

COALITION FOR A BETTER MEMPHIS
Shelby County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire
Election Date: May 4, 2010

Name: John Pellicciotti _____

District for which you are running: District 4

Section 1: Qualifications and Background (2 questions)

Section 2: Vision and Strategies (4 questions)

Section 3: Improving the Education System (4 questions)

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

- 1. Describe your qualifications for holding the office of Shelby County Commissioner. (Please answer in the space below and attach a resume.)**

I bring to the table a strong combination of business, community, and political experience provide me with a solid foundation from which to make decisions. My business experience has enabled me to identify \$5M-\$10M in cost saving opportunities in the 6 weeks I have been on the commission. My involvement in philanthropic endeavors has given me the foundation to understand the impact of my decisions across all socio-economic groups. Furthermore, I have demonstrated my ability to work with people from both parties, as evidenced by my appointment with bipartisan support. Finally, my conservative values mirror the values of the people of District 4.

- 2. What events or experiences caused you to decide to run for this office?**

The repeated budget issues we have had at all levels of government make it essential for individual citizens to step up and help straighten out our government. I have become frustrated by the continued lack of prioritization within all levels of government, and feel that failing to prioritize has lead to the wasteful spending of 10's, if not 100's of millions of tax dollars. I believe that I have the experience and the ability to impact these decisions and help focus the role government plays to three areas- Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Education.

2. VISION AND STRATEGIES

NAME: _____JOHN PELLICCIOTTI_____

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing Shelby County in the next four years?

The three biggest challenges facing Shelby County over the next four years are creating a sustainable budget, stabilizing The Med, and Economic Development.

The county's \$1.7B of debt limits the flexibility of our government to address various challenges that fall on government to solve. In order to address this issue, we must quit letting programs that are good be obstacles to those that are best. An example of a good program might be the HOV lanes on I-40, but when compared to The Med, can we really say they were the best use of taxpayer dollars?

The Med must be stabilized as it is a key part of our city's infrastructure. Not only is The Med the safety net hospital for those who have nowhere else to go, it is also the lynchpin in our care network for the most trauma incidents. We must find a way to make the hospital financially viable to be certain that their services are available for everything from tragic car accidents to saving our police officers who suffer gunshot wounds.

Finally, we must create economic growth in our community. Job growth will provide our fellow citizens with the opportunity to provide for their families while improving the County balance sheet through increased revenues. We must develop and maintain a climate that encourages small businesses to start in Shelby County, medium business to grow here, and large corporations to relocate to our community.

2. Shelby County's debt is seen by many people as a threat to county government. How would you propose that the county pay down its debt? How would you prevent additional debt in the future?

Just as with personal finance, Shelby County must set priorities if we expect to reduce the \$1.7B in debt we currently have. As we reduce ineffective programs, the cost savings of those programs should be split between debt reduction and the lowering of property tax rates. Since much of the debt was taken on to build schools, we must find a way to limit the expense of building new schools that is associated with the school funding formulas. I believe that the Special School district legislation currently making its way through the Tennessee Legislature may help to address this problem. New debt should be taken on only when required to meet a statutory requirement or when it reduces operating expenses sufficiently to cover the associated payments.

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- 3. The Memphis City Council has taken steps over the last few years attempting to shift the burden of funding both city and county schools to Shelby County residents. What are your views regarding the best way to fund public education of Shelby County and Memphis children?**

It is my opinion that the Special School district legislation may be able to help address this problem. Ideally, if we are able to lock in the current school district borders, then the tax revenues from those districts should be used to fund the schools in the district. I believe that one of the key components to school funding going forward is to improve the percentage of money that makes its way into the classroom. The current teachers to administrator ratios indicate to me that too many dollars never make it into our classrooms.

- 4. Some people believe that urban communities should adopt policies that encourage what is called “smart growth.” Do you believe Shelby County should have a general policy about new residential and commercial developments? If so, what should that policy be?**

Shelby County needs to have responsible development policies. I believe the “smart growth” movement brings good ideas to the forefront and those ideas, where appropriate, should be included into the upcoming unified development codes. We must also keep in mind that there are still a number of rural areas in Shelby County that need to be considered as we implement new policies around development.

SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2010

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1. What do you regard as the greatest obstacle or barrier to economic growth in Shelby County today? What can the County Commission do to reduce that impediment?

I don't believe that there is a single greatest obstacle facing economic growth in Shelby County right now. The axis of crime, workforce skills, and the Memphis City Schools education system make combine to create a major barrier to creating new jobs, attracting new talent and expanding our economy. As a Commissioner I am supportive of crime reduction programs and serve on the Drug Court Task Force. I believe we need to be creative in finding ways to combat crime and give our community a sense of safety. To address workforce skills, the County Commission should push all participants in Community Services to learn marketable skills. We need to "teach people to fish" whenever possible. The County Commission must support initiatives that simultaneously address each of these issues if we are to be successful. As a Commissioner I do and will support creative education initiatives including, but not limited to charter schools and vouchers.

2. What is your philosophy about offering incentives to companies that are considering major new investments or job expansions in Shelby County?

I believe that we must continue to offer incentives in the short term to encourage growth in our community. The key though will be transforming Shelby County so that it is competitive based on our workforce, natural resources and general low cost of living as opposed to what one time incentives we offer. We can do these things by lowering the cost of government, investing in key areas like education and workforce development, and addressing the socio-economic challenges of poverty and crime in our community.

NAME: _____JOHN PELLICCIOTTI_____

3. What is your view regarding the best way to address financing of The Med and the need for public health options?

The Med is a critical component of Shelby County's medical infrastructure. We must continue to solicit from the State of Tennessee the money due to The Med for uncompensated care. The Federal government is providing the State with \$81M for services directly provided by The Med, but passes on less than \$30M of that to the hospital. We should continue to identify ways to reduce the operating expense of The Med, without impacting the quality of care or services being provided there. Ultimately, we need to make sure that those in need of critical care always have the ability to receive it.

4. When you complete your service as commissioner, what do you want your legacy to be?

While I'm not running for office to leave a legacy, I would like my service as Commissioner for Shelby County to produce three things. First, I want the county to have a solid financial foundation. This is necessary for the long term viability of our community and to give us the ability to meet any new challenges that may arise. Second, I believe that we can make all of Shelby County a safe place to live, work, and play. We must do this to stop the flight of people away from our great county. Finally, I would like to see this community serve as an example of how education can and must be reformed to meet the changing requirements of the new century. We have the talent, natural resources, and the ability to accomplish all of these things, but we must have the leadership throughout the community come together to see them to fruition.

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NAME: _____JOHN PELLICCIOTTI_____

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Summary

Professional and dynamic leader in the community with a focus on reduced government spending and economic development. Able to build consensus amongst people of various social and economic backgrounds.

Academic Credentials

Bachelor of Business Administration, University of Memphis
Masters of Arts, Political Science, University of Memphis (In progress)

Professional Objectives

To give back to the Shelby County community that has provided me with significant opportunities.

Business Experience

Owner- Personal Touch Bodywerks- Small business focusing on auto body repair and classic car restoration

Business Consultant- Self employed- Consulting for various business entities on how to leverage technology to improve business efficiencies to lower costs, increase sales, and improve customer experiences.

Technology Sales- Pomeroy- Technology sales for the past 13 years.

Additionally, I have been an active investor in various other small enterprises. Each of these investments has required varying skills including budgeting, process management, and long range planning.

Community Experience

Shelby County Commissioner- Appointed Jan. 2010.

Board of Directors- Neighborhood Christian Center- The Neighborhood Christian Center focuses on bringing Christian values into the inner city. Various programs include scholarships for children heading to college, marriage classes, and new mother classes.

Vice President- Help the Least of These- Help the Least of These is an international missions organization with NGO status in Kenya and seeking NGO status in other countries. This organization has focused heavily on children's ministries having opened an orphanage, a preschool, multiple elementary programs, a youth program, and various medical clinics over the past 5 years.

Board of Directors- Rotary Club of Memphis East

Board of Directors- Success for Charter Schools

Member Hope Presbyterian

Soccer coach- Christ United Methodist soccer camp

Eagle Scout- Boy Scouts of America