

Dorchester Reporter

“The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?

- Kim Janey
- 56
- Boston, MA
- 27 Copeland Street, Roxbury, MA

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

- 55th Mayor of Boston
- Previously
 - Boston City Council President
 - First woman to represent Boston City Council District 7
 - Senior Project Director -- Massachusetts Advocates for Children
 - Community Organizer - Parents United for Childcare

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

- Edwards Middle School, during second phase of desegregation busing
- Reading High School, METCO
- Greater Hartford Community College
- Attended Smith College for two years as Ada Comstock Scholar

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations and political groups.

I'm a founding board member of MassVOTE, which advocates for civic engagement, voting rights, and electoral justice.

I founded the Historic Moreland Street Neighborhood Association in 2009 as a way to strengthen my neighborhood through relationship building, community organizing, and collective action. I served as president for the first four years. Under my leadership, my neighbors and I organized community walks with the City's Inspectional Services Department to identify issues to be addressed, led efforts to prohibit the sale of alcohol at a small corner store, and co-sponsored community meetings with B2 police in response to neighborhood violence. We also convened neighbors in the redesign of two neighborhood parks, and organized fun, family-friendly events, including art, literacy, and science days, Christmas Caroling, Halloween Walks, and Easter Egg Hunts.

I've also served on a number of boards, including the Ward 12 Democratic Committee, Discover Roxbury, and Diamond Girls Boston. I've also been very active in the NAACP Boston Branch and was elected to its executive committee in 2016, before stepping down to serve on the Boston City Council.

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?

I am uniquely equipped to lead as the only person in this race that has actual experience being a mayor and leading a major urban city with more than 680,000 residents, 18,000 employees, and a \$3.75 billion budget.

As the first woman and first Black Mayor of Boston, I bring to City Hall, and to this race, a life experience like none of my predecessors. As a daughter of Roxbury and the South End, I understand the challenges so many of our residents are facing – from structural racism, food and housing insecurity, failing schools, and faltering public transportation, hurdles to home ownership, and fear for Black and Brown people’s safety in our communities. I understand these challenges, because I have lived them.

I have more than 30 years experience working in the non-profit sector, including non-profit management. I’ve spent my entire career fighting for racial justice – including my work in education advocacy, as the first woman to represent District 7 on the City Council, and as President of the most diverse Council in Boston’s history. And now, as Mayor, I am leading through a lens of equity, justice, and love – for every resident of Boston.

6. What are the three accomplishments you’re most proud of?

- My greatest accomplishment in life is my daughter Kimesha and the three wonderful grandchildren she has blessed me with. I was just 16 years old and a junior in high school when Kimesha was born. As a young single mother, I worked multiple jobs – from cleaning bathrooms to being a security guard – to take care of her. I began my career of activism, focused on excellence and equity in education for all families, when I recognized that my daughter’s experiences were interconnected with the experiences of other children. It became my life’s work.
- Leading the City of Boston’s efforts to vaccinate its residents against COVID-19. Our focus here in Boston is making sure that everyone has their shot at hope and that means getting the life-saving vaccine.

This is what we have been doing since Day 1 of this fight to get our neighbors vaccinated. As Mayor, I have invested \$3 million to boost vaccinations in communities that are hardest hit by the pandemic. I also launched the Hope Campaign, a multilingual public awareness campaign, encouraging residents to get the COVID-19 vaccine - meeting people where they are and where they feel safe. Because of these efforts we are increasing vaccination rates in every neighborhood - as of Tuesday, July 27, over 400,000 Boston residents were fully vaccinated and over 67% had received at least one dose of the vaccine. Boston is leading the way, that is why we are one of the most vaccinated big cities in America in one of the most vaccinated States in the country. And we are not about to stop.

- My work as Mayor to make homeownership a reality for Boston families that have for too long been shut out of this part of the American Dream. I am focusing on homeownership opportunities as a way to stabilize our communities, including expanding the Boston Home Center's first-time Homebuyer Program. Down payment assistance for income-eligible, first-time homebuyers is now up to \$40,000 — triple what was previously offered by the City. Two decades ago, as a single mom, I was able to purchase my own home with the assistance of a first-time homebuyers program, and I want to help others to realize their own dreams of putting down roots. Expanding home ownership will give residents the opportunity to build generational wealth and break the cycle of poverty. That is also how we'll close the enormous wealth gap in Boston.

7. Are you a member of a union?

No, but I'm proud that my younger sister is a member of the Boston Teachers' Union, as well as a cousin who also teaches in BPS, and a host of other relatives who have taught. My brother in-law and cousin are also members of the Boston Carmen's Union 589.

