



## 2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Michele Ronco

Office Sought: Ward 1 City Council Northampton, MA

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### (A) Your Candidacy

#### 1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

- a. Support the mayor to define the budget
- b. Change the charter, now the strong mayor form of government we have is too unbalanced
- c. Fund the schools and other essential services, filling positions in the department of public works so they can deliver services

#### 2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

- a. I have been city councilor (in a town in Italy) for 3 years
- b. I have managerial experience with large union workforce
- c. I have experience developing and managing city budgets and business budgets
- d. I work in construction projects of power plants that cost 300-500 million, so I know how to manage large projects and contractors for a city

#### 3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to adopt locally?

Vacancy taxes

### (B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

**1. Given state law, municipalities in Massachusetts are limited in their taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue to support essential city services?**

- a. Motor Vehicle Excise (MVE) Surcharge
- b. Short-Term Rentals Community Impact Fee
- c. Purpose taxes to consolidate school buildings via override and decrease running costs
- d. Tax RE of private schools buildings that generate income that is not related to education, and those funds go to public schools.

**2. What are your top priorities for ensuring that all students in your city can receive a high-quality public education?**

Opt-in as City Councilor and increase funding beyond what the current mayor allocated in spite of that superintendent and school committee proposed and approved.

**3. What can your city do to help protect immigrant communities under attack from ICE and ensure genuine community safety?**

Don't collaborate with ICE

**4. What are your top three policy priorities for making your city climate-resilient, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?**

- a. Implement nature-based solutions for stormwater management, giving tax breaks to people who do it on their property
- b. Promote green building standards, i.e. net zero ADUs
- c. Retrofit existing buildings, establish a very low interest loan program for low income home owners to install heat pumps and solar panels, on top of what Mass Save and MassCEC do

**5. What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of city residents to safely get around by walking, biking, or public transit?**

- a. Fund free public transportation via extra taxes on vehicles owned

**6. What policies will you advocate for to ensure that your city can be a place that is affordable for residents to live at any stage of life?**

Establish a fund to help homeowners who rent to low income renters. Work with developers to build on public owned land to lower cost of construction and therefore cost of buying for low income

**7. [If relevant] How would you assess your city's MBTA Communities Act rezoning efforts so far?**

N/A

**8. What strategies would you employ to resist federal overreach from the Trump Administration while protecting critical services and funding for residents?**

- a. All the above actions already go in that direction

**9. How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?**

- a. City should provide a quarterly update on how the city spent the money budgeted during the fiscal year, attached to the letter taxpayer receive with the assessed property taxes for the quarter, so taxpayers can see how their taxes are spent and how we are doing compared to budget

**(C) Yes/No Policy Questions**

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES**
2. Do you support the creation of an unarmed, community-based emergency response program, separate from the Police Department, to respond to mental and behavioral health crises? **YES**
3. If your community has not already, do you support adopting the new specialized stretch code, which would require new construction and major renovations to be built to a very high-efficiency standard with all-electric (as opposed to fossil fuel) heating and cooling systems? **YES**
4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES only where economically feasible, otherwise it will reduce funding to other essential services**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES only where safe**

6. Would you support a home rule petition to establish a small transfer fee on high-end real estate transactions to create dedicated funding for affordable housing production and preservation? **YES**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES**
8. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES**

**(D) Additional Comments**

*(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)*