Howze: Audit, close watch on city finances needed

Santiago Esparza / The Detroit News

Detroit -- Lisa Howze gained notice in the 1980s as a student at Cass Technical High School who sold candy from her locker, on city buses or from a book bag.

She sold so much that she purchased M&Ms by the case and wound up paying for a portion of her first year of college with proceeds from the sales.

"Not only did I pay for college ... but I was able to help on bills (at home)," said Howze, 35, a council candidate. "I felt good to be able to help my family at a young age."

Howze earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan and completed a master's degree in finance from Walsh College.

She has worked for DTE Energy and also at an accounting firm that once performed an audit of the city's finances.

Howze said she would push for a forensic audit of the city's finances and go over revenues and expenditures closely.

"I have the business acumen; the actual accounting background," she said. "We want to make sure we weed out any fraud or misappropriation of funds."

Howze grew up on the city's Northwest side and recently visited Omega Coney Island at Fenkell and Southfield to chat with people about her campaign.

Teotis Adams came away impressed by Howze's talk.

"It's time for some changes," he said. "As someone who works with accounting and understands the role of accounting, she would be ideal."

Howze owns and operates Speaking Life Principles Inc., a motivational company that helps clients with their personal and business lives.

She also is leader of the Kingdompreneurs and Economic Development Ministry at Union Grace Missionary Baptist Church and a former Detroit chapter president of the National Association of Black Accountants, Inc.

Other issues important to Howze include addressing blighted buildings in the city, hiring more police officers and ensuring that all decisions are open to public inspection.