



Seven Mayoral candidates participate in North High forum, video available on school's Facebook page; controversy emerges over candidates Johnson (excluded) & Awed (absent), & no-show Media; candidates shy away from RCV tickets excluding Mayor Frey

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Minneapolis, MN, 10/21/2021 – North Community High School hosted a Mayoral Forum Tuesday, October 19th, following a City Council forum; both were ably moderated by class President Khadija Ba. Seven Mayoral candidates participated (shown at right). All have been regular participants in multi-candidate events; not surprisingly, by and large no new positions were stated. However, Clint Conner talked extensively of his “extremely alarming” experiences with police ride-alongs; he saw multiple shooting events. Following his recent Star Tribune article bobagain talked of his experiences as a School Bus driver, and his plan for the School Bus Driver crisis, which includes paying students cash (beyond free bus passes) to ride Metro Transit to school. “That prompted a buzz,” bobagain commented – he followed that suggesting by briefly explaining how it could be cost effective. Acknowledging his prospective defeat, bobagain also said he was running for Governor, his focus is changing to that. Multiple candidates took a rare opportunity to challenge Mayor Frey directly on issues – prompting several back-and-forth exchanges.



Candidates (from left): Nate “Honey Badger” Atkins, Bob “Again” Carney Jr., Clint Conner, Mayor Jacob Frey, Kate Knuth, Sheila Nezhad, Jerrell Perry



The entire forum can be viewed on the school's [facebook page](#), however the Twin Cities media establishment was a no-show – a Google search (“North Community High School Minneapolis Mayoral Forum,” filtered for recent days) does not surface any results for the Star Tribune or other major media outlets, and no major TV station sent a camera crew. Mayoral candidate Jerrell Perry wasn't initially reached about the event but contacted the organizers and was included; another candidate, Paul Johnson, who Perry has frequently campaigned with, also contacted the organizers shortly before the event, but was excluded. Perry has recounted multiple instances where both he and other Mayoral candidates have been sidetracked or prevented in various ways from participating in forums and getting campaign messaging out through established media; he also reports he has been unable to arrange for a ride-along with the Minneapolis Police. The 2013 Mayoral Election featured candidates on the ballot to raise issues based on their personal experiences, including homelessness and battling foreclosure. Both Perry and Johnson have lost family members or close friends to violence in Minneapolis; this year personal circumstances of candidates appear to be treated differently by the media.

In recent weeks, bobagain has attempted to organize both group campaigning by candidates, and consideration by candidates of one or more “Join, or Frey” tickets of three candidates, designed to effect the defeat of Mayor Frey, and possibly linked to bobagain’s proposal for annual elections by including a pledge to resign in time to trigger a special election for Mayor at the same time as the November 2022 mid-term election – bobagain has made such a pledge. However, except for Perry, Johnson (constrained by a work schedule,) and Park Board at large candidate Katherine Kelly, there appears to have been little to no interest in joint campaigning, based on past presence at a physical location. This could be due to a general reluctance, or fear, by people in Minneapolis, to assemble at any public location involving politically controversial events.

At the Tuesday Mayoral forum, no candidate announced their support for a ticket of three candidates that did not include Mayor Frey. Perry came the closest, announcing his support for Johnson, and suggesting people “use their power” to make a third choice. The absence of candidate AJ Awed, widely seen as a major challenger to Mayor Frey, could have something to do with comments both recently reported in the Star Tribune, and heard at the Tuesday event, to the effect that Awed’s opposition to Charter question #2 -- the “defund the police” amendment – is inconsistent with the position he took when running for an open Minneapolis City Council seat in 2020.

A possible role for the Hennepin County Sherriff?

Perry has suggested greater involvement by the Hennepin County Sherriff’s Department could result in an immediate improvement in Minneapolis, in effect reinforcing the Police Department. However, this potential should be viewed in the context of a recent [Politico report](#) on a: “tradition of ‘constitutional sheriffs,’ who for decades have propagated the idea — refuted by constitutional experts — that sheriffs are the supreme legal authority in America, above even the president and the Supreme Court, and that they can choose not to enforce any law they consider unconstitutional. Former sheriffs Joe Arpaio and David Clarke, along with an estimated 138 currently serving sheriffs, are self-declared adherents of the philosophy...” Sheriffs also appear to be entering the field of public education. The Star Tribune reported Wednesday that [the Ramsey County Sherriff is now involved in forming a new charter school](#): “Other Sheriff’s Office employees affiliated with the new school are public information officer Roy Magnuson, a former teacher who is listed as a founder of the school... Students will be able to study a variety of public service careers including how to become police officers, dispatchers, construction workers, secretaries and mechanics, Magnuson said. ‘In too many of our schools, families have not felt the learning environment for their child was stable, supportive, they have not felt their school setting is as safe as it could or should be. So they’ve sought other options,’ [Magnuson] said. ‘We believe we will create a community of communities.’” Going forward, the Hennepin County Sherriff is on the ballot November 2022 – the issues of policing, public safety, and possibly also education, could emerge as central to that campaign.

UPDATE – On Wednesday evening Perry responded to Christopher David on an e-mail thread to fellow candidates for Mayor -- David had written: “I would say that it is likely that Mayor Mr. Frey, Ms. Nezhad or former state representative Ms. Knuth ends up winning when all the votes are counted and ranked.” Perry’s response was: “You guys could always back out and ask your supporters to put their votes behind a Candidate that will actually push to make a difference in a City where racial justice and equity are the top platforms of all Candidates. To say that one of the 3 will win shows how little faith we have in Minneapolitans to think on their own. People I have spoken to and met with are fed up with the status quo and both Sheila and Kate reflect and are fighting for that same thing. It’s a very sad state of affairs but I sincerely believe Minneapolis voters are smarter than that. You should too.”

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