

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

Name: Mark Luttrell

Section 1: Qualifications and Background (2 questions)

Section 2: Vision and Strategies (3 questions)

Section 3: Improving the System (2 questions)

QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

- 1. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding the office of Shelby County mayor. (*Please answer in the space below. You may attach a resume or other description to provide us with additional detail.*)**

Over thirty years as a successful professional administrator providing positive and visionary leadership, managing multi-million dollar budgets and thousands of employees. Serving the past eight years as Shelby County Sheriff, I fixed serious budget problems, freed the jail from federal supervision, and working with the community, made real progress in the fight against crime; thus gaining positive national recognition and reelection. And, as sheriff, I got to know every neighborhood in the county, often under trying circumstances. I have a good sense of the issues facing the citizens of Shelby County.

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

I ran for sheriff because I saw there was a job to be done and I thought I was qualified to do it. An important department of government needed strong administration, the application of good management principles and a vision of leadership. The same situation now applies to the Office of Mayor. In tough times we need to make the most out of resources, continue the discipline of debt reduction, secure The Med, and build support for public safety, education, and economic development. I like challenges and am running with the urging and support of a cross section of the county because I believe I can do the job.

NAME: MARK LUTTRELL

2. VISION AND STRATEGIES

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

- 1. Economic development (More and better jobs particularly in the private sector.)**
- 2. Financial stability for the Med (The Med must remain a permanent fixture of our health care system.)**
- 3. Good resource management resulting in a reduced debt at the present tax rate or lower.**

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?

Good management and responsible utilization of resources is the key to any debt reduction and fiscal responsibility. I point to prior success as a key to what I will do in the future. In addition there is a debt reduction plan for the county in place and working surely even if slowly. The fiscal discipline that has been a hallmark of my past service will keep the reduction moving at a faster pace. Economic development that increases revenue is needed for really rapid progress. Increased taxation is not the answer.

3. Are you satisfied with the economic growth (jobs and income) of Shelby County today? If not, what should the county government do to improve economic development efforts?

No one should be satisfied with the economic growth of Shelby County today. Part of the problem of course are national and international trends that we can do little about, but we must face the fact that our best hope for improvement is to make our community more attractive, a place where people want to live and industry and business want to locate. That means that greater safety and better education and social relations must continue to be goals of the public and private sectors alike. We as a community have much work to do but must keep our eyes on what really matters. Meanwhile, all governments and businesses must work together to tell the world about the good and potential we know is already here. Togetherness and aggressiveness are keys. So is planning. Setting goals and measuring progress towards them must be a priority.

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IMPROVING THE SYSTEM

- 1. 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?**

Absolutely! Only I would say, in light of past history, “smarter growth.” This involves greenways, retail, medical, and recreational components currently in place. Much has already been invested in infrastructure that is currently underutilized, partly as a result of poor or no planning for growth over many years. We must take advantage of underutilized services and make sure that ALL future decisions are made with the good of the whole in mind.

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

I start from the premise that The Med must be a permanent part of our health system and needs a stable source for adequate funding and we must look at the issues from all angles. As I have done with all that I have previously managed, I would first look at the internal budgeting and operations of The Med. (I would not take a “hands off” approach.) Secondly, I would review as realistically as possible, if The Med can continue to operate as a stand alone facility. What might be some alternatives? Perhaps there are ways to reduce the current burden on The Med? Maybe by more reliance on health clinics, etc. In any case, we know that current funding problems come from several sources; the increasing number of uninsured requiring treatment, partial reimbursement from our own state of Tennessee and little from Mississippi and Arkansas for treating their residents. We need renewed dialog with these governments and, hopefully, new administrations with more understanding of our problems and responsibilities.

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