

IVI-IPO 2006 COUNTY COMMISSIONER QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE January 5, 2006 DISTRICT: 9th Cook County PARTY: Republican

NAME: Peter N. Silvestri

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Tom Manion

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 4600 NUMBER REQUIRED: 265

Please use an additional sheet to complete the following background information:

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

Member, Board of Education-Community Unit School District 401
Elected (1977-1983 /President 1981-1983)

Associate Director of Labor, State of Illinois
Appointed (1988-1994)
(Previously Hearing Officer and Chief Hearing Officer 1982-1988)

Member, Village of Elmwood Park Zoning Board of Appeals
Appointed (1985-1988)

Trustee, Village of Elmwood Park
Appointed to fill vacancy (1988-1989)

President, Village of Elmwood Park
Elected (1989-present)

County Commissioner, Cook County
Elected (1994-present)

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

I have never have been a candidate for any other office.

C) What is your primary occupation?

Primary occupation is County Commissioner. I am a licensed attorney in Illinois.

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

In addition to the elected offices listed above, civic activities for the past ten years have included the following:

Member, Executive Committee- West Central Municipal Conference

Member, Chicagoland Metro Mayors Caucus

Italian American Political Action Committee (IPAC)

Justinian Society of Lawyers

Mont Clare Elmwood Park Lions Club

Mont Clare Elmwood Park Kiwanis

Saint Vincent Ferrer Religious Education Advisory Board

Former member, Board of Directors- Norwood Park Senior Home

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 have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from De Paul University (1979) and

A Juris Doctorate from De Paul College of Law (1982). I previously taught Real Estate Law at Triton College (1982-1984).

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

I have not taken an active role in anyone else's campaign, except for local village board candidates in the Village of Elmwood Park.

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

The process for seeking endorsements has just begun, and as such, no formal notifications have been received. In my last campaign for this office I received the following endorsements, among others:

Chicago Tribune

Chicago Sun Times

Pioneer Press

(Serving the following communities in my district: Suburban- Park Ridge, Norridge, Harwood Heights, River Grove, Elmwood Park, Oak Park and River Forest. Chicago- Galewood, Mont Clare, Harlem Irving, Edison Park, Norwood Park)

Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI-IPO)

Chicago Fraternal Order of Police

Chicago Firefighters Union

Teamsters Local 738

Italian American Political Action Committee

Mexican American Political Action Committee

National Organization of Women (NOW)

Personal PAC

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Laborers International Union of North America, Local 1

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 believe I should be endorsed over the other candidates because of my experience in government, my past service and constituency based services to the people of my district and the county, my broad based support over the years from a variety of different types of organizations, my open dialogue with these diverse groups, and my ability and reputation of working with Republicans, Democrats and Independents to accomplish positive results. My personal goals for the upcoming term is the reform of county government through reorganization of the bureaucracy, professionalization and redirection of the administrative structure, the elimination of politically based hirings, reduction of pin-stripe patronage through service and consultant contracts and a refocusing of public service among employee groups through a better interaction with management and worker.

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

Campaign budget- \$250,000; Current funds- \$200,000 approximately

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

Not finalized- Anticipate 1.5 campaign staff and approximately 100 volunteers

IVI-IPO 2006 COUNTY BOARD COMMISSIONER QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2

	YES	NO	
1.	X		Do you support removing the cap on the number of abortions performed at Stroger Hospital?
The issue must be based on an opinion to be offered by the health bureau that medical care is negatively impacted by the cap and must be considered within budgetary constraints			
2.	X		Is the distribution of County funded health facilities sufficient?
3.		X	Does your district need additional health care facilities?
ESSAY		Please elaborate.	
4.	ESSAY		How would you solve the budget gap while still ensuring that health and other basic human services would continue to be provided?
The Cook County Board of Commissioners must require the reduction of expenditures prior to an increase in revenues. The budget gap anticipated in the current proposed budget should be eliminated by the following measures:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Restructuring of administrative services so as to a) consolidate personnel, finance, and public information functions, b) reduce the number of administrators and managers in these areas and other areas effected by the restructuring; 			

