

Response to survey
By: Solomon Okhifoh

1. Will you oppose privatization of municipal services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

Ans. As a graduate of public administration, I am acquainted with the fact that providing value to citizens should be the focus of municipal government. There are certain services that the government can provide more effectively and there are those that the private sector has proven they excel at. All services need to be critically looked at and the best and most effective means should be adopted. I am a municipal employee myself, but I want what is best for the citizens.

2. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the municipality employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

Ans. Yes to employing staff with living wages, full-time hours, and job security. But as someone who had studies in human resource management, collective bargaining units are a drag on any organization, unless where such bargaining units have proven that their mission is to further the objectives of the organization with their collective bargaining.

3. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against municipal staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

Ans. With the provisions of the constitution, municipalities are basically at the mercy of provincial government. Provincial government have the power to dictate what happens at the municipal level, including such things as forced amalgamations. As a municipal employee, I will oppose such moves, but I am not sure how far we can go because the province has the backing of the constitution.

4. How do you propose your municipality deal with funding shortfalls, cuts, and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments? Do you favour spending cuts over tax increases?

Ans. I believe that if we are fiscally responsible, we can plan for funding shortfalls. Like every household operate on a budget and anticipate what to do when income level falls, municipalities should not be caught napping when such happens. They should have reserves that need to be turned to during these times of economic predicament and not resort to cutting programs, which will result in job losses. Both spending cuts and tax increases are a menace, but the lesser evil will be tax increase because it is distributed across many citizens instead of a few families going hungry or losing their homes, because their programs were cut, and they no longer have a job.

5. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine "passports", and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your municipality?

Ans. I believe we need to keep our communities safe and healthy but such measures as mask mandates and vaccine passports are infringement on the rights and freedom of citizens. Why should people who are already vaccinated be afraid of unvaccinated since

they have acquired the immunity. Those who refuse to vaccinate are aware of the risk they expose themselves to and as such, they should be left to their own fate. Everyone has a choice to make and the constitution guarantee citizens the rights to those choices. Conversely, it is public knowledge that even vaccinated individuals have a potential to spread the virus as well. So, what difference does it make in terms of spreading the virus whether you are vaccinated or not? My best advice would be for everyone to practice effective hygiene and keep a safe distance. Carry hand sanitizer and use it often.

6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares?

Ans. I do not believe in communism and as such to expect free things from the government is impracticable. Besides, many municipal governments are already living on borrowed money. Where will they have the funds to support the transit system if fares are eliminated. For those who cannot afford it, I can make exemption, as it is already the case in many municipalities. To expect a blanket elimination of fees and fares and expect the government to provide other essential services is a mirage.