



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH MAYOR-PRESIDENT

### DISASTER RECOVERY RESPONSE

**How will you assist in the extensive recovery efforts in response to the recent flooding in Baton Rouge and its surrounding areas?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

In the short term, my campaign team and I have been out in the communities volunteering and offering assistance, access to information and basic supplies. But in the long term and as Mayor our parish will need a leader who can work with every agency, both federal, state and local, to marshal the necessary resources to rebuild and recover. As a member of Governor John Bel Edwards executive transition team, I have a very good working relationship with him and his teams that will help our parish receive the resources we need to rebuild. I will work with Congressman Garret Graves and Congressman Cedric Richmond and their teams and especially Congressman Richmond as he has personally experienced a disaster of this type. It is important to learn from past disasters and talk to the people who have led past efforts to rebuild entire communities and that's what I will do as Mayor. I will work to make sure any CDBG money is administered and controlled at the local level and I've already been meeting with state/federal officials to demand local small businesses and workers are a key part of rebuilding our parish and it's economy.

#### **Mack "Bodi" White**

My senate district, which includes St. Helena, Livingston, Tangipahoa, and both north and southeast Baton Rouge, took on major damage from the flood. Working with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Louisiana State Police, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, and other local, state, and federal offices, I immediately started to assess the damage and requested for the Governor to request state and federal disaster assistance for affected families.

As Chairman of the Joint Legislative Homeland Security Committee, I have begun to hold meetings with state and federal agencies to gather information and coordinate the legislatures' response for future flood planning assistance.

I will continue to fight for the completion of the Comite River Diversion Canal project as well as the five major named tributaries to the Amite and the Comite that were never funded by the federal government. Last week, I sent a letter to President Obama requesting his aid in more federal funding to complete the project. Working with our congressional leaders, I will follow through on seeing that this project will not go another 10–20 years before we see results.

### GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY AND OVERARCHING ISSUES

**If elected, what top three goals will you lead toward implementation during your term?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

1. Make full recovery from the flood a priority to ensure future economic prosperity for the entire community
2. Ensure respectful and equitable public safety
3. Take immediate and long term action on traffic

#### **Mack "Bodi" White**

1. Working with federal, state, and local authorities to complete recovery for families and businesses impacted by flooding.
2. Working with the school board, business, and community leaders to improve the East Baton Rouge School System across the parish, thus lowering the crime rate.
3. Breaking ground on projects that will provide relief from traffic congestion.

## **What steps will you take to unite the parish and foster inclusiveness and consensus?**

### **Sharon Weston Broome**

My entire career has been centered on bringing people together to find common ground and that won't change as Mayor. Specifically, this means listening, including people from all parts of the parish, from every political side and every economic side to get input on finding common ground and solutions. So, the first step is to increase visibility and transparency of what the Mayor's office does so the citizens know what is planned before it is implemented. This means holding quarterly state of the city updates, community town halls and virtual town halls and involving citizens in the process. I will make sure my administration reflects the diversity of our community. My administration will create a community advisory board to hold meetings to make sure issues that are of immediate concern to citizens are addressed timely by city parish government.

### **Mack "Bodi" White**

I will be a visible Mayor-President in every community in the parish. I want to hold town hall meetings across the parish to address concerns from economic development in north Baton Rouge to education and traffic concerns in the south part of the parish. I want to listen and let constituents know I'm working for them. As well as working with the three mayors of Baker, Zachary and Central to address their concerns in the parish also.

## **How will you support the value of diversity, including non-discrimination policies?**

### **Sharon Weston Broome**

As Mayor, I will constantly emphasize the value of diversity and the positive impact it has on our community.

I plan to assemble a diverse group of community stakeholders to revisit the One Baton Rouge ordinance that was brought before the Metro Council two years ago. My goal is to attempt to build as much consensus around the issue and less contention as I witnessed the last time it was brought before the Metro Council. I also support the present anti discrimination Executive Order for City Parish enacted by Mayor Holden.

Lastly, I will lead from my core values of loving God and loving my neighbor — with no exceptions.

