

Advice on running for office

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Candidates for election](#), [Election](#) February 9, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 

Gadfly will be out of work May 19.

Thinking to explore what might lay on the next horizon, he dropped in (virtually) to the January 30 Lehigh Valley League of Women Voters webinar on “Running for Local Office”

Ken Mohr, former Lehigh County Commissioner, was the keynote speaker. His topic was “Prepare Yourself to Be a Candidate.”

Mohr structured his advice to the assembled first-time office seekers around two-dozen what-he-called cliches.

Quite interesting.

What would you like to see added to Mohr’s list of advices for the wannabe’s?

*Every day I’m a little smarter than I was the day before.
Have a desire to learn, running and serving is a great education.*

*Politics is for the long-distance runner.
You need to bring along a lot of people.*

*They who assume public office should consider themselves public property.
Everything in your life can and will be brought up in a campaign.*

*Never write anything or say anything that you wouldn’t want to see on the front page of tomorrow’s newspaper.
Do not stretch a point.*

*They who live in the media, die in the media.
Reporters, etc., who use your information will turn on you in a minute;*

everything you post on social media will alienate a certain percentage of the electorate.

Never speculate in public.
Don't share your first thoughts.

A little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing.
Know what you don't know; don't guess; say I'll get back to you.

It is different in the bull ring than to speak of bulls.
Politics is a contact sport, it is not like sitting in a bar talking to a buddy.

In politics, friends may come and friends may go, but enemies accumulate.
It's easier to create opposition than to build consensus.

You have to count to five (or, on Bethlehem City Council, four).
If you want to get something done, you have to get the votes; being right is not enough, you have to build consensus.

Do you want to make a point or do you want to make a difference.
You have to bring others along.

A good product with no advertisement will not succeed.
You are the product.

Target the market.
Only market super-voters, people who are known to vote.

A campaign brochure has a life expectancy from the front door to the garbage can, or from click to swipe left.
Keep it simple: your name is key thing and no more than three issues.

Too much information can be a dangerous thing.
Too much detail can be used against you or alienate some voters.

Everybody knows my name, so why do I have to campaign.
Most local elections are about name recognition not issues; put your name before the super-voters at least five times.

Begin with the end in mind.
List the benchmark events of your campaign in order.

Time is the hunter.
Drive the process and keep the schedule moving.

Asking for campaign contributions from friends is their way of contributing to good government because they like and trust you.
Price out the scope of your campaign and budget accordingly.

If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.
Form a committee and assign responsibility, minimize you and spouse, whose responsibility is speaking and raising money.

I love it when a plan comes together.
Stick to your plan.

(Should you get elected), governing is win/win, you need to bring others along.
Campaigning is win/lose, somebody has to win, somebody has to lose.

Power is like an inheritance, you can grow it or squander it.
Depends on your actions.

America is great because she is good.
Good people make good government, democracy is fragile; our future is in your hands.

Gadfly tries to use every opportunity to bring the candidates to you, so he apologizes for missing the Bethlehem Dems last night, where several local candidates gave brief presentations.

The Bethlehem Gadfly