

WARD 5: Candidates asked about budgeting background, thoughts on homelessness issue

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limits can vote for anyone who is running for a particular seat. Furthermore, all city voters can vote for candidates in all 12 wards, regardless of where the voter lives.

If there are only two candidates for a seat, there is no vote for that seat in the primary. Rather, the final decision for that seat takes place in November.

However, if there are more than two candidates in a race, then there is a run off in the May primary. Each voter will throw their vote to only one candidate per ward, but the two candidates in each ward who receive the most votes move on to the November ballot.

In preparation for the election, the Commonwealth Journal spoke with all three Ward 5 candidates to help the voters learn more about them. They were each asked the same questions, and their answers will be presented in alphabetical order – Dick's, then Girdler's, then Hislope's.

Who are the candidates?

Like the other three candidates, Dick has lived here the majority of her life and graduated from Somerset High School. In her case, she graduated in 1980.

Dick currently works for the Somerset Independent School District as an administrative assistant in the transportation and special education departments. Before that, she worked at Meece Middle School. She has been with the district for 23 years total.

She has been a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church for 14 years, and in terms of civic organizations, she said she supports Somernites Cruise and the athletic teams for Somerset Independent.

Dick is married to Jeff Dick, and they have one

son, Christopher.

As a child, Girdler attended the Somerset Independent district, graduating from Somerset High School in 1963. He then went to Lake City Junior College on a basketball scholarship for two years before being drafted into the U.S. Marine Corps, serving for two years.

After serving and finishing his degree, Girdler came back to Somerset and was an educator for 27 years, working as both a teacher and a principal.

Girdler is widowed, and has two children, son Bart who recently retired from the Dallas Police Department, and daughter Nichole, who is a neonatal nurse in California.

Hislope has owned several businesses throughout her life, such as a printing company and a temporary employment company, but her name may best be recognized as being part of the family who operated the Morris and Hislope Funeral Home for many years.

She is the daughter of Denver and Jo Ann Hislope, and she graduated from Somerset High School in 1982.

Hislope attends Delmer Nazarene Church and is the pianist there. She currently works part time for Comfort Keepers.

Why do you want to run for city council?

Dick: "I just think we need some different people in there. They've been in there long enough. We need some fresh eyes, fresh opinions. ... I think two terms ought to be enough."

Girdler: "I just like to serve people and help people. I've done that all my life. I try to do what's good for the citizens of Somerset. ... People have been really good to me, and I've tried to help the people. About all my life, I've

been in some kind of service to the public." Hislope: "I've always had an interest in politics, and as I've gotten older it's become more (of an interest). ... I like the energy of the city council. I like the enthusiasm, as to what we can do to help Somerset be the very best that it can. ... I know I'll bring the enthusiasm. I think it's a place where your voice is heard, but you're speaking for every citizen of Somerset."

What would you like to see for Somerset?

Dick noted several things she likes about Somerset, mostly centered on the downtown area. She said she enjoys walking downtown – she prefers walking outside, while her husband will walk inside at the Rocky Hollow Recreation Center – and while walking she enjoys hearing the music come from the speakers.

"I love seeing the downtown grow," she said. "I'd like to see more businesses in town, make it more lively – clothing stores, general restaurants. I like the growth of Somerset on (U.S.) 27. We just need a variety of different stores – bigger stores."

Girdler's focus was also on business, noting that the mayor, city council, Somerset-Pulaski County Economic Development Authority and Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce work closely together to try to get industry and business here.

"I'd like to see us be aggressive like we have been in downtown development and industry," Girdler said. "... It's hard for this community to support a big chain store (like Target or Meijer). You're not going to get them here, because our economy just won't pay for it. I'd just like to keep the small town atmosphere,

where everybody knows their neighbor, hopefully."

Hislope echoed that she enjoys the small town atmosphere in Somerset. "I like that we are big enough to have the Master Musicians Festival and the Somernites Cruise, and we have the lake. I like that," she said. "I like that we retain a small-town feel, which, to me, is a very friendly feel, a welcoming feel."

"... As far as what I would change? I'm just going to tell you the true answer: I don't know. But I know you can always strive to be more. Because a lot of things you don't need to strive to be better for – you are the best of the best – but you can always strive to be 'more,' whether it's more helpful, more courteous, more inviting, (or) more in-tune with the constituents."

Part of the city council's job is to budget the revenues and taxpayers' money that are collected throughout a year. Having a background dealing with numbers can make the job easier. Dick pointed out that she has been a bookkeeper throughout her career. "I'm a bookkeeper for my husband's business – have been for 33 years. And then, I was also a bookkeeper and helped with the budget at Meece Middle School for eight years."

She said she felt that would be good preparation for working with a budget the size of a city's. "That way you know how to diversify where the money goes, who it goes to, and (how to deal with) the expenditures."

Girdler has been assisting the with city's budget the whole time he has been on the council, but had some experience coming into that position.

"I was in (school) administration for nine years, supervising about 60 teachers and a budget when I was principal," he said.