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

- UNITE HERE Local 26
- 32BJ SEIU
- UFCW 1445
- SEIU 888
- Right to the City Vote
- Chinese Progressive Political Action
- Mi Gente
- WAKANDA II
- Suffolk County Register of Probate Felix D. Arroyo
- State Representative Nika Elugardo
- Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

I am a proud progressive Democrat who believes that we need new bold ideas to help make Boston stronger. We need to use this moment in time to create a more equitable, just, and resilient Boston. We need to work with members of all the communities in Boston - and listen to their input - to build a city which responds to the needs of every resident.

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

I will never forget how I felt on the night of November 4, 2008. We had done what seemed impossible, electing Barack Obama as President of the United States of America. This was such an important victory for people all

across the world, but especially for children, like my own two grandsons, who could finally see themselves represented in the highest office in America.

I also remember the day in July 2009 when I met Ayanna Pressley for the first time. She was running for Boston City Council, as the only woman in a crowded field of male candidates. I worked with her over the years as a community leader and education advocate and then in 2018, I worked alongside her as we served together on the Boston City Council. Ayanna has always been a strong advocate for equity and has truly paved the way for so many women who now serve or are running for office. I am proud to have her as a partner as she serves us well in Congress.

Mel King is another groundbreaking leader and champion of working people. As one of the architects of the Rainbow Coalition, he brought people together from all walks of life. I had the opportunity to learn from him first hand and pass out flyers when he ran for Mayor decades ago. He is a community organizer, father, and a beloved Boston treasure. I've been blessed to have his wise counsel over the years.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

The voters of our city are most able to create and enforce term limits on their own.

4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting?

We need to improve voter turnout in the city of Boston. The best way to do this is by making voting easier and more accessible to the people of Boston. I am in full support of all of these proposed solutions as a means to build a multifaceted approach to making voting more available to the people of Boston and I've been a strong advocate as a founding board member of MassVOTE and I've led on these issues in elected office.

5. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?

Yes.

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?

My top priority will be to continue the fight against COVID-19 in Boston and to lead the City in its recovery, reopening and renewal. As Mayor, I have placed vaccination at the center of our response to COVID-19, investing \$3 million to boost vaccinations in communities that are hardest hit by the pandemic. I also launched the Hope Campaign, a multilingual public awareness campaign, encouraging residents to get the COVID-19 vaccine - meeting people where they are and where they feel safe. Because of these efforts we are increasing vaccination rates in every neighborhood - as of Tuesday, July 27, over 400,000 Boston residents were fully vaccinated and over 67% had received at least one dose of the vaccine. In addition, we've implemented a mask mandate for our schools, and now we are working with our municipal unions toward a vaccine mandate for city workers. In addition, we are getting assistance to those most impacted by the pandemic including investing \$50 million in rental relief -- that so far has aided 3,200 households --- and providing critical financial support and resources to our restaurants and small businesses to get them through this

crisis. Going forward, we will continue to follow the science and data to protect every resident of Boston.

2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

I have witnessed the horror of gun violence too often in my own neighborhood and as Mayor I have visited crime scenes and met with devastated families members of victims. We must get guns off the streets and at the same time tackle the root causes of crime. We must invest in economic opportunities for our young people; we must ensure better educational opportunities, and we must address unresolved trauma.

After just one month as your Mayor, I launched reforms that begin to reimagine policing in Boston with a focus on safety, healing and justice in every neighborhood and putting accountability and transparency front and center. I budgeted for an increase in the new cadet class to ensure our streets are safe and that our police force is more diverse -- reflecting the communities our officers serve.

We need concrete action taken at all levels of government to help us push back against the scourge of gun violence in Boston, including federal and state action. On the city level, at the beginning of the summer, I announced a summer safety plan that is guided by the public health lens of prevention, intervention, response and recovery initiatives.

And thus far the plan is working. I am encouraged that homicides are down 40 percent this year, compared to this time last year. Fatal shootings are down 58 percent compared to this time last year. Non-fatal shootings are down 17%. Obviously, any shooting is one too many. That is why I am also encouraged by and grateful for the police department's work to get guns off our streets -- 492 guns have been recovered and 372 gun arrests have

been made. Together, we are strengthening intervention efforts and suppressing crime in hotspots across the city. In instances where violence has occurred, our trauma response teams are ensuring that neighborhoods are supported and residents are connected to resources to help them recover from incidents of violence.

3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

The BPDA, today, is a product of decades of structural adjustments and changes that were designed by and for a minority of stakeholders. The end result could not have been anything but political, unpredictable, and non-transparent. It doesn't provide effective avenues and tools for the community at large, especially our most impacted residents and neighborhoods, to effect and influence the process as they should. Because the BPDA is statutorily required by law to oversee this process, we need to make changes immediately to fix the problems it creates.