### **Mack "Bodi" White**

I think by fostering an environment of open discussion in our communities and having a leader who will listen is a great starting point, especially after recent events. Discrimination will not be tolerated in my office. There are already tough federal anti-discrimination laws and I will enforce those in my administration.

## **What steps will you take to act regionally and cooperatively with other Capital Area parishes?**

### **Sharon Weston Broome**

Baton Rouge is the economic hub in this region. Because we are the economic leader we must work with other parishes and businesses to create an economic environment that is attractive to new companies. I will personally be involved in existing regional planning and economic structures including the Capital Regional Planning Commission.

Again, my entire career has centered on a working method that tried to foster good communication with every other legislator and state agency I dealt with in order to serve my constituents in the best fashion. As a member of the Senate, there are 38 other leaders in the same room. If you don't get along with or have a desire to work with your fellow contemporaries you won't get anything done for your district. I'll take the same approach with other leaders and work with them so we all can get needed results in traffic and drainage that works for all of us. For example, nearly every parish in our region faces serious traffic issues. Unless we all get together and work on a common solution we won't be able to obtain the necessary help from the federal or state government we need to build the roads we need to alleviate the traffic. One of the first things I'll do is dive into this issue, re-visit the solutions offered and find a way to reduce traffic in the region.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

I think this is a very real concern the next Mayor-President needs to be able to take the lead on. A prosperous Baton Rouge benefits the region. In 2008, I held the first meeting to organize the Capital Region Legislative delegation to strengthen our voting block to over 30 votes. My district covers three of the nine Capital area parishes. I have a strong relationship with the leaders in the area. I think the first steps that I take as mayor will be to work with our neighbors in Ascension and Livingston to develop infrastructure plans that can come to fruition sooner rather than later. We don't have to build new roads to address the traffic coming into Baton Rouge from Livingston and Ascension, we just have to expand existing ones. I think that can help with traffic now.

**Will you pledge to help keep the parish unified and oppose St. George incorporation?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

100% Yes. My record on this is clear in the legislature as I cast vote after vote opposing this type of divisive action. My position is clear as I stand in opposition to this specific action and my leadership will be clear as Mayor to keep the parish unified and moving forward together.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

I don't think it's necessary to create any new cities in East Baton Rouge Parish. I will work to keep the parish unified. I believe that when I'm mayor, St. George supporters will give me an opportunity to address their concerns. They want what we all want, and that's a better education system for everyone.

**Will you actively demand public school excellence and new quality public school choices, including high-performing charters, in underserved areas (North and Southeast EBR)?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes. One the items in my platform is to have a designated cabinet level position to deal with public education in the parish. The Mayor should lead on this issue and I will.

Every parent should have choices in their child's education. Public schools should be the foundation for building a quality first class education for our children. I will propose to include parish superintendents in conversations and collaborate with them consistently. I will also implement a joint public meeting with the Metro Council and the EBR Parish School Board to build synergy and established education as a priority for our community.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, I don't accept the notion that the mayor can't be involved in improving education. I will be very active in an improved school system across the parish. As a state legislator, I consistently voted to support parents' choice to alternatives type of education in K-12 including charter schools, virtual schools and school vouchers for children in failing schools.

**Will you support hiring an experienced, professional manager as CAO to help administer government operations? Describe the ideal candidate.**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes, I will search for the best candidate to help administrate the operations of the office. The ideal candidate would have political skills and experience — preferably working in an executive position in a Mayor's office before or in a cabinet level position and a working knowledge of public works operations, transportation and/or public safety. The ideal candidate could also have experience in the private sector to balance my experience in public sector but this is a critical position to the operation of the city-parish and I'll conduct a thorough and comprehensive search to find the right person to work with me to lead this parish forward.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes. The most important qualification would be experience in public administration in a parish or city-government for a large metropolitan area like East Baton Rouge. If we want to continue to move East Baton Rouge forward, experience with infrastructure and engineering projects are needed. Other qualifications preferred would include a Masters degree in Public Administration, proven experience in improving departments through streamlining and efficient managing, business friendly, and implementing innovative programs while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

### **Will you institute effective community policing and recruitment and training of officers? How and why?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

When I was on the Council in the late 80’s, I brought Chief Ruben Greenberg from Charleston South Carolina to Baton Rouge to explain community policing to our council and administration. I’ve been a long time supporter of this method of public safety and I will demand the BRPD institute more community policing as Mayor.