As for the current budget, Girdler said that he was proud of how the city's utilities and infrastructure is run. "I'm really proud of the fact that we've got a good sewer system, sewer department and plant, and a good water department and water plant. ... We're the envy of a lot of people because we have our own sewer and own water and our own (natural) gas (departments)."

Hislope, too, has firsthand knowledge of how to take care of a budget, although she said it's not as large as a city's.

"I have always known from the time I was old enough to know what accounting was – my dad ran the funeral home – I knew about their books. My degree is in business. In my business, I did everything except my own (business) taxes. ... I have the knowledge of how the finances work. I know there will be differences, but I agree with people who say 'You can't spend more than you have.'"

Thoughts on how to deal with the homelessness issue?

Dick responded: "It's a touchy subject. You've got to watch what you do with that, watch how that is approached. Most of them don't want to be helped."

When asked if there is an approach to helping those who are homeless, Dick said, "Just try to talk to them and tell them that there is help out there for them. There are jobs out there if they want to work. But like I said, some of them don't want any help."

Girdler, likewise, was asked about his thoughts on how to help those who are homeless. "That

is a very good question," he said, "and there's no good answer to that question. If you try to help them, they do not want to go by or conform to the rules and regulations that try to help them – the homes they have for them. They come here from out of state, and then if they fail the (recovery) program that they're in, they, for a lack of a better word, get kicked out, then they're just left out on the street."

Girdler noted that the city has been working towards creating laws that would require those who bring someone into the area from out of state to enroll into a recovery center to take them back home should they be removed from those programs. This is one of the ways they are trying to prevent people from being left here without a support system.

Hislope said she wanted to steer people towards the resources that are on hand within the city.

"I firmly believe that – I know we have resources here, quite a few, more than even I know – we should help anyone who wants to be helped. I think the question is, what if a person doesn't want to be helped? And I don't have an answer for that," Hislope said.

She continued: "I also believe that the ones who are truly seeking help, I have no problem with that. But it's very hard when some people have what I call a have a sense of entitlement. Nobody should have a sense of entitlement, I think you should have a sense of loyalty and pride and honor, but some have a sense of entitlement. ... I don't think anybody should be homeless, and it's a problem everywhere."

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FALLEN: Six fallen peace officers are buried in Somerset Cemetery

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November 1, 1929 bootlegging raid on South Maple Street.

- In that raid, Massingale was assisted by then-Ofc. James B. Jasper – who would go on to be elected county sheriff. Sheriff Jasper was killed in the line of duty on July 3, 1952.

- Chief Harold Lewis Catron, Sr. was attacked outside of his home in 1957 and suffered shotgun wounds that ultimately led to his death on September 16, 1964.

- Nearly 40 years later, his son, Sheriff Samuel Wilson Catron was running for re-election when he fatally shot by a sniper as he left a fish fry on April 13, 2002.

In addition to the officers honored who are buried at the Somerset Cemetery, Sheriff Bobby Jones noted that there have been six other PCSO officers who have died in the line of duty: Deputy Sheriff James Marshall Richardson, End of Watch (EOW) Feb. 1, 1988; Deputy Douglas Frank Hutton, EOW Dec. 1, 1961; Special Deputy Ambrous Murphy Johnson, EOW July 27, 1932; Deputy H.M. Holloway, EOW March 12, 1911; Deputy J.T. Lovett, EOW March 12, 1911; and Deputy Andy Downs, EOW July 4, 1907.

All but Richardson were killed due to gunfire, whereas Richardson suffered a heart attack while training.

Sheriff Jones also stated that four Burnside Police Department officers have been killed in the line of duty.

They are Marshal George Prentice Southwood, EOW Sept. 30, 1948; City Marshal Charlie Wright, EOW Nov. 15, 1926; City Marshal Hiram Gregory, EOW April 23, 1926; and City Marshal John C. Coomer; Oct. 1, 1913.

Acting SPD Chief Josh Wesley said of the ceremony that it is important not to forget those who served and gave their life for their community.

"It's easy to think that happened a long time ago, but (Sheriff Jones) and I, and none of us, would be standing here if guys like that hadn't served and built the departments and what we have today."

Jones added, "It's not the end of the watch as much as what they did to serve and protect the communities and their actions."

In particular, Jones noted about the late Sheriff Sam Catron that he had heard the phrase

"married to the job" applied to him.

"He was dedicated to this county. He worked 24/7, so it's an honor to pay tribute to somebody who sacrificed so much for the community."

Nancy Catron, sister of Sam Catron and daughter of Harold Lewis Catron, Sr., was on hand to witness the ceremony.

"I'm glad to be here to honor my father and my brother and all law enforcement officers, and I appreciate and respect law enforcement. It has a vital role to play," Nancy Catron said.

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program— is an intensive one-week summer program that provides valuable leadership skills and exclusive college scholarship opportunities for rising high school juniors in Southern and Eastern Kentucky to build their

skills as the region's next generation of business and entrepreneurial leaders.

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