

QUESTIONS FROM LEEDS MAGAZINE:

Submitted by Charlotte Earnest, District 4

1. What is your position on an elected school board?

I personally favor an elected school board. Not only does it take the power away from the City Council, but gives it to the constituents (parents) who have the most vested interest in our schools. If the City Council appoints the school board, it turns more political. I truly believe interested parents can thoroughly investigate the qualifications of those interested in serving the schools decision making body and select a diverse group of independent decisions makers.

2. How are you going to pay for extra and needed city employees?

Understandably, I am NOT going to pay for extra and needed city employees. The citizens and businesses control much of the city's budget. Therefore and foremost we need to vigorously pursue other businesses and industry to the area. The intelligent negotiation with additional businesses will add needed revenue to increase services to our city. As I move through this process, I am learning there are many grant sources to city services. Tight budgeting of our available funds should also allow us to begin an employee analysis/financial analysis based on our cities population. If we grow business, and citizens patronage those businesses or those businesses or industry employee local people, we can hopefully see the increase in needed city employees and services.

3. What are your plans for our parks and youth sports?

I have just begun my investigation into park and recreation facilities of other municipalities. This is a tremendous need for Leeds that I have truly realized as my grandson played in the World Series in Gardendale and Fultondale. Leeds has in recent years neglected youth sports . Potential residents recognize this. I have not given you a specific answer, because I don't have the complete answer at this time. However, let me remind the citizen's that the VOLUNTEER force in this arena can make or break it's success regardless of how much money we can funnel towards it.

4. How will you address Leeds Magazine's request to be more open with government?

As a Councilor, I will request and support at least a weekly press conference with the media by the Mayor. If a conference is impossible, a press release concerning any city business happening that week should be prepared. I will encourage council packages to be shared with the media before council meetings unless attorney client information is included. Only that portion would be removed from the packet. As far as the law allows, I will be totally transparent as an elected official.

5. How will you get control over outside fees from lawyers, experts and consultants?

First, whatever issue is being addressed, I will research what are usual and customary fees. I will never vote to employ a lawyer, expert or consultant without a **written contract**. I will recommend that the full council be involved in negotiating any contract concerning the above. Fees should be stated before business is to be accomplished and the Mayor signing any document. There will be no "good old boy" mentality in my service to Leeds.

6. What is your position on the current fallout with the Cooperative District Board members?

The mistrust among the members grieves me. In a time when Leeds was critically in need of financial help and sought that help, Moody and St. Clair County bailed us out. Now we seem to have become a me, me, me group. Why can't fellow governments who are so attached not want the best for all concerned. The Cooperative District could become one of the most economically developed areas in the state. Badly written contracts are again the culprit, plus conflicting interests of some board members. We can make this a good thing, but not with an "all for me" mentality.

7. What is your plan to help revitalize down town Leeds?

Until the citizens of Leeds have more voice in what happens in downtown Leeds, a complete revitalization will be improbable. I would love to see a quaint, yet up to date downtown Leeds. Unless some present building owners accept pride in downtown, this will be an uphill battle. Economic development or the improvement of business areas along Hwy. 78 will be a major step in encouraging travelers to move farther into town than the Bass Pro Shop or Grand River Project. We

need to consider a complete overlay of what it could look like, examine the sources of revenue and move forward with fiscal responsibility.

8. What are your plans to bring medium to large business to Leeds other than retail?

I believe Leeds needs a full time employee and assistant dedicated totally to Economic Development. A local rubber stamp authority cannot move Leeds to adequate growth. Only with the presence of daily recruiting can the city support the debt on the schools, Grand River, etc. This person should not be a present or former resident of Leeds but a person totally dedicated to the interest of the city, not families, other businesses, etc. Politics should be removed from the function except when it requires action to move forward by the City Council .

9. How will you address the lack of working animal control with numerous stray animals abound?

With my minimal knowledge of this area, I believe we have very few choices of animal control agencies. We have a contract with one for a minimal number of days per month. We would have to expend more money to increase animal control. I will promise to review this problem.

10. What scrutiny do you place on City Board applicants and nominees?

I am beginning a complete review of the boards, their usefulness, applicant processes, etc. I believe no one should serve on two boards. I also believe a person should be qualified for the board they are serving. Additionally, term limits should be required..More citizens should have the opportunity to serve the city where they have expertise. As stated, I am reviewing this before I take office.