August 30, 2016

Morrissey leads crowded contest for Richmond mayor; voters sour on current City Council and School Board

Summary of Key Findings

1. Joe Morrissey has 28% of the city-wide vote in the crowded 8-person field for mayor. Jack Berry is second city-wide with 16%, with 24% still uncertain of their choice.

2. Morrissey has a commanding lead in 3 precincts; to avoid a runoff, a candidate must win at least 5 of the city's 9 precincts.

3. Michelle Mosby is the voters' top 'second choice' candidate, with 20%; Jon Baliles is the second choice of 16% of the voters.

4. By a small margin, Richmond voters are more happy than unhappy with the direction of their city.

5. Richmond voters pan the job performances of Mayor Dwight Jones, the City Council, and the School Board.

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Analysis

In the crowd of eight candidates for Richmond's next mayor, former Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney and House of Delegates member Joe Morrissey leads with 28% of the city-wide vote, followed by former Venture Richmond Executive Director Jack Berry with 16% of the vote. Current Richmond City Council members Michelle Mosby and Jon Baliles stand at 10% and 9% of the city-wide vote respectively, followed by former Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney with 7% of the vote. Former Richmond councilman Bruce Tyler has 4% of the city-wide vote, while Lawrence Williams and Bobby Junes each has less than 1% of the vote. Nearly a quarter (24%) of Richmonders say they have not yet made up their minds or don't know who they will vote for. These are the results of a survey of 600 registered Richmond city voters conducted August 18-24 by the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University. The survey has an overall adjusted margin of error of +/- 4.9%.

Q8: And thinking about that mayor's race… if the election were held TODAY would you vote for…**[NAMES RANDOMIZED]**

Joe Morrissey	28
Jack Berry	16
Michelle Mosby	10
Jon Baliles	9
Levar Stoney	7
Bruce Tyler	4
Lawrence Williams	<1
Bobby Junes	<1
Someone else (vol)	<1
Undecided (vol)	18
Dk/ref (vol)	6

While the city-wide totals give an indication of the candidates' overall standings, Richmond election rules require the winner to receive the most votes in at least five of the nine city council districts. If no candidate achieves that mark on November 8, the two candidates receiving the highest vote totals city-wide will continue into a runoff election to be held December 20.

While the district-level margins of error are much larger than the survey's overall margin of error (see right-hand column of table below), analysis of the district-level vote shows Joe Morrissey leading other candidates by much more than the district-level margin of error in three districts (5th, 6th, and 8th) and a more modest lead, but still more than the margin of error in a fourth district (7th). Jack Berry has a modest lead over his nearest other contender right at the district-level margin of error in the 1st District. In the remaining four districts (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 9th), no candidates' leads are more than the district-level margin of error. In the 2nd district, Jack Berry, Joe Morrissey, and Jon Baliles are the top vote-getters. In the 3rd district, Joe Morrissey, Jack Berry, and Levar Stoney are the top vote-getters. In the 4th district, Jack Berry, Jon Baliles, and Levar Stoney are the top vote-getters. In the 9th district, Michelle Mosby, Joe Morrissey, and Bruce Tyler are the top vote-getters.

District	Joe Morrissey	Jack Berry	Michelle Mosby	Jon Baliles	Levar Stoney	Bruce Tyler	Lawrence Williams	Bobby Junes	Someone else	Und	Dk/ref	District MofE
1	2	33	18	20	4	14	0	0	0	8	0	+/- **13.1**
2	17	30	3	15	6	3	2	0	2	21	2	+/- **14.8**
3	29	17	8	7	10	3	0	0	0	17	10	+/- **14.1**
4	8	21	5	16	13	7	0	0	0	20	12	+/- **13.7**
5	54	8	8	6	8	0	0	0	3	5	9	+/- **14.9**
6	60	2	11	2	0	0	2	4	0	18	2	+/- **16.2**
7	27	12	2	6	10	0	0	2	0	40	2	+/- **14.7**
8	48	2	13	0	3	0	0	2	0	13	18	+/- **15.5**
9	20	9	26	0	7	11	0	0	0	22	4	+/- **16.3**
Overall	28	16	10	9	7	4	<1	<1	<1	18	6	+/- **4.9**

In a crowded field, questions about who would benefit if candidates drop out of the race are natural, and two candidates appear to be the second choice of more than a third of voters. Michelle Mosby is the second choice for 20% of voters, followed by Jon Baliles for 16% of voters. Following are Levar Stoney (10%), Joe Morrissey (9%), Jack Berry (8%), and Bruce Tyler (7%), with Lawrence Williams and Bobby Junes at the bottom with 3% of the second-choice vote.

"With a little over two months to go, Joe Morrissey is in a very strong position," said Dr. Quentin Kidd, director of the Wason Center. "If he is unable to win the election outright, he will almost certainly be one of the two candidates in a runoff. The real contest at this point might be over whether any of the other candidates can bump Jack Berry out of second place."

