

IVI-IPO 2012 COOK COUNTY BOARD OF REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE December, 2011 DISTRICT: 3rd PARTY:
Democratic

NAME: Larry R. Rogers,
Jr.

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CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: **Committee to Re-elect Larry R. Rogers, Jr., P.O. Box 64780, Chicago, IL**
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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Allen Manuel (campaign
coordinator)

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 16,537 NUMBER REQUIRED: 4000

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates.

Elected Democratic Candidate for Cook County Board of Review, 3rd District, 2004 & 2008

Elected Board of Review Commissioner 3rd District, 2004 & 2008

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

None.

C) What is your primary occupation?

Commissioner, Cook County Board of Review and Attorney, Power Rogers & Smith, P.C.

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years.

Board of Directors, Providence-St. Mel School, Chicago, IL
Cook County Bar Association, President, 1st Vice President

**National Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division Chairperson, Member
Illinois Trial Lawyers of America, Board of Advocates
Association of Trial Lawyers of America, Member
Chicago Bar Association, Member
American Bar Association, Member
Lawyers Assistance Program, Board of Directors
100 Club, Board of Directors
Operation PUSH
Others upon request**

E) What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

I obtained an undergraduate degree in Managerial Economics in 1990 from the University of California, Davis and a J.D. degree from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1993. I have been a practicing attorney for over 17 years and have served at the Board of Review as Commissioner since December, 2004. Because the Board of Review is, by state statute, a quasi-judicial agency that hears evidence of property valuation, my background, knowledge, training, and experience as a commissioner for the last 7 years have made me uniquely qualified to decide valuation appeals on properties within Cook County.

F) What candidates have you supported in past elections? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign.

I have supported a variety of candidates over the years through formal endorsements, campaign contributions, and work on political campaigns. They include:

**Barrack Obama, President of the United States
Barrack Obama, Senator of the United States
Jesse Jackson, Jr., Congressman of the United States
Danny Davis, Congressman of the United States
Bobby Rush, Congressman of the United States
Patrick Quinn, Governor State of Illinois
Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President
Kwame Raoul, State Senator, 13th District
James T. Meeks, State Senator
Patricia Dowell, 3rd Ward Alderman
Will Burns, 4th Ward Alderman
Leslie Hairston, 5th Ward Alderman
Fredreena Lyle, 6th Ward former Alderman
Sandi Jackson, 7th Ward Alderman
Michelle Harris, 8th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
Marlow Colvin, State Representative**

*** many, many others including those below**

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far.

Various Elected Officials Including:

**- Karen Yarbrough, Proviso Township Committeeman
- Frank Zucharelli, Thornton Township Committeeman**

- Terry Matthews, Bremen Township Committeeman
- Tim Bradford, Rich Township Committeeman
- Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President & 4th Ward Alderman

- Robert Fioretti, 2nd Ward Alderman & Committeeman

- Patricia Dowell, 3rd Ward Alderman & Committeeman

- Leslie Hairston, 5th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- Roderick Sawyer, 6th Ward Alderman
- Fredreena Lyle, 6th Ward Committeeman
- Sandi Jackson, 7th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- Michelle Harris, 8th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- Anthony Beale, 9th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- John Pope, 10th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- John Daley, 11th Ward Committeeman
- Marty Quinn & Michael Madigan, 13th Ward Alderman & Committeeman, respectively
- Joanne Thompson, 16th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- Matt O'Shea, 19th Ward Alderman & Committeeman

- Willie Cochran, 20th Ward Alderman & Committeeman

- Howard Brookins, 21th Ward Alderman & Committeeman
- Carrie Austin, 34th Ward Alderman & Committeeman

H) As concisely as possible, please state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally?

I have had the pleasure of serving the citizens of Cook County as the 3rd District Board of Review Commissioner for the past 7 years. The Board of Review is a quasi-judicial agency that hears appeals filed by property owners who believe their property has been overassessed, resulting in them being over taxed. While many businesses routinely file property tax appeals on an annual basis, many residential property owners and small businesses have not been aware of the appeals process, and therefore, have paid property taxes based upon over-inflated property values. To address this issue, I have worked hard to make more citizens aware of the appeals process so they too can avoid paying more than their fair share of property taxes. I have worked with numerous elected officials, churches and community organizations to provide the services of the office to the citizens by hosting community outreach programs within the townships, wards, and communities throughout my district and Cook County. Because I believe that information is power, I have taken the time to explain the property tax system in Cook County to educate property owners on the various ways in which they can ensure that they are not being both overassessed and overtaxed. Additionally, I have worked to make the agency more efficient by utilizing technology within the office. This has allowed us to manage the exponential increase in the number of property tax appeals filed, without increasing the number of employees. Most recently, in September, 2011, I was instrumental in the Board of Review launching an on-line property valuation

appeal process, making the agency accessible to property owners across Cook County from the comfort of their own homes.

In addition to the work that I have done, I also believe that as an attorney, I am uniquely qualified to serve as Commissioner. The Board of Review is a quasi-judicial agency, which hears property tax appeals on commercial, industrial, and some residential properties filed by lawyers. Hearing officers at the Board of Review do not assess property, but rather hear and weigh evidence presented on the value of parcels of property that are the subject of the appeal. Corporate owners of property who file appeals must be represented by attorneys to pursue property valuation appeals at the Board of Review. Given that the Board is a quasi-judicial agency that hears evidence, and that many appeals must be presented by an attorney, I believe it important to have commissioners who have similar qualifications to those who are appearing before the agency. I have been a trial attorney for 17 years representing individuals against corporations and entities that have caused them or their families harm due to corporate negligence and carelessness. I believe my background, training, and experience make me uniquely qualified to continue serving as commissioner of the Board of Review, 3rd District.