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Seek statutory authority to eliminate various elected offices so as to combine these services into the general county operation; 3. Seek statutory authority to allow intergovernmental agreements with townships or local municipalities to perform various services that could be better administered at the local level. (i.e. building enforcement, police patrol in unincorporated areas) 4. Eliminate positions which have been vacant for periods over two years; 5. Eliminate consultant contracts and service contracts which do not fulfill the basic mission of public health and safety; 6. Re-evaluate the number of community clinics and determine if partnerships with private clinics and hospitals would not better service our constituents; 7. Increase group purchasing with the City of Chicago, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to reduce per unit costs. This may include all types of insurance, payroll preparation, and the purchase of basic commodities. 8. Prioritize county government services to determine if any should be eliminated, reduced, or accomplished by working with other governments.
5.	X		Do you favor a freeze in the property tax rate?
6.	X		Do you support extension of the 7% property tax cap beyond the expiration date?
7.		X	Should County Board approval be required prior to the creation of TIF districts in Cook County?
8.	ESSAY		What should be done by the County Board to foster affordable housing, including subsidized housing?
Cook County must work with the City of Chicago and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (a consortium of municipalities across northeastern Illinois) to encourage developers to build individualized subsidized homes, rehabilitate existing rental units and provide guidance to such developers with respect to county HOME funds, and other federal and state funds (if any). Cook County must continue to develop tax assessment relief and tax exemptions for such housing. I have supported past efforts in this regard and supported the additional recorder's fees for such purposes.			
9.	X		Will you support equitable geographic distribution of affordable housing throughout the county?
			Will you support an amendment to the County Human Rights Ordinance to protect Section 8 voucher holders from discrimination in housing
10.		X	in buildings of any size without exemptions?
11.	X		if owner occupied buildings of 6 or <u>less</u> units were exempted?
12.	X		Do you support lifting the moratorium on restoration of Forest Preserve land?
			With specific guidelines, reasonable standards and community outreach.
13.		X	Do you support the sale or transfer of forest preserve land to private interests?
			Please explain your answer.
14.	ESSAY		What proposals do you support to reduce overcrowding at Cook County Jail and the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center?
The problems associated with the Juvenile Detention Center are complex. I believe these problems can be categorized as follows: 1) Failure to provide an adequate quality of life- The staff and administration have failed to make the facility "livable" for so many young people who come from a negative place. The primary purpose			

of the facility staff and administration should be providing a place where these young men and women see a positive example, role models, not jailors. I have received complaints regarding the manner in which young women must live on a day to day basis, without basic essentials, and how these young offenders can only visit with their loved ones once a week. The goal should be to build these young men and women into better citizens, to teach them the importance of basic self-respect and the importance of family. These policies discourage such development, even in the relatively short time they are at the facility. 2) Failure to provide an adequate school setting- Aides line the halls in an intimidating manner, students are allowed to sleep or just survive through various periods. This is not an appropriate setting and does not provide a positive setting to encourage young men and women to avoid a life of crime. 3) Failure of the juvenile court system to expeditiously handle these juvenile cases- It should be the court's highest priority to expedite adjudication of non-violent juvenile offenders.

The juvenile detention center would be less crowded if we encouraged a lifestyle there where these young men and women would not become repeat offenders and if the court would expedite these cases. The court must seek remedial sentences, including additional community service, rather than creating young men and women who become greater criminals. The court must expand its division which deals with these young offenders with a goal of removing as many of these offenders as quickly as possible.

15.	ESSAY	What should the County Board do to ensure that the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center provides adequate educational and vocational services to detainees?
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In order to ensure that Juvenile Detention Center detainees receive adequate educational and vocational services, the County must do the following:

1. Recruit administrators and teachers that are sincerely interested in working with these types of children and teens. These are positions that require more than a desire to teach; these positions require men and women dedicated to serving mainly minority children who come from negative backgrounds and are on the way to a life of crime if not enough positive interactions alter that course. These administrators and staff must recognize the unique children at the facility and that it is a government run detention center.
2. Create a more positive, friendlier environment at the facility. In my visits to the Center, it is my impression that the aides act more like guards and create a negative environment. These guards seem disinterested in anything but moving the detainees from this area to that area without any positive interpersonal dialogue.
3. Create a “blue ribbon” citizens advisory group, a local school council, to assist in setting policy, creating standards, and monitoring the progress of administrators, teachers, staff and students. This panel would include public and private school administrators and teachers, charitable organizations, civic organizations, a psychologist, an attorney, and representatives of the juvenile detention advocacy. I proposed this to President Stroger in a letter last August, just prior to his enlisting the assistance of the Anne Casey Foundation.
4. Review and determine if administration of the school should be privatized in order to better reach the goals determined by the school council.
5. Develop more interaction with various groups in an effort to increase the types of social and sports activities at the school. In addition, develop a relationship with business, commercial and industrial associations and labor organizations to assist in part time job placement and long term vocational planning.

16.	X		Do you support separating violent from non-violent offenders?
17.	X		Do you support separating juvenile from adult offenders?
18.	X		Do you favor work-release, electronic monitoring and other alternative sentencing programs?
19.	X		Do you support drug testing of potential or current County employees?
Should not be retroactive unless employee shows some sign of a problem. May be subject of collective bargaining in new hiring situations for most employees.			
20.	X		Do you support Affirmative Action?
21.	X		Do you favor restructuring the wage scale of county employees to correct disparities based on gender by instituting equal pay for jobs of comparable worth?
22.		X	Do you support patronage?
23.	X		Do you favor extending the Civil Service System to replace patronage in County employment?

