflects my support for this issue and this matter is certainly something I plan to continue as a councilperson.
**PETER E. PERINI, SR.**

A business owner who actually lives in the city limits of Hagerstown should vote for Peter E. Perini, Sr. for City Council because he will work hard to bring more business, more customers and more commerce to Hagerstown. By enhancing economic development, Mr. Perini will raise the tide of businesses including retail, commercial and hospitality. His vision is to raise awareness, value, and benefit of being located in Hagerstown. He is a business owner who has run both large and small companies; making payroll, meeting budgets. As a Chamber member for almost 30 years, Mr. Perini has worked on many tasks for the betterment of our community. He believes that Hagerstown has so much potential, and that we must work hard to unlock that potential.

**DR. BRENDA J. THIAM**

Hagerstown business owners understand that a city government can help or a hinder a business's bottom line. Hagerstown needs some new ideas if we're going to start solving the same old problems that we've faced for over the past 20 years. Business owners understand that we need a voice on the City Council that isn't afraid to ask the right economic questions. Local entrepreneurs know that we need an attentive voice that's determined to alter the tax and spend status quo that has crippled our city’s AAA credit score. Business owners know that Hagerstown needs a leader who wants to do the right thing for all the right reasons. A vote for Brenda Thiam is a results driven vote for businesses.
Washington County Board of Education
(Candidates appear in alphabetical order by last name and election is non-partisan)

PIETER BICKFORD - INCUMBENT
I am employed by a small business in downtown Hagerstown, am actively involved in the Washington County community, and was raised in the Washington County school system (Winter Street, Western Heights, North High). During my first term on the Board of Education, we expanded vocational and STEM programs, providing valuable job-ready skills to your future workers. We have led the way in Maryland by expanding pre-k to all elementary schools, providing iPads and laptops to every student, and offering the state’s highest starting salary for teachers. I continue to believe that a strong, well-managed school system is key to a healthy economy and a happy workforce.

WILLIAM “BILL” DONAHUE
I am running for the Board of Education because we need 21st century schools that better meet the needs of students, families, and businesses/employers. As a retired teacher who co-owns a small business, I have firsthand insights into the improvements and innovations needed, and I also understand education as a business with fiscal responsibilities. Schools educate future employees in communication, mathematics, and critical thinking skills necessary for business operations, and current students are consumers – both today and tomorrow. We need them to become taxpayers with the capital to participate in the local economy in thousands of ways. We need BOE members with experience and vision to make this happen. I have the vision, and I am asking for your vote and support.

BENJAMIN FORREST
If elected, I plan to work closely with the Washington County business community to ensure that our vocational, technical, skills, and certificate programs, which prepare students with essential skills to enter the workforce, meet the strategic and standing needs of our community, including increasing opportunities for students in the county to get out and work with local businesses and employers in our county. This will allow these students to get hands-on experience that will prepare them for these jobs after graduation while also supplementing the workforce of our local businesses and giving them the opportunity to guide, mentor, train, and work with new potential employees. It is essential to keep these relationships as strong as possible for a stronger Washington County Public Schools.
LADETRA ROBINSON
You should vote for me because I have the passion to see all Washington County students have the best education and upon graduation have the confidence to succeed in whatever road they follow.

I am a mother, a mentor, an educator, a business owner myself, and I have a strong passion for our youth. I have held positions on boards throughout Washington County focusing on our youth. I have excellent leadership and collaborative skills, which will help in working toward the success of our students, staff, parents and our business community. I have a strong desire to work toward a stronger relationship between Washington County Public school and the public we serve.

STAN STOUFFER – INCUMBENT – VICE PRESIDENT
I have served as a board member and its vice president for four years. As an experienced forty-two year educator, I have served diligently on the WCBOE Finance, Facilities, and Policy committees, the MABE Legislative Committee, and as the board representative at the UIP meetings. I played an instrumental role in appointing Dr. Michael as superintendent. My colleagues and I directed Dr. Michael to conduct a complete budget review to insure budget integrity. I am very knowledgeable about employer/employee relations. Realizing that we live in a dynamic world, I am a strong proponent of curricula to prepare students from Pre-K through twelfth grade. I proudly served my country in Vietnam and hold the Purple Heart and Army Combat Infantryman Badge.

MELISSA A. WILLIAMS – INCUMBENT - PRESIDENT
I believe our county’s economic health depends upon quality jobs and quality employees. I believe those are only attained when the citizens and our leaders value education enough to support quality schools. During my tenure as President of the Board of Education we have presented conservative needs-based funding requests which have not been fully funded. The BOE has developed and presented cost-saving capital plans which have been ignored at the cost of losing millions in state dollars. In spite of this, we have made tremendous strides but we cannot continue, and the business climate will not thrive, with only the minimum local funding required by state law. I believe the support of business owners is essential to changing this attitude toward local funding.
DR. APRIL A. ZENTMEYER

Businesses are key to building safe and nurturing communities that include our schools. One of my core values is to buy locally, supporting local businesses. Washington County is an incredibly generous community, boasting successful alumni who give time, talent, and financial support to our schools. Capitalizing on this network to promote partnerships can prepare students for the world of work. I support expanding community outreach to enhance and grow internships, shadowing programs, and vocational opportunities. Community support via outsourcing services is an important consideration when services are performed by stakeholders in the community with a vested interest in our schools. Additionally, I graduated from WCPS and have served as both a teacher and administrator here. I have vested interest in educating the next generation.