
Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire Shelby County Assessor

The Coalition for a Better Memphis is an independent non-profit organization, made up of Shelby County individuals, businesses and organizations. Its mission is to assist area voters in identifying qualified candidates for public office. In 2008, CBM's Candidate Assessment Committee is interviewing candidates for the Shelby County Assessor with the intention of publishing a "voter guide" of candidate evaluations. Completed questionnaires may be emailed to: peggy@bettermemphis.org Or mailed to: **Coalition for a Better Memphis 7730 Goshawk Cove Cordova, TN 38016** Direct any questions

to: Peggy Callahan peggy@bettermemphis.org **Please**

**complete this questionnaire and
return it to The Coalition for a Better
Memphis No later than 5**

p.m., Friday, June 6, 2008 *Please answer all
questions carefully – your responses will be printed on the CBM website
EXACTLY as they are provided to us.*

How does your education and experience in qualify you for this position?

I have twenty years of directly related experience with the Assessor's office. For the last eight years, I have served as the Chief Administrator for the office. I have a total of 24 years of public service with Shelby County. I have served under three assessors and participated in five successful reappraisals. To effectively manage the Assessor's' office one must possess a wide range of knowledge from customer service to how to properly implement management decisions.

486-8007

Based on your awareness of voter concerns, what should be the priorities of the Shelby County Assessor's office during the next four years?

Fair and equitable property values for all property owners. Professional customer service. Identifying and maintaining information on all properties regarding ownership, property address, appraisals, and property description.

What factor(s) will affect the 2009 re-appraisal?

The exceptionally high number of foreclosures. Percentage of vacancies experienced by the commercial property owners. High number of abandoned and empty homes. Marketability of homes. Cap rates for commercial properties. Validated sales. Property characteristics (age, condition, size, etc.).

How efficient and up-to-date is the present technology in our Assessor's office?

State of the art CAMA (commuter assisted mass appraisal application) system. This exact application has been adopted by the State of Tennessee to be used to value ninety counties throughout the state. The Assessor's Web site was the first in Shelby County and in the state of Tennessee; the site provides customer service and first-line request for property reviews. This site also allows personal property owners to file their mandated property schedules on line annually. All maps are digitally generated and maintained.

Is the process for appealing an appraisal fair and equitable and if not, how could it/and should it be changed?

Yes, the process is fair and equitable and provides several levels of appeal. Allowing online filing of an appeal would be a great benefit to the property owner as well as providing all comparable properties used to appraise each home.

The Assessor's office is located on Mullins Station Road which presents a transportation problem for some citizens. How do you plan to address this issue?

It is important that the downtown office remains open, and every effort will be made to ensure the taxpayers of this accessible location. Several Shelby County commissioners and Memphis city council individuals often hold town meetings throughout the county. I would coordinate efforts with these individuals and make certain that assessor's staff is available to attend these meetings to address appraisal issues. Also, I will increase community outreach activities and public service announcements.

With the Charter Commission evaluating the merits of appointments versus election of this office, do you have an opinion on which is the better method?

Personally, I feel that this office should be elected for two reasons. **First**, the Assessor is responsible for the valuation of all properties within the seven municipalities that make up Shelby County. The Assessor must be flexible enough to entertain the concerns of everyone and make decisions that are fair for everyone. Being appointed may lead one to believe that their loyalty is to the body that appointed them and their decisions may be slanted in that direction.

Second, property ownership is the most valued achievement for many individuals. The valuation of the property and the assessment of it is a very personal matter and should not be considered an administrative process. One's property appraisal may determine one's estate worth, available equity for a refinance, required level of insurance, state holder for a student loan, bond for release, a comparison for another investment. Property ownership is a right that should be respected and every effort should be made to maintain the pride and dignity associated with it.