But, in order to do this effectively we must recruit new officers who reflect the community. We have been under a Consent Decree for too long and the BRPD has to do a better job in meeting the requirements and getting us out from under the decree. That means better recruitment of African American and Hispanic officers and paying them more. This is all intertwined together. There are incentives we can offer new recruits like tax breaks on property taxes to lure people to Baton Rouge with an economic incentive and keep new officers in Baton Rouge. I will take a comprehensive approach to solving this problem but it must be addressed immediately.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, right now nearly half of the officers live outside of East Baton Rouge because of factors such as failing schools and high cost of living. I want to provide a living wage for officers above the current \$32,000 where their pay structure will be close to the East Baton Rouge Sheriff’s Office and the Louisiana State Police, which would allow us to compete with the same pool of applicants. I will also promote mixed income communities where families of a median income will be able to afford housing in communities with good public schools.

### **Will you advocate for sentencing reforms to address the incarceration rate, and work toward training opportunities for those leaving incarceration? How and why?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

I’ve supported sentencing reforms as a member of the legislature and my record on support for additional money for job training programs is very long and strong. Of course we need to reform some sentencing guidelines because we incarcerate too many of our young people — specifically African American youth. We cannot grow as a community if we continue to lock up the future of one community for small crimes without offering them a way out when they get out of jail. The Mayor’s office should take a greater role in fostering public-private partnerships that include job training not just for those who have been in jail but before they get into trouble to give this segment of our community a future, a skill and a purpose.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, as a state senator I saw the problem of overcrowding and mass incarceration rates in our jails and I supported legislation for marijuana sentencing reforms. Right now the Department of Corrections is required to provide training for incarcerated individuals and the Louisiana Workforce Commission administers a work release program to help transition inmates into the workforce upon release. I’m very interested in continuing to advocate these programs and working with businesses to participate in the program. These programs help to break the cycle of repeat offenders and can be a step towards finding permanent jobs to rise above poverty.

**Will you prioritize and fully fund the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) program? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

I've met with District Attorney Hillar Moore and his team and assured him of my support of BRAVE and my support of making sure his office has the money it needs to operate. Additionally, I'll make certain the BRPD gives its full cooperation to the BRAVE program moving forward.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, I fully support the BRAVE program. Programs like BRAVE provide a blueprint to how I believe we should attack crime. Through cooperation between multiple law enforcement agencies and community involvement, targeting high crime areas has been an effective program. I don't see how we can't find more money to keep it going. Right now in a budget of almost \$900 million, I plan on making it a priority to find funding in the existing budget for continuing funding.

**Will you promote continued innovative, data-driven policing strategies and collaboration among area law enforcement and criminal justice officials? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Again, I've met with DA Moore and with Sheriff Gautreaux and assured them my Mayor's office will work as partners with their offices to tackle crime and make the parish safer. The DA's office is breaking new ground with the Crime Strategies Unit that is being "smart on crime" using data to predict where the next crime is going to happen and who is going to most likely to commit that crime. I understand that simply putting more police officers on the street is not smart crime fighting and that's why I support BRAVE and the Crime Strategies Unit. I'll make sure the DA has the necessary resources from the City Parish budget to keep working on the cutting edge to prevent crime in EBR.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, in 2010 I passed legislation to create parish advisory committees on emergency preparedness that reported to GOHSEP so there would be more cooperation between parishes and the state in times of an emergency. So I fully believe in working together to solve problems. The Crime Strategy Unit and BRAVE will continue under my administration.