My approach to reimagining the BPDA starts with the understanding that planning has to drive development, not the other way around. We need to ensure that 1) our planning processes are equitable and bottom up with a special focus on neighborhood-level planning and design that lifts up communities and provide for a safe, healthy and empowering living environments, 2) planning is driving the development/negotiations process by clearly and transparently setting development goals based on the community's goals, 3) developing a clear set of city-wide and neighborhood land use policies that add value and strengthen the fabric of our neighborhoods (bottom up community planning processes) with carrots and sticks that help produce the types of developments that benefit our neighbors, especially those most impacted by decades of structural and system challenges, 4) proposes a modernized, community-value-based zoning code and ensuing neighborhood plans that equitably puts residents

at the center (not fiscal, budgetary, political or narrow stakeholder concerns at the center).

4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

I strongly support the residency ordinance. It is important that city employees are city residents. Those making and enforcing our laws should be subject to those laws.

5. The city of Boston presently owns and manages the historic Strand Theater in Uphams Corner. How would you seek to program, market and utilize this asset?

We need to revitalize and invest in the Strand. It should be an arts and cultural hub for the city and an economic booster for the Uphams Corner and Grove Hall communities. Its programming must reflect the cultural diversity and artistic talents of Dorchester.

6. What is your position on vaccinations? Should students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 to attend school in Boston?

We need to listen to the guidelines of the federal government on whether we should mandate the vaccine for school children returning to in person education in the fall. Currently the Covid vaccines are for emergency use only and children under 12 years old are not eligible for the vaccine at all. This is why I'm requiring the wearing of masks for all students and staff this fall.

I am also actively working with my cabinet chiefs, department heads, and with labor leaders on a vaccine mandate for all City of Boston employees. As Mayor I am responsible for 18,000 employees, of which 90% are unionized. We are taking a collaborative, thoughtful, worker-centered

approach to our vaccine mandate, so that we can best protect our workforce from this deadly virus.

I support every eligible person getting vaccinated. With the increase of the Delta variant in unvaccinated locations, it is clear that the vaccine is the best way for us to defeat the coronavirus.

7. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

I support exploring a hybrid model for the school committee, to include appointed, elected, and additional youth members with voting power. It is long past time to give the residents more of a voice in our schools. While more accountability to parents, youth, and stakeholders is welcome, it is absolutely essential that a direct line of accountability to the Mayor be preserved.

8. Do you support the recent decision of the BPS and School Committee to alter the admission plan for the city's three exam schools?

Yes. This is the right move to move the city forward and certainly to give opportunity for families in Boston. This is good for our students, this is good for our school district, and this is good for the city of Boston. I would add that it is certainly important to make sure that all of our schools have academic rigor and are great choices for our families here in Boston, so we have more work to do.

I have long been a strong advocate of equity and excellence in our schools and I have a proven track record of fighting for access and opportunity for BPS students, especially those who historically have been left behind. As someone born into a family of educators and a lifelong child advocate, I

know the importance of a great education and will continue my advocacy on behalf of children all across our city.

9. Do you support the citywide ballot question that would hand new budgetary powers to the City Council?

Yes. Building on my commitment to equity and my focus on engaging all of Boston in the City's governance, I have already signed off on a ballot question to amend the City of Boston Charter. In addition, my FY22 budget included \$1 million for the creation of the City's first Office of Participatory Budgeting.

10. The city of Boston is presently without a permanent police commissioner. What should the next mayor do to fill the position and what type of person should be selected to lead the BPD?

It is critical that the people of Boston have a voice in the future of leadership at BPD. That is why as Mayor I am appointing a committee of community residents, public safety advocates, and law enforcement professionals who will lead a community engagement process to define what Boston residents seek from leadership within our police force -- informing and setting the stage for a nation-wide search for a new commissioner by the end of the year. In addition, I announced going forward we will be requiring that all candidates for positions of leadership in the Boston Police Department to undergo thorough vetting and background checks, we are updating and bolstering the department's outdated domestic violence policy, and instituting the BPD's first sexual assault policy. I am committed to building a more responsive, diverse, transparent,

and accountable department -- leading to a more just and equitable Boston.

11. Do you support the redevelopment of City Hall and City Hall Plaza?

City Hall Plaza is already being redeveloped to make it a much more accessible space for all residents, including persons with disabilities. The designs include a playground and much more green space.

12. What is your assessment of the Climate Ready Boston initiative conceived and executed to date by the Walsh administration? Is this initiative a sufficient response to prepare for the anticipated climate change in coming years and decades? What else might you do to build climate resiliency in the city of Boston?