24.	ESSAY		What should be done to eliminate patronage abuse in county government?
<p>In order to eliminate patronage abuse in county government, I would create a true civil service commission to create hiring practices consistent with those ordered under the Shakman decree. In addition, I would require all job postings to be published in a major newspaper, with copies to the members of the Board, and the Civil Service Commission. As a follow-up, the names and addresses of those hired would be supplied to the Board of Commissioners and a semi-annual listing would be published in the major newspaper. These efforts would “open up” the process and render it more difficult to hire from one area of our county. It is hard to believe that most non-exempt jobs are given to citizens of certain geographic areas,</p> <p>I would also support efforts to either change state law or enact home rule ordinances which would require the advice and consent of the Board of Commissioners on the hiring of administrative personnel of certain categories (i.e. Bureau Chiefs, heads of major departments, as defined by said ordinance). This could be similar to the state government.</p>			
25.	X		Do you favor permitting county employees to hold other public sector jobs concurrently?
26.	ESSAY		In what circumstances should the County contract for outside professional services?
<p>The County should contract with outside professional services when the scope and magnitude of the work is beyond the ability or immediate resources of the county administration and in cases where the nature of the services sought is so specialized that the county taxpayers would be better served financially and product-wise. This determination must consider the possibility of going out for competitive bid and verify the inability of the county to pursue such an option. These contracts must be transparent and be done after extensive review by the appropriate committee of the Board. I would support ordinances to require a “RFQ” (Request for Qualifications) in every case, and an “RFP” (Request for Proposals) in any case where the potential pool of contractors is great (i.e. construction projects). In cases where an “RFP” is appropriate, and “RFQ” need not be solicited. In addition, outside professional services should be contracted in those instances where the President or Board requires a highly specialized consultant in a specific situation, such as an attorney or financial advisor.</p>			
27.	ESSAY		In what circumstances should competitive bidding for contracts be required? Please comment on any existing abuses.
<p>Competitive bidding should be the accepted course of action in all cases, except those described above. Competitive bidding is the fairest, most open way to award work at the County and any deviation from this course of action must be justified as stated in the response to Question 26.</p>			
28.	X	X	Would you support contracting for outside services with companies located outside of Cook County? Why or why not?
<p>Depends on the ability to find companies within Cook County and degree of specialization of service.</p>			
29.	X		Will you accept or have you accepted campaign contributions from current or potential suppliers, employees or outside contractors?
30.	X		Is the County Ethics Ordinance adequate?
	ESSAY		Why or why not?
<p>As a primary sponsor of the current Ethics Ordinance, I believe it is more than adequate, but always open to improvement as circumstances present. In addition, I believe the ethics compliance staff of the county should be independent of the President’s Office- perhaps under the authority of the Inspector General (who also needs to be more independent of the President’s office), or an independent Ethics Review Commission of citizens appointed in part by the President, in part by the Board of Commissioners, in part by the Chief Judge’s Office, and in part by a non-governmental entity or entities to be defined.</p>			
31.		X	Do you support public financing of campaigns for this office?
32.	X		Do you support a campaign expenditure limit?
33.	X		Will you be a full-time Commissioner?

34.	ESSAY	What other employment, if any, do you intend to hold?
Since being elected in 1994, I have always held the part-time position of Elmwood Park Village President. The municipality is administered by a full-time village manager.		
35.	X	Will you open an office in your district?
I have always maintained a full-time office and a part-time auxiliary office in the District.		
36.	ESSAY	What will you do to ensure community involvement in identifying the concerns of the residents of your district?
<p>Community involvement is vitally important to me. I regularly meet with the Chicago aldermen, village presidents and township officials in my area to discuss current county issues. In addition, I sponsor community health fairs and tax appeal seminars, which always include public information town hall meetings and one on one communication. I sponsor information booths, which I usually attend, at community events, senior picnics and various other activities. I attend various meetings of local community groups and communicate with them when there are issues of special interest seeking their input and feedback. I have a district office that is known for its constituent services. In addition to regular day hours, it is open on Thursday evenings. I have a website, and interact through the internet with constituents. I annually publish a newsletter to all residents and routinely send press releases and guest editorials to the local newspapers. I distribute an informational brochure on county services to any public entity that will accept it- libraries, municipal and township buildings, etc.</p> <p>I unsuccessfully attempted to create various citizens advisory groups on specific topics- health care, senior issues and forest preserve issues. I am considering attempting these committees once again.</p> <p>My greatest obstacle in seeking this office the first time was the citizens' lack of information and knowledge about the county. I have always strived to change this lack of information through community outreach.</p>		
37.	X	Should candidates for Board President be prohibited from running concurrently from a district?