**Will you implement "broken windows" strategies aligning agencies with community policing programs? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

There are a lot of variations of what "broken windows" strategy means to different people so I'm not going to go on record and say I will "implement broken windows" strategy. What I will support — as I have said to both DA Moore and Sheriff Gautreaux — is that I know the city-parish and BRPD can be better partners with both their agencies and work more closely together. But, that leadership comes from the top and I will lead us to a more cooperative effort that will absolutely include more community policing programs.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, working together with the Chief of Police, we will work with the community on a regular basis to respond to quality of life issues. For "broken windows" policing to be effective, we need to build trust on both sides. Any minor issue that we can address early with delinquent juveniles or minor offenders prevents major crimes late by those same individuals.

**Will you support early-intervention programs like the Truancy Center to address social issues among young people that may lead to criminal activity? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

My platform includes additional support from city parish for the Truancy Center in terms of financial resources and adding more Truancy officers to address the problem. Right now we don't have the officers needed to effectively manage truancy in the parish. Secondly, I've proposed starting a Truancy Court that is not punitive but holds parents accountable for kids that are habitually truant.

The DA will fine parents a small fine or they can enter a period where the misdemeanor charges are dropped if their child attends school. But it is also an opportunity to get to the root of the problem so that when this Court is held, there are representatives of city parish and state agencies in attendance to address counseling, housing, transportation or mental illness and health care. The goal is not to punish anyone but to address the problem some kids are facing at home and get them help so they attend school.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, programs like the Family and Youth Services Center need the support of the community and the Mayor-President. If we want to get serious about early intervention, early childhood education, and workforce training for our at-risk children, we need to have collaboration between agencies and work together to support programs like TASK and the Reading Recovery program.

**Are there any other policies you intend to enact under this area?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack "Bodi" White**

I'd like to get a head start with our inmates to create a program similar to Sheriff Mike Cazes's transitional work program.

## **EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**

**Will you conduct regular and frequent meetings with parish school superintendents and school board members?**

**How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

As stated in my platform, I intend to elevate to a cabinet level position a person whose sole responsibility is to deal with education issues in the parish. This includes making sure all school superintendents are including in policy discussions on issues that affect our school age children.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, I have a good relationship with Warren Drake. I plan on working with him, school board members, teachers, parents and business and community leaders across the parish. I want to lead from day one on education. Working together through educational task forces is the first step towards a better education system in EBR.

**Will you streamline and restructure Workforce Investment Board operations to align training with business needs?**

**How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

The five year plan of the WIB will expire in 2018. I believe proactive steps should be taken to make sure the Board is working at maximum capacity and building strategic relationships to fulfill their mission of “building a stronger demand-driven workforce system that more effectively helps workers by understanding and fulfilling the demands of employers.”

As Mayor-President, I will lead efforts to create jobs in the parish. This not only includes working to recruit new businesses to Baton Rouge but also making sure businesses already operating in the parish have access to highly trained employees and that the City Parish does everything possible to help those businesses expand and create jobs. That includes making sure the Workforce Investment Board is working closely with existing businesses to find out their needs for workers and training for those employees.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

I will continue to improve workforce investment in the parish and support the progress the Workforce Investment Board has made recently in conjunction with the state. I will also continue to encourage industry involvement.

**Will you unify the programs and enrollment of early childhood education, namely Head Start and Early Head Start, with the EBR School System and the community’s childcare providers? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

I am a strong advocate of early childhood development. Part of my platform calls for introducing a new program, “Cradle to K” to start our children on a path to success. As it relates to the unification of programs, the U.S. Department of Health and Humans Services states the most important factors for integration and unification of early childhood programs are:

1. whether existing early childhood education programs are already effective at preparing children for entry into formal schooling
2. whether the current school system has proven transition approaches or methods in place are effective.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

I think it’s something I would look into. I would go to the legislature and the federal government and call to obtain more dollars to put in our early head start to enroll as many 2–3 year olds as possible.

**Are there any other policies you intend to enact under this area?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, I think we need new schools so that every child in our parish has a local option for public education. I want to see early childhood development expanded because every family, irrespective of income, should have a choice among private or public pre-k, Head Start, or child care. Last, I want to see more dual enrollment classes, giving children more access to workplace or college courses.

**TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Will you secure funding for major regional transportation megaprojects? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes. As Mayor, I recognize this is a regional issue not just an EBR issue and thus I’ll work with anyone to secure the cooperation and the dollars we need to finally alleviate the traffic in our region. The recent flood will also create an opportunity for our region to ask for much needed federal dollars to fix existing roads and repair bridges.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, as a state legislator, I’ve been successful in helping to secure over \$500 million in funding for East Baton Rouge transportation and infrastructure projects. I am the most qualified candidate in this race to fight for our share of tax dollars to fix our traffic problems, and on my first days as mayor, you will find me at the state capitol and in Washington D.C. working with state and federal leaders to make sure funding is there to fix our traffic problems.

**Will you extend the Green Light plan to focus on prioritized projects for traffic reduction? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes. My platform is clear on this and I’ve sent a letter to all current participants in the program pledging to support an extension of the program while making sure that each and every part of the parish is benefiting from the improvements.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, it’s the most successful infrastructure program during the Holden administration. By putting a definite timetable in prioritized list of unfinished original Greenlight programs we can extend the program.

**Will you improve Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation planning, funding and results? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

The Capital Region Planning Commission is Baton Rouge’s MPO. It is critical that improvements are made with the MPO so we can effectively address the transportation issues we currently face and to proactively prepare for the transportation future in our city/parish.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, I believe an organized Capital Region Planning Commission working together as one can not only benefit the quality of life and traffic problems in East Baton Rouge, but also the 11 parish region. Communication between elected officials needs to happen more often. Our priorities might be different, but we will work towards a consensus, comprehensive plan to receive necessary federal funding and move quickly on short term transportation projects. East Baton Rouge parish has five positions on the MPO to work towards projects in our area and I can work with officials in surrounding areas to build that consensus needed to get started right away.

**Will you implement Complete Streets policies? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Bike paths and sidewalks need to have a place in planning. I will look for opportunities in new and old infrastructure to implement complete streets. I will work to get federal and state dollars that can be used for programs like this.

**Will you support incentives for more direct flights to and from Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes, we have to recognize that more direct flights mean more traffic at the airport and increasing flights leads to economic expansion and more jobs, which is good for our local economy.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

The incentives program BRAC and the LED put together for Albemarle was well thought out and a great attempt to keep them here in Baton Rouge. I would support incentive packages like that as well as being very active in more funding from grant programs like the Small Community Air Service Development Program to attract more carriers to Baton Rouge. I also believe the biggest incentive we can give these companies is a good public education system for their employees.

**Will you pursue a plan to modernize CATS? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes. I've called on the CATS board to wait until a new Mayor is elected before hiring a new director because the entire CATS program must be re-examined and re-tooled to make the service more efficient throughout the parish. CATS must be modernized and this will be a priority of my administration.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

I think we need to look at other similar size cities in the south and do comparisons with number of riders per day, costs for riders and length of ride. We need to adjust the bus fleet and employees to fit the demand. I'd also look into selling some of the older buses and look into purchasing smaller, electric buses.

**Will you develop rail infrastructure needed for rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes, I support the fast rail between the two cities. However, this must not be placed as a higher priority than getting traffic relief in and around Baton Rouge but without question, this is a program I support and will lobby Congress for the dollars to make this happen.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

While modern rail systems still require a subsidy from state and federal sources, I will work to secure as many state and federal dollars to subsidize that rail while growing the ridership and economic development that will develop along the rail.

**Are there any other policies you intend to enact under this area?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack "Bodi" White**

As we move forward with new mega-projects, the option of tolling new infrastructure and public-private partnerships should always be on the table.

**ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT**

**Will you develop parish economic infrastructure strategy, including an industrial park plan? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack "Bodi" White**

It's essential to designate potential growth areas in the parish for development of light industrial parks, as well continue development and recruitment of heavy industrial sites along the Mississippi River.

**Especially after the tragic events of July, will you elevate BR's external image nationally as a top destination for talent and business? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

One of my strengths is being a good communicator and in fact, my educational and professional background is in public communications and I'll use that experience and my love of Baton Rouge to promote our parish to anyone who takes the time to listen.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, Mayor Holden has done a great job of promoting Baton Rouge and I hope to continue in that aspect. We won't let tragic events define us. There is so much Baton Rouge has left to offer in terms of opportunities for growth. Working with Louisiana Economic Development and Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, I hope we can continue to shine a positive light on Baton Rouge.

