

May 1, 2025

Kristi Richardson
President
Village of Poplar Grove
200 Hill St.
Belvidere, IL 61008

Re: Administrative Hearing Officer

Dear President Richardson:

During our April 29, 2025 phone conversation you indicated an intent to make appointments in the near future and asked that I submit a brief synopsis of my background.

I have been the full time City Attorney for the City of Belvidere since 2003. In that role I administer all legal matters for the City and provide pertinent legal and business advice to the City's elected and appointed officials. My duties include providing legal advice and research, representing the City in litigation and administrative proceedings, reviewing and preparing all ordinances and contracts, and of course enforcing the City's codes and ordinances.

Prior to joining the City of Belvidere, I worked for seven years in private practice in McHenry County concentrating my practice in municipal law, banking law, commercial and residential real estate, bankruptcy, and commercial litigation. The firm represented such clients as the Village of Harvard, the Village of Lake in the Hills, the Village of Hebron, the City of Marengo, the Village of Algonquin, several other units of local government and special districts, Algonquin State Bank, Home State Bank and several construction firms.

In 2014 I completed the required training to serve as a hearing officer in compliance with the Illinois Municipal Code. Since that time, I have served as a hearing officer for the Village of Cherry Valley, the City of South Beloit, the Village of Poplar Grove and the Boone County Electoral Board. Serving as a hearing officer allows me to utilize my legal experience and background in a different manner. I am able to apply the facts of a specific case to the pertinent law at hand without the need to advocate for a specific position.

My wife and I have resided in Boone County since 2003 and have raised our two children in this wonderful community. Raising our family in the area has allowed me to broaden my local ties. I have served as an assistant swim coach for the former Belvidere Barracudas and have coached for BYB Baseball in the past.

If appointed, I look forward to continuing to the Village of Poplar Grove as its hearing officer. Accompanying this correspondence is a letter of engagement setting forth the terms of service.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Drella

May 1, 2025

Kristi Richardson
President
Village of Poplar Grove
200 Hill St.
Belvidere, IL 61008

Re: Administrative Hearing Officer

Dear President Richardson:


I am pleased to offer my services as an Administrative Hearing Officer to the Village of Poplar Grove in support of its administrative adjudication of code violations. As a Hearing Officer I will not provide any legal advice or services to the Village and an attorney client relationship will not be created. Rather, the role of the Hearing Officer will solely be to preside over administrative hearings, brought pursuant to Illinois statute and the Village's ordinances, and render impartial decisions related to alleged violations of the Village's codes.

The Village will be responsible for all needs associated with conducting administrative hearings, including but not limited to: 1) the prosecution of all matters brought before the Hearing Officer; 2) the provision of appropriate safe spaces to conduct the administrative hearings; 3) all record keeping functions; and 4) the provision of all materials necessary for administrative hearings (recording devices, forms etc.). As mentioned above, I will simply serve as an impartial Hearing Officer as required by relevant State statutes and the Village's Code.

My fee for serving as an Administrative Hearing Officer is \$150.00 per hour. Time may be billed for actual attendance at administrative hearings as well as time preparing for any hearings (review of pleadings etc.) and review of submitted documents (motions, orders etc.). I typically do not bill for travel time so long as the hearings are conducted within the Village. The Village shall indemnify, defend and hold me harmless from all claims, complaints, actions, suits, demands, damages, liabilities, obligations, settlements, judgments, costs and expenses (including attorney's fees and costs) which are in any way related to my service as a Hearing Officer for the Village of Poplar Grove including, but not limited to, conducting administrative hearings and rendering decisions as Hearing Officer. Either myself, or the Village may terminate my services as an Administrative Hearing Officer at any time and for any legal reason.

As you know, I currently serve as the full time City Attorney for the City of Belvidere. As I will not provide any legal advice or services (other than as Hearing Officer) to the Village of Poplar Grove, I do not believe any conflict of interest will arise. Further, we can typically schedule hearings that are convenient to the parties and in a manner that will not conflict with my regular duties as City Attorney for the City of Belvidere. On occasion, I may not be available for a regularly scheduled hearing (vacation, unavoidable timing conflicts etc.). In such an event, a mutually agreeable alternative date could be selected or the Village could elect to utilize another individual as Hearing Officer for that day.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Village's administrative hearing officer.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Drella

Agreed this _____ day of _____ 2025

Kristi Richardson
President