I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date?

I will spend whatever amount is necessary to educate the voters and deliver my campaign message to the voters within the Board of Review 3rd District. My campaign currently has in excess of \$250,000.00

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list?

My formal campaign staff consists of 5 individuals who have formal roles, with a host of others who have offered to volunteer their assistance. I have not compiled a formal list of volunteers.

1. Will you make this a full-time job? What other employment, if any, do you intend to hold?

I have successfully carried out my duties as commissioner while maintaining my law practice. Because my law firm employs 13 attorneys, I am able to manage both positions without difficulty as evidenced by my regular meetings with County leadership, appearances before the County Board of Commissioners, and active participation in community outreach programs throughout Cook County.

2. Will you accept or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers, contractors or employees of this office?

I will not and have not accepted political contributions from potential suppliers, contractors or employees of the Board of Review.

3. Will you accept or have you accepted contributions from attorneys, title insurers or property owners who do business with this office?

I have only accepted political contributions from citizens who have chosen to support my candidacy, including, but not limited to attorneys, title insurers, and property owners. However, I have steadfastly honored the contribution limitations imposed by state statute.

4. Will you employ or have you employed staff in your office who hold other public sector employment concurrently?

I have from time to time employed staff who have been uniquely familiar with various communities within my district and Cook County, including, a one or two who have held public sector employment. I currently do not employ any persons who hold elected office or any public sector employment to my knowledge.

5. Will you employ or have you employed staff in your office who have either outside employment or contracts with entities which do business with the County?

I do not employ any staff in my office who hold outside employment (except for possibly holding a 2nd job) or who have contracts with entities which do business with the county.

6. In what circumstances should the Board of Review contract for outside professional services and what criteria would you implement for letting contracts? Please comment on any existing abuses and how you would correct them.

The Board of Review very rarely if ever contracts for outside professional services.

7. Do you support Patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?

I do not support patronage in hiring or promoting public employees.

8. Do you support Affirmative Action?

I do support Affirmative Action.

9. How can the Board of Review act to increase assessments on undervalued properties?

As a quasi-judicial agency, the Board of Review can increase the assessed value of undervalued properties where local municipalities and taxing districts present evidence in support of increasing the valuation of said properties. As with any decision rendered by the Board of Review, sound evidence must be presented on valuation to support a decision, irrespective of whether the property is overvalued or undervalued.

10. How will you ensure that all tax appeals are given equal consideration without regard to political and partisan concerns?

By employing competent and qualified personnel, I have and will continue to ensure that property valuation appeals are considered fairly, justly and impartially. I have instituted safe guards to preclude private meetings with Board of Review personnel and maintained the highest ethics with regard to how appeals are considered and decided by my staff.

11. What programs do you support to inform property owners of their right to appeal their assessments?

I support any and all programs which provide taxpayers with information about the tax appeal process. It is important that the process be equally accessible to taxpayers throughout Cook County. Through our community outreach programs and faith-based outreach programs, we have reached tens of thousands of property owners per year, throughout Cook County to advise them of the Board of Review appeal process and to bring the process directly to the community. I hope to continue this and other efforts to make the Board of Review a taxpayer friendly office that is known as one that serves Cook County residents.

12. Do you favor legislation requiring notification to governmental bodies of tax assessment appeals?

I support the concept of notifying governmental bodies of the pursuit of property assessed valuation appeals filed before the Board of Review so that they can consider whether to oppose the appeal. I would need to review any specific legislation before formally agreeing or disagreeing with what it proposes.

13. How should the administration of the Board of Review be improved?

As with everything, there is always room for improvement. My staff and I meet and confer regularly on ways in which we can do a better job. These discussions primarily center on how we can be more effective in educating the public on the property valuation appeal process and how we can help citizens ensure accurate and fair valuation of their property. We can and have provided information to the Assessor's office on what we are finding in communities to assist the Assessor in coming to appropriate property valuations when he reassess communities. These and

undoubtedly other areas are ripe for improvement within the administration of the Board of Review to make it an even better agency in the months and years to come.

14. Do you support creation of an Office of Taxpayer Advocate/Ombudsman reporting directly to the Cook County Board of Commissioners, to facilitate taxpayer requests for information and assistance by helping individuals navigate the numerous offices involved?

The creation of an Office of Taxpayer Advocate/Ombudsman has been mentioned, but no detailed plan has been put forth, therefore, without knowing what it would entail or consist of, makes it difficult to address this question. I do believe that ways to increase taxpayer understanding and navigation of the property tax appeal process should be explored in an effort to make this area of government work better for the people it serves. Maintaining an independent agency for the consideration and hearing of property valuation appeals is important to the property tax appeal system, because citizens need an independent means of challenging values set by the Cook County Assessor. The Board of Review serves this much needed function by hearing evidence on valuation, and rendering well-reasoned and justified opinions on value that ensure fairness in the valuation process.

15. What safeguards would you implement to prohibit employees from doing political work on county time?

We inform employees of the Board of Review that political work on county time is prohibited and that violations are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Providing employees instruction on this and other rules within the agency, combined with adequate supervision, and employee trust can effectively safeguard against employees violating this and other rules. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the foregoing, no rule or safeguard can guarantee compliance. With this, or any policy, employers must be clear about what they expect and employees must be clear on what is expected to ensure the effective implementation of policy in the workplace.