

SMART QUESTIONS TO ASK

Your Local Leaders

Here are a few questions you can consider asking as you work to build relationships with your elected leaders. You don't need to ask them all at once. And when you ask, take time to truly listen to their answers. In addition, remember to smile, look them in the eye, shake their hand when appropriate and always thank them for their time.

Your mission is to get them to think about the topic at hand from a different perspective. Your strategic questions will be pebbles in their shoes that they may have to continue to chew on long after the meeting is over. These are just some ideas and a place to start:

- Does the city (or government body you are addressing) operate on a balanced budget, why or why not?
- You passed an initiative a few months ago to spend x dollars on x project. Would you please supply us with a report on how it is going?
- Who and what frames your worldview and your governing policies for decision making as a leader of this board?
- What are the opportunities you provide for citizens to get to know the process more? To get questions answered? To better understand your job and how we can support you?
- What are opportunities for citizens to be part of the solution?
- How do you as elected leaders hold yourself accountable?
- What is your long term legacy plan? I.e. how do you go about making decisions today that are weighed with consideration for future generations?
- We have limited resources. How do you choose what categories matter most?
- In reviewing the material it appears you have cut back on x. Could you explain to us the thought process for how you came to this conclusion?
- Would you help us understand why you trust so much in the bigger government? You are making weighty decisions here and now and you seem eager to take resources from outside sources but what guarantee can you give that it will not come back to bite us later?
- How does our "rainy day" fund look as a community? Should there be an emergency - what preparations have you made for us to be financially capable to meet the needs of our community?