**Will you promote economic assets like universities, the Water Campus, the Health District and a new medical school?**

**How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

One of the duties of the Mayor-President, while not spelled out in an oath of office, is to promote the businesses and people of our parish. I will take that responsibility very seriously as Mayor. One thing we cannot do however is to promote one area of the parish over another or at the expense of another. We must look at the parish as a whole and not North, South, black or white. The entire parish cannot move forward if one part of the parish is thriving at an A level but another part is mired at the D level. All parts must be promoted so every citizen can thrive and prosper.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, local universities are some of our biggest assets in the area. East Baton Rouge Parish is home to a flagship university, the biggest minority university in the country, and the biggest and fastest growing community technical college system in the state, which will be opening two new campuses in 2016.

The Water Campus will serve as the hub of water research activity in the state. It will be the premier academic facility for coastal restoration and studies of hydrology in the world. Another asset to the parish is the Pennington Biomedical Research Campus, which conducts research that is promoted all over the world. The Water Campus will draw world-class business and talent to our area and thus it should be promoted as a world class economic asset.

To better promote the Health District, we need to fix the traffic congestion surrounding it with a smart traffic plan to improve traffic flow starting with improved infrastructure from Essen and Bluebonnet to I-10.

**Will you actively engage in and incentivize economic development, including small business growth, entrepreneurship and corporate recruitment? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

See above answer but one way that presented recently to promote local small businesses is to make sure our businesses are a real part of the rebuilding process after the flood. I issued a statement and pledged to work with the Governor and federal authorities to insist local businesses have a place at the table when large rebuilding contracts are being handed out or put up for bid. We cannot just ascetically restore our homes and businesses but we must also economically restore our businesses so everyone can thrive. As Mayor, I'll open parish government contracts up for all and not just a select few.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, I will work with the chamber and the metro council to provide economic incentives on a local level. I will also work with LED to continue financial support to the Tech Park at Bon Carre', and supporting the Louisiana Business and Technical Center, to develop new business opportunities for young entrepreneurs wanting to locate in East Baton Rouge Parish.

**Will you fully fund the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority in support of efforts that eliminate blight, attract more investment, and build stronger neighborhoods? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

As part of my platform, I've put forth a program called "Operation Deconstruction" which is a program designed to eliminate blighted houses in neighborhoods — thus making them safer and stronger. An added bonus to this program is the program would train young people from the neighborhoods and community to tear down the houses and get rid of blighted houses. The program in other cities has also created another industry, which sells the material that can be salvaged from the old homes. This program gets young people working and makes neighborhoods safer.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

Financially supporting the RDA will be essential after current events with the flooding as some areas of East Baton Rouge may not rebuild and leave new sections of blighted houses.

### **Will you support economically competitive reforms to major state tax issues, like unified sales tax collection, ITEP reforms and inventory tax changes? How and why?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

The Governor has made this a key part of his plan to get Louisiana back on a more solid financial foundation and I support those efforts. An examination of return on investment of each of the exemptions should be discussed and local government should have the right to examine these exemptions to see if they are returning on the investment.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

I would support uniformed sales tax collection as long as the state of Louisiana can guarantee a very short turnaround on returning local sales tax to all of our government entities. I think in the upcoming legislative session, there should be attempts to reform the way we tax in Louisiana and make it more uniformed. I think the inventory tax will be phased out, but while doing that, we have to figure an offset for the loss of income for the local entities along the Mississippi River that depend on that income for their operations.

## **IMPROVING PARISH GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

### **Will you propose or support a bond election to address critical services and infrastructure for sewer, drainage, public safety and mental health? How and why?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

Before the flood, this answer may have been different but we are in a new place now and need a lot of additional examination of where our parish budget will be moving forward. With that being said, I support a bond election for a mental health facility and will support that effort should the council present it to me. Of course, the needs prior to the flood for drainage, sewer, etc. are now far greater than they were before and I will want to see how much relief the federal government will provide before I will support any new taxes.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

The sewer usage fee is a critical infrastructure service that needs to be addressed, but after federal mandates are met under the consent decree, there needs to be a study on how much will be needed after that.

