



Edwardsville | Glen Carbon
Chamber of Commerce

POLICY COUNCIL & BUSINESS BUILDS PAC

CITY OF EDWARDSVILLE: MAYOR CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Art Risavy

Position Sought: Mayor City of Edwardsville

1. Please provide us with some basic information. Tell us briefly about:

- a. Your family: I have been married to my wife Rhonda for 24 years. We have a son, A.J. who is a Senior in college.**
- b. How long you've lived in Edwardsville: 23 Years**
- c. Your education: BA from Boston University in International Relations**
- d. Your employment: Business Owner Swing City Music (2 locations)**

2. Why are you seeking this office? I have always been interested in serving the community. I have been an Alderman for 10 years, and am in my 3rd term. I have had the great opportunity to work for 2 Mayors, 3 City Administrators, many committed department heads and city employees but most of all for the Citizens of Edwardsville. I want to continue to give back to the city that I live in by serving as Mayor.

3. What education, skills and experiences have prepared you to deal with the complex financial, technical and legal issues that regularly come before city council? I have had the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the Administrative and Community Services Committee. I have also been working for our family's business for most of my professional life. Prior to operating Swing City Music, I worked for Magna Bank as a Division Manager where I was responsible for 50 employees and 6 retail locations. These experiences have prepared me to guide the City of Edwardsville through the next 4 years with a strong City Council and the dedicated employees of our great city.

4. What, if anything, should the city of Edwardsville do to retain, expand and attract 'head of household' jobs? We are always looking for ways to bring good jobs to our city. For example the Enterprise Zone is a example of bringing good

paying jobs to our city. World Wide Technology and Amazon have also been expanding their footprint which has added to our job base.

5. Identify and prioritize the three most important 'large capital' projects in the city of Edwardsville. Please justify your prioritization. How do you propose to pay for these projects?

1) Building a new fire station east of Governors Parkway. If approved by council, the 3rd fire station will be similar in scope and size as the SIUE fire station. This will be approximately a 2 acre piece of property and the architectural plans could start if approved by late 2021. We need to purchase land and decide on financing options. The estimated cost is between 4 and 5 million dollars. A portion of this could be funded from the 1/4 percent sales tax and the rest could be financed through a bond. This will better position our city for growth along Goshen Road near the YMCA-Meyer Center and past Governors Parkway towards Hwy 143 and 55.

2) Expansion to the existing water treatment plant consisting of new filters and softeners. In the next 6 to 8 years we will need an expansion to the water treatment facility to ensure it has a capacity of 2 to 3 million gallons. Plant 1 is old and aging and parts of the plant date back to the early 1900s. The cost of the expansion will be between 4 and 5 million dollars. We recently raised water rates in order to cover the cost of water and to prepare for the improvements to our plants. We are trying to be smart and prepare now for infrastructure needs coming in the future.

3) Parking needs to be more attainable for our residents and those who work downtown. We are currently looking at the feasibility of a parking garage. We are exploring different avenues for financing either through a public or private partnership. There are funds available from a TIF but it is too early to speculate a funding mechanism.

6. What are your thoughts on city finances?

a. Are there opportunities to cut expenses? Yes.

Specifically, where are those opportunities? Every year we meet with our department heads and have them determine a priority list of needs. We have limited funds and many needs so each department has to budget their most important needs year to year. I have been impressed how our department heads work together to meet the needs of our city. It is a give and take and in my experience staff always works together within the revenue we have to make the right decisions for our citizens.

b. Is there a need for new or additional revenue? Yes.

Specifically, where would it come from? Most recently we imposed a 1 percent food and beverage tax. This tax is generated from the restaurants and bars. The proceeds are to be used on capital equipment and infrastructure.

c. Are there areas where spending needs to be increased? Yes.

Specifically, where does spending need to increase? The Police Department because of the criminal justice reform legislation bill HB3653.

Specifically, where would the money come from? It could come from the 1% Food and Beverage Tax.

7. What do you believe is the role of a city council member in the city administrator form of government? The role of a city council member is to represent the residents of their Ward to the best of their ability.

8. Governor J.B. Pritzker recently signed into law HB 3653. How do you recommend the city prepare for the unfunded financial burden when this law goes into effect? Over the past few years the city updated the in car video systems using grant opportunities for body worn cameras. Expanding video storage, purchasing redaction software required to address FOIA requests, and adding personnel to do the redaction is a bigger challenge. This expense comes directly from HB 3653. We are hopeful a state agency will coordinate video storage and address redaction issues. This could lead to economies of scale, allowing participating agencies to benefit from a large contract for cloud data storage and spread this cost among many users. We are also hoping that grants become available to off-set these cost if not we will have to cut our budget in other areas to meet the mandated requirements from the State.

9. If you're the incumbent, what have been your significant accomplishments during your term? If you're the challenger, what do you believe have been the significant disappointments of the incumbents, and how would your term in office be different? I have served with Mayor Patton for 8 Years. I personally feel he has done a tremendous job in leading the City of Edwardsville. We have seen positive growth under his leadership and vision with the support of the council. We have seen new parks, businesses, residential developments and a new public safety facility building. I can tell you that I have been very impressed with his leadership and his ability to navigate through large projects. I have not been disappointed but impressed with his term as Mayor.

10. Will you commit to not raising the city's property tax levy? Since I have been Alderman we have not raised property taxes in the last 10 years. To be fair and transparent we have found other revenue sources such as the 1 percent food and beverage tax, hotel/motel tax, and the 1/4 cent sales tax increase. I will commit to do the best I can to not raise our property tax.

11. Glen Carbon has placed a moratorium on collection of school district impact fees. Are you willing to again consider an impact fee moratorium? Yes, I am willing to look at the impact fee. I feel it puts our developers at an unfair advantage.

12. If elected, what would be your top three priorities? 1st and foremost to watch our bottom line, 2nd continue to improve our aging roads, streets, and sidewalks, 3rd I would encourage people to shop local and support everything in Edwardsville. Support - our restaurants, bars, and retail, and keep your dollars local.

13. At the end of your term in office, how will you know if you've been successful? I want Edwardsville to be the best place to live in Illinois. If I can look back and see increased residential growth, commercial development that fits the aesthetics of our city, parks that meet the needs of our residents, and roads, streets and sidewalks that are in good shape. I feel I would have done a good job.

14. Are there any changes you would like to see regarding:

a. how city council functions?

I would suggest working out the details of proposals before something goes to council for a vote.

b. how committees function?

Committees should iron out all the details in committee before council. Council members need to be transparent on where they stand without changing their mind unless it is absolutely necessary. People like to know where you stand.

c. how departments function?

No changes at this time. We have great department heads and committed city employees.