The establishment of Climate Ready Boston set a good example of how the city of Boston can lead in reducing carbon emissions and making our city more climate resilient, however, we need to aim to do better. In my first budget as Mayor, I allocated millions in funding for projects to retrofit older buildings to make them more energy efficient, and ensure that many public areas are built to be climate resilient. I look forward to continuing this process and working with my new Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, to make Boston a prime example of a city prepared for the future.

13. A millionaires tax is expected to be on the statewide ballot in 2022. How do you plan to vote?

I will vote to support a millionaires tax to help raise funds which we can use to improve education and secure more affordable housing.

14. Should gig workers be considered company employees, rather than independent contractors?

We need to ensure that gig workers are given the needed protections that many full time employees have. We need to make sure that these workers have fair wages, health benefits, and good working conditions. As Mayor, I have passed an executive order raising the wages for many of the city's contractors, and I look forward to continuing to be an advocate for Bostonians who work in all kinds of different jobs.

15. A report commissioned by the Walsh administration found that just 1.2 percent of city contracts awarded between 2014-2018 were awarded to Black or Latino-owned businesses. What would you do to change that?

I led on this issue with strong advocacy while on the Council and as the first Black mayor and first woman mayor, I continue to lead. I've appointed a new Chief of Equity and Inclusion and also hired the City's first Director of Strategic Procurement. I've also beefed up the Supplier Diversity Team with five full-time staff. And I announced the creation of the \$750,000 Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund which gives grants to MWBEs that have specific capacity building needs to assist them in bidding for City contracts. In addition, I also announced that we will pilot the implementation of participation goals on the \$9.4 million Malcolm X Park Improvement Project to give a diverse array of businesses the opportunity to participate in the comprehensive renovations of the park.

16. In 2018, the Walsh administration set a goal of creating 69,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030. What is your assessment of this

target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester?

As someone who has experienced housing insecurity firsthand, I know how crucial affordable housing is. My father grew up in Orchard Park projects. As a child, my mom and sister and I had to double up with another family and eventually ended up in a homeless shelter for women and children for a week. As a young, single mother, I was able to move into my first apartment with a Section 8 voucher. My family was not able to hold onto their Brownstone in the South End as it gentrified in the 1980s, robbing us of the opportunity to create generational wealth — and gentrification is happening today in other neighborhoods, like Dorchester, Chinatown, East Boston, and Roxbury. This isn't theoretical for me. I understand the challenges that families are facing, because I have lived them.

In my very first week as Mayor, I invested \$50 million in rental relief to help residents who are having a difficult time paying their rent due to COVID. My team and I are also reviewing IDP for opportunities to require more affordable housing from development in Boston. And I am focusing on homeownership opportunities as a way to stabilize our communities, including expanding the Boston Home Center's first-time Homebuyer Program, offering up to \$40,000 in down payment assistance, where historically 70% of program participants are households of color.

17. What is your assessment of the Walsh administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

It's no secret I've inherited a number of controversial issues, whether the Patrick Rose case, former police commissioner Dennis White, or the

School Committee. As Mayor of Boston, I am focused on creating a hopeful, equitable future for our city, so we can't afford to spend our time looking back. I will say that the former mayor worked tirelessly on behalf of this city he so loves and he has been a champion for labor and working people in Boston and nationally. I am glad to have him as a partner at the federal level.

18. What is your assessment of the acting Mayor Kim Janey's performance since taking office in March 2021? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

I think the only grades that matter are the ones that come from the residents of Boston, and since I have become Mayor I have been so humbled and appreciative of the support they have shown me. In the four most recent public polls, I've been in the lead or in a statistical dead heat. When I am out in the neighborhoods - whether at senior centers or small businesses - in the schools or in the parks and playgrounds -- residents have expressed support for my leadership of Boston's equitable recovery, reopening, and renewal from the pandemic, my prioritizing of affordable housing by investing \$50 million dollars in rental relief and \$2.4 million to triple assistance to Boston's first-time homebuyers; and how I have brought my commitment to equity and a three decade record as an activist on behalf of BPS students and families to the Mayor's office.

19. Will you seek to expand or change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

As a city councilor. I have seen the challenges of the ZBA, and I know that we need serious reforms. We need a board that is more reflective of the communities it represents, and we need to ensure that the goal of this

board is to promote sustainable development and not support projects which will price families out of their homes.

20. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

I have very limited time to unwind, between serving as Mayor and actively campaigning. Spending time with my family, especially my grandchildren, brings me great joy and is rejuvenating for me.

21. If you were not a candidate, who would you support in this election for either Mayor or City Council?

The voters of Boston face an important choice, and must consider all the options before them. All of my opponents are dedicated public servants who bring many admirable qualities to the race, but in the end this is a question that will be answered by the voters.

Thank you for participating in the Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to newseditor@dotnews.com by Fri. Aug. 8, 2021.