Drainage, I am in favor of increasing the DPW’s budget for drainage maintenance work, especially if that work can coincide with future flood protection work funded by the state and federal governments.

I would support fully funding our public safety.

It’s essential we operate a parish-wide mental health center but would prefer that it be done in partnership with a private entity and not solely government-run. Or a public private partnership, as I have devised a program to divert more patients from the ER to Mental Health. As much as 75%-80% of those transports can be mental or substance abuse cases.

### **Will you set and meet approval deadlines for building and business permitting? How and why?**

#### **Sharon Weston Broome**

One thing I hear on the campaign trail is how to make city-parish government more efficient and this is one area where I know we can improve our performance.

### **Mack “Bodi” White**

I plan on appointing a committee made up of architects, engineers, contractors, and fire departments with expertise in permitting. We will update the process to start issuing permits in a timely, responsible manner.

**Will you streamline and modernize government services through greatly expanded online services, open data, creation of a single Chief Technology Officer, and exploration of privatization where appropriate? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

The city-parish has frankly lagged a bit behind other cities of its size when comparing how the city parish utilizes new technology. For example, there are new way to use technology to make traffic lights more efficient and move traffic better but more than that a citizen should be able to do far more business with the city-parish online and I'll work to make that happen as Mayor. Additionally, we as a government entity must make a greater effort to ensure more transparency in parish government by allowing easy access to government contracts, RFPs and job openings. I'm not going to commit to hiring a new position until I'm able to get my hands dirty so to speak and get a better grasp on what may be in the planning stages that needs to be implemented by current staff and agencies.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, programs like Baltimore's CitiStat have been very effective in targeting inefficiencies in city government and saving money. Data driven programs could be used to improve under performing areas of city-parish government. If implemented we should have a CTO lead this program. And I will be open to improving services through privatization if it is an affordable, cost-saving and effective option for East Baton Rouge.

**Are there any other policies you intend to enact under this area?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack "Bodi" White**

During session this year, I passed legislation to divert non-life-threatening illnesses away from emergency rooms and into mental health or urgent care facilities to give patients the help they need. I want to pursue making that pilot program as efficient as possible here in East Baton Rouge by working with the EMT professionals, healthcare providers, and facilities in the area.

## **IMPROVING PARISH PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS, CLEANLINESS AND "QUALITY OF PLACE"**

**Will you establish a robust program for upkeep of public spaces, corridors and gateways? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, see answer to "other policies".

**Will you support further development of signature destination places, like downtown, the riverfront, and other natural assets? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes.

**Mack "Bodi" White**

Yes, we've come a long way to make downtown an attractive place for visitors, but I want to make sure we don't focus exclusively on downtown. The riverfront is ripe for development and we need to take advantage of what it has to offer.

**Will you properly fund the planning department and support passage of a new Unified Development Code with strict implementation of requirements?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Just like any department, I would like to review all staff and departments before committing to funding. If we have a Unified Development Code, we can remove politics from the decision process of zoning. If we were to take the time to develop the code then we will certainly implement it.

**Will you expand code enforcement to reduce blight and require property owners to maintain property? How and why?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

Yes, as Mayor I will make a much more concerted effort to put the power of the administration behind measures to allow us to tear down blighted property using the Operation De-construction program.

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes.

**Are there any other policies you intend to enact under this area?**

**Sharon Weston Broome**

(no response)

**Mack “Bodi” White**

Yes, I want to look into the possibility of enacting Albuquerque’s Mayor Richard Berry’s program called “There’s a Better Way”. The program hires panhandlers and the homeless for day jobs to help clean the city. The program works in conjunction with non-profits to provide a lunch, transportation and shelter for a night. While beautifying the city, the program offers a paycheck instead of a handout to those in needs and has been a pipeline to finding gainful and permanent employment.