



Updated 10/23/2009 11:50 AM

## Binghamton mayoral debate

By: Rob Wu

*For the first time, Binghamton voters had a chance to hear from all of the mayoral candidates, side-by-side. Mayor Matt Ryan said at the beginning of the debate that he wanted voters to separate fact from fiction, and substance from slogans. Not a problem says Republican Rich David. Rob Wu reports.*

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. -- "Your slogan is restoring the pride. Pride in City Hall has never been lower. Morale has never been lower. Let's look at substance as far as property taxes, sky rocketing through the roof the last four years," David said.

David says Binghamton needs a new direction and he intends to run the city like a business, increase revenues and reduce expenses.

"City government is not a business. City government is a public trust. It won't be a private club. It will be run on talent, merit and ideas, not on political patronage," said independent candidate Douglas Walter Drazen.

Mayor Ryan says speaking out on city issues and doing something about it are two different things, and he says the last four years show he's the one to lead the city forward.

"Maybe you don't agree with everything I stand for, but I'll stand up on principle. I'll make sure I'm not afraid of standing up for what I believe in and I think that's an important part of being a leader and being mayor," said Ryan.

David says he might not be a Binghamton native, but he's deeply invested in the city with his businesses and his motivation for running is to give back.

Drazen painted himself as the only candidate who can bring a real change in philosophy that the city needs, and he wasn't afraid to infuse humor into his answers.

"To those of you who want to understand, who can see what's killing me Binghamton, I say come with me, if you want to live," Drazen said.

Those in the audience say each candidate was impressive in their own way, and it's hard to pick a clear-cut winner.

Even resident, Johan Jelsma, who told us he supports current Mayor Matt Ryan in the election had positive things to say about opponent, Doug Drazen.

"Doug Drazen, he's entertaining to say the least, someone like that is something that can really put a fire under the city," said resident Johan Jelsma.

"David and Ryan are a little more schooled in politics. They understand how to get their point across a little better. Probably a little better as far as debating goes, but they all held their own. Alex Paolano, a BU student.