



**Q and A with Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin
Following LWVGB public meeting at
Beloved Community Church,
May 17, 2018**

On May 17, 2018, Birmingham, AL Mayor Randall Woodfin addressed members of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham and the public at Beloved Community Church (located in the Avondale neighborhood). At the conclusion of his presentation, the mayor answered audience questions. The event was live-streamed on Facebook @LWVGB, and the captured video is [posted here](#). Because there were more questions than time would allow, Mayor Woodfin agreed to answer other submitted questions at a later time. Following are the submitted questions and Mayor Woodfin's responses received Aug. 21, 2018 via email from Mr. Edward Bowser, a member of Mayor Woodfin's public information team. The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham thanks Mayor Woodfin for speaking to our members and the public and for answering all questions.

1. Please talk about your experience with your first budget--what you are most pleased about and what you are not?

Passing a budget means you have to compromise. You have to communicate. You have to negotiate. I think we have been successful in doing that since the month of May. So, to be able to pass a budget on time and prior to July 1, I want to send a shout out, kudos and a thank you to ... the councilors. I would like to thank the council for working with me to create a budget dedicated to building a better Birmingham.

This is the first time the budget has been approved before the start of a new fiscal year since 2014 and only the fourth time since 2006.

A lot of this budget reflects our No. 1 priority and that is neighborhood revitalization. There is more money for weed abatement and demolition as far as putting money on the ground in neighborhoods,

Highlights of the budget include:

- 1% Cost of Living Adjustment for all city employees
- Longevity pay for city employees
- Neighborhood Association allocations (\$2,000 per Neighborhood Association)
- Weed Abatement – \$1.2 million
- Demolition – \$2 million

- Community Development Block Grant – \$8.3 million
- Transit – \$10 million
- Birmingham City Schools – \$3 million

The budget includes the city's annual \$3 million commitment to support the renovation and expansion of the BJCC. Projected revenue from the expansion and construction of a multi-purpose, open air stadium will create a neighborhood revitalization fund. The budget also includes creation of a deferred maintenance plan for city equipment and a \$2.9 million increase in the city's contribution to the employee pension plan.

2. What is your plan to end homelessness in Birmingham?

It is a challenge that the city has been focused on resolving. First, we have established a team to workshop this issue over the summer. This group continues to assess needs, identify opportunities and cultivate partnerships.

Since arriving at City Hall in November, we have continued discussions with federal, state and non-profit entities to determine the best ways to share resources and strategies.

Please understand homelessness is a product of multiple issues: poverty, disparity, mental health and unemployment. There is not one single solution. We must address each issue in order to establish a multi-pronged approach to ending the problem.

3. What are your plans for West End?

Neighborhood revitalization is the focus through our budget, our strategic planning and the actual work taking place each day in our 99 neighborhoods and 23 communities.

The overwhelming request I hear from across the city is the removal of blight, the development of affordable housing and a commitment of keeping neighborhood streets clean through the pickup of brush and trash.

Combined with public safety, these are the basic functions we must provide to West End and each community in the city.

We are intentionally gathering information from residents in each community to identify the best way to address their needs.

4. Do you have any plans to remove/clean up clutter in downtown around the post office and connecting streets? The first impression for tourists are of freeways, tracks, and unsanitary environment.

The removal of trash and blight has been a huge priority for our administration. This week, we announced a new brush and trash pickup schedule targeting bulk items, limbs, furniture and brush. Garbage pick-up will not be affected by this schedule. It's part of our priority to promote a cleaner, healthier neighborhood that our residents can be proud to live in.

We have heard the complaints about the current 311 system and are working to improve the service for all of our residents.

As far cleaning up clutter, work strategies and schedules have been adapted to cover more streets in a shorter time period with a quicker return. Instead of moving from neighborhood to neighborhood, the Department of Public Works has adapted four zones with dedicated work teams for each zone.

5. What opportunities do you see for working in collaboration with neighboring cities to maximize resources and address common problems and concerns?

Collaboration is a key component of future growth. We've partnered with Shipt, a \$550 million tech firm and home-grown Birmingham business, to expand its Alabama operations by hiring more than 800 workers in Birmingham.

Our 100 Homes, 100 Days project, which aims to renovate owner-occupied structures in Birmingham, will be fueled by our Neighborhood Revitalization Fund - \$1 million from Shipt and \$600,000 from DC Blox, an Atlanta-based data center that will be opening a site in Titusville.

All of these efforts – from new employment opportunities to removal of blight – are fueled by collaboration. It's an example of the strength we have when we work toward a common goal.