

Democracy 2019: Godfrey Mayoral Endorsements and an Opposing Response

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY – Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick announced his “strong support” for three of the six candidates running for village trustee in the April 2, 2019 election.

Of the six candidates: Ben Allen, Virginia Woulfe-Beile, Dr. Richard Jones, Jerome Jacobs, Richard Springman III, and Karen McAtee, McCormick said he strongly supports McAtee, Dr. Jones, and Allen. He voiced his support in a release sent to local media with the title “Letter to the Editor.” Of the three, two, Allen and McAtee, are incumbents. McAtee even serves as McCormick's Mayor Pro Tem. In a recent forum for all six candidates, both Dr. Jones and Allen said Godfrey did not have any major problems, unlike many of its neighboring municipalities struggling with pension debt. McAtee was unable to attend the forum, due to an eye injury. That forum can be seen in its entirety below. As for Mayor McCormick's endorsements, he gave the following reasons for each candidate:

“Karen McAtee, who has served the village diligently over the past four years and has always made her decisions based on what is best for the 'whole village,' not special interests,” he wrote. “Karen's vast experience in the banking industry has brought tremendous help to the village in supporting our own human resource operation. Her ingenuity and dedication have saved the taxpayers lots of money.

“Dr. Richard Jones, who is one of the smartest individuals I have ever met. His reason for running is his deep love for the community he has lived in (and made his living in) throughout his life,” Mayor McCormick said. “As both a veteran and someone whose lifetime has been vested in our community, he will bring so much knowledge to the board in many varied ways.

“Ben Allen, he is a visionary with both a legal and strong business background. When he agreed to finish Trustee Twirp Williams's term and run this spring, I was so elated, because he brings so much to the table. He is the epitome of wisdom and embodies the perfect example of what a good 'steward of the community' should be.”

Allen was appointed to finish Trustee Williams's term following his tragic murder in 2018.

“These candidates are running for the right reason, the betterment of Godfrey with no special agenda other than keeping Godfrey going in the right direction, keeping taxes low, encouraging development and promoting quality, efficiency, and transparency within local government,” McCormick said at the end of the release.

In a release sent to Riverbender.com by Godfrey resident, Lynne Burnett, she disputed Mayor McCormick's assertion the candidates he supports are not invested in special interests. As an admitted supporter of Woulfe-Beile, who is publicly against the Lars

Hoffman extension in the village, as well as Springman, Burnett said Allen will benefit most if elected.

“Mr. Allen will benefit most if elected, since he and his family have multiple business interests in Grafton, including the Loading Dock,” she said in a written response to Mayor McCormick's endorsements. “He will certainly support the Lars Hoffman extension, because it would connect 255 with the River Road and straight into Grafton, thus steering consumers and visitors away from Godfrey businesses. Google his name along with Grafton. You'll be able to read all about his business enterprises – not in Godfrey, not even in Madison County.”

As for Dr. Jones, Burnett said he does not know the Village of Godfrey's needs, despite working there and living there for most of his professional life.

“When asked about issues facing Godfrey, Mr. Jones responded, 'I don't know that Godfrey has any big, major problems,’” she said. “Residents affected by ineffective storm water handling, every time it rains, don't agree. Flooded streets, basements and cars are a big issue. So are crumbling streets and sidewalks. At the candidate forum, he didn't voice any kind of a platform. Mr. Jones doesn't have a vision for Godfrey – he's just a friend of the Mayor.”

She continued with her support for Woulfe-Beile and Springman.

“Godfrey is a large landmass, and Ms. Woulfe-Beile's foresight and planning experience considers our infrastructure and services. Her vision for Godfrey reflects how sprawl stresses emergency responders; our firefighters are already underfunded. Mr. Springman got down to the nuts and bolts of Godfrey,” Burnett continued. “His report that only 17 percent of Godfrey's roads are in good condition is shameful. He knows that the infrastructure is already in trouble and has the experience to tackle these problems.”

More information can be found by watching the video of the forum. A candidate profile on Woulfe-Beile is [available here](#), and Allen and McAtee are scheduled to be featured on Riverbender.com by the end of this week. Any other candidates running in local elections are encouraged to call Reporter Cory Davenport at (618) 419-3046.