

MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

Summary of Minutes and Agenda Actions

Meeting of March 8, 2017

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics (COE) convened in the Biscayne Building, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite 820, Miami, FL, on March 8, 2017. Present were Commission Chair Judge Lawrence Schwartz and Commissioners Nelson Bellido, Judith Bernier and Marcia Narine Weldon. Also present were Joseph Centorino, Executive Director; Michael Murawski, Advocate; Gilma Diaz-Greco, Martha Perez and Radia Turay, Staff Attorneys; Rhonda Victor Sibilia, Communications Director; Rachele Cedeno, Executive Secretary; Robert Steinback, Nilda Olmo, Karl Ross and Breno Penichet, Investigators; Assistant Miami City Attorneys Xavier Alban and Jessica O'Neill, Mim Liong of Florida International University; Attorneys Ben Kuehne and Dan Daley; Patra Liu of the Office of Inspector General; Miami Herald reporter Doug Hanks and other members of the public. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Schwartz. A quorum was present.

I. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Narine Weldon made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2017, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bernier and unanimously approved (3-0 Bellido not yet arrived).

II. Public Comment

Gustavo Chacon discussed lobbyists for Uber and the County's regulation of them.

Christopher Davis discussed his complaint about the Uber CEO and stated he would keep an eye on the Ethics Commission.

III. Public Hearing regarding MIA Security Protocol Report

Executive Director Joseph Centorino explained the background of the MIA Security Protocol report and introduced investigator Robert Steinback, who summarized the changes made since the report was presented at the prior meeting. They included additional information, corrections to the report, as well as a provision suggestion that any policy adopted should include leeway for the Miami-Dade County Mayor due to the unique responsibilities of that office. There were no public speakers.

Commissioner Bellido made a motion to endorse the report's recommendations, including that the Board of County Commissioners adopt a policy regarding the use of special escorts through Miami International Airport's Office of Protocol and International Affairs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine Weldon and unanimously approved (4-0).

IV. Section Eight Requests

Staff Attorney Gilma Diaz-Greco had one request for a County employee to contract under the federally-funded Section 8 program, and, since he was not associated with the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department, recommended approval. Commissioner Bellido made a motion to support the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Bernier and unanimously approved (4-0).

V. Housing requests

Staff Attorney Diaz-Greco presented the requests of four County employees to seek assistance through programs overseen by the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department, and since neither they nor any of their family members oversee or administer the programs, recommended they be approved. Commissioner Bellido made a motion to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Narine Weldon and unanimously approved (4-0).

VI. Monthly Summary of Inquiries

Staff Attorney Radia Turay presented a Summary of Inquiries issued by the COE staff from January 28 through February 24th, of which three were briefly discussed.

VII. Executive Director's Report

--Executive Director Joseph Centorino presented the findings of a questionnaire administered by COE staff to regulatory employees of the city of Miami Beach as a follow up to a prior survey completed by them after they participated in intensive ethics training in 2013. He stated that he would present the results to city officials, which show significant improvement in the attitudes of those surveyed employees regarding the state of ethics in their departments and for the city as a whole.

--Mr. Centorino announced that more than 300 people had registered for the COE-sponsored conference, "Doing Business with Cuba: Legal, Ethical & Compliance Challenges," that will be held on March 10th at Barry University. Commissioner Bellido added that the intent of the event is to educate and host a "community dialog" on the subject.

--Mr. Centorino discussed legislation regarding Florida's Public Records law that is moving through the state legislature that may make it more difficult for plaintiffs to be awarded attorney fees in lawsuits where it is determined that public records have been improperly withheld.

VIII. Complaints

--Advocate Michael Murawski presented a status update and schedule for depositions on **C 16-34** regarding Frantz Pierre, with attorney for the respondent, Ben Kuehne, and stated he hoped to hold a public hearing on the complaint before the Commission during May.

The Ethics Commission convened in closed session at 10:42 a.m. Commissioners returned to open session at 10:51 a.m. and took the following action:

--Commissioner Bellido made a motion to support the Advocate's request for a Stay of **C 16-31**, pending the outcome of a criminal investigation by the State Attorney's Office. Commissioner Narine Weldon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved (**4-0**).

--Commissioner Narine Weldon made a motion to find No Legal Sufficiency a complaint (**C 16-38**) filed against North Miami Councilman Scott Galvin for allegedly violating the County Charter's Citizens' Bill of Rights by knowingly furnishing false information on a public matter. The investigation found that his comments regarding a police shooting were "the result of simple miscommunication." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bellido and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

IX. Old Business

None

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.



Prepared by Rhonda Victor Sibilia, Communications Director