Q9: And who would your second choice be…would it be… **[NAMES REPEAT SAME ORDER AS Q8]**

Michelle Mosby	20
Jon Baliles	16
Levar Stoney	10
Joe Morrissey	9
Jack Berry	8
Bruce Tyler	7
Lawrence Williams	3
Bobby Junes	3
Someone else (vol)	1
Undecided (vol)	13
Dk/ref (vol)	10

While a majority of Richmond voters say they are following news about the candidates (62% say very or somewhat closely), and a very strong majority (90%) say they plan to vote, the horse race numbers are explained at least in part by what voters think of the candidates, and whether voters know enough about candidates to make an assessment. Joe Morrissey has the highest name recognition, at 84%, but he is a polarizing figure, with voters strongly divided about whether they have a favorable (40%) or unfavorable (44%) view of him. Less well recognized, but still known by more than half of voters, Michelle Mosby is as polarizing as Morrissey, with slightly more voters saying they have an unfavorable (28%) as favorable (25%) view of her. By contrast, voters are better than two-to-one positive about Jon Baliles (29% to 12%) and Jack Berry (27% to 12%), but

more than half of voters aren't able to say how they feel about them. Likewise, majorities of voters say they do not know Levar Stoney, Bruce Tyler, Bobby Junes, and Lawrence Williams well enough to rate them.

Q5: As you know, there is an election coming up for mayor of Richmond. How closely have you been following news about the candidates for the mayor's race, would you say...

Very closely	18
Somewhat closely	44
Not very closely	23
Not at all	15

Q6: Do you yourself plan to vote in the upcoming November election for mayor of Richmond, or not?

Yes	90
Not sure (vol)	1
No	9

Q7: Several people are running for mayor of Richmond. As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of them, or if you don't know enough about them to have an opinion. **[NAMES RANDOMIZED]**

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	Dk/ref (vol)
Joe Morrissey	40	44	11	5
Jon Baliles	29	12	39	20
Jack Berry	27	12	38	23
Michelle Mosby	25	28	33	14
Levar Stoney	22	15	39	24
Bruce Tyler	16	15	41	28
Bobby Junes	8	10	48	33
Lawrence Williams	6	11	50	33

Richmond voters are slightly more optimistic than pessimistic about the direction of their city, with 46% saying it is moving in the right direction and 44% saying it is moving in the wrong direction. But they are very sour on current city leadership. Richmonders disapprove of the job performance of current Mayor Dwight Jones by a greater than two-to-one margin, 64% to 26%. Richmonders are equally unsparing about the School Board, with 64% disapproving the way the board is handling its job and 24% approving. The City Council is also unpopular, but less so, with 50% of voters saying they disapprove and 37% saying they approve of the way the City Council is handling its job.

Q1: Overall would you say things in the CITY OF RICHMOND are heading more in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Right	46
Mixed (vol)	5
Wrong	44
Dk/ref (vol)	5

Q2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dwight Jones is handling his job as Mayor of Richmond?

Approve	26
Disapprove	64
Dk/ref (vol)	10

Q3: [READ] Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Richmond City Council is handling its job?

Approve	37
Disapprove	50
Dk/ref (vol)	13

Q4: [READ] Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Richmond School Board is handling its job?

Approve	24
Disapprove	64
Dk/ref (vol)	12

Demographic Toplines

EDUC:

High school or less	18
Some college	24
Vocational or technical training	2
College graduate	32
Graduate study or more	24

HISPANIC:

Yes	2
No	98

RACE:

White	44
Black or African American	49
Other	7

RELIG:

Protestant	29
Christian (non-specific) (vol)	16
Catholic	10
Jewish	1
Other	25
None	17
Dk/ref (vol)	2

PARTYID:

Republican	11
Democrat	56
Independent	29
No preference (vol)	1
Dk/ref (vol)	3

AGE:

18-24	10
25-34	12
35-44	17
45-54	20
55 & older	41

INCOME:

Under $25,000	12
$25-$49,999	17
$50-$74,999	21
$75-$99,999	14
$100,000-$149,999	11
Over $150,000	12
Dk/ref (vol)	13

SEX: [INTERVIEWER CODE]

Male	45
Female	55

DISTRICT DISTRIBUTION:

1	14
2	11
3	12
4	13
5	11
6	9
7	11
8	10
9	9

How the survey was conducted:

The results of this poll are based on 600 live interviews of registered Richmond voters, including 415 on landline and 185 on cell phone, conducted August 18-24, 2016. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the whole survey is +/- 4.9% at the 95% level of confidence. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.5 in this survey. The design effect is a factor representing the survey's deviation from a simple random sample, and takes into account decreases in precision due to sample design and weighting procedures. Sub samples have a higher margin of error. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 23%. Five callbacks were employed in the fielding process. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on sex, age, race and voting district to reflect as closely as possible the demographic composition of registered voters in Richmond. The survey was designed by Dr. Quentin Kidd of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University.