

Lansing Mayoral Candidates Square Off  
Debate turns nasty at times  
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LANSING -- Incumbent Mayor Virg Bernero talked economy -- his opponent, Lansing City Councilwoman Carol Wood focused on neighborhoods.

And neither held punches, back-and-forthing over just about every issue presented at the candidates' first and final debate Tuesday night at Pattengill Middle School in Lansing.

Bernero, through those back-and-forths, highlighted the city's balanced budget, noting its Double-A credit rating, and the \$16.5 million worth of repairs this summer on Lansing's roads.

Wood, meanwhile, went on the attack, criticizing the mayor's construction on a portion of Northrup Street that she says residents there opposed.

The two candidates even revisited an old argument -- over the mayor's closing of two city golf . He says Lansing simply couldn't afford them.

Wood countered that the community wants them back, though she wouldn't give a definitive answer when News 10 moderator Jason Colthorp asked her if she would reopen them as mayor.

Bernero's day and the debate here Tuesday night were chased, meanwhile, by a lawsuit filed by the local electrical workers union.

Officials at the IBEW-Local 665 donated \$5,000 back in 2006 to the mayor's Lansing Booster Club, and they now claim he's been using those funds to wine and dine his friends. Bernero took Tuesday night as an opportunity to defend himself against those claims.

"They're [Wood's] leading supporter," the mayor pointed out, "And they want her to win. This is a political prank; nothing more, nothing less."

Wood says she has no connection to the lawsuit, but did say she would eliminate the mayor's booster club, if she's elected.

"Absolutely not, I wouldn't have that account," she said. When Colthorp asked her how she'd paid for mayoral trips, she said, "Out of my salary."

An aggressive attack on a night that saw plenty of head-to-head.

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