

Summary of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust Meeting Held on July 14, 2021

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public held a Commission Meeting on July 14, 2021. The following actions took place:



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No Probable Cause Found in Case Involving a Division Director at the County Human Resources Department

C 21-10-04: The Ethics Commission found No Probable Cause that Helena Denham-Carter, the Division Director of the Benefits and Employee Support Services Division at the County's Human Resources Department, violated the Exploitation of Official Position section of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance. The complaint, filed by a retired County employee, alleged that Ms. Denham-Carter had a subordinate alter the benefit election of an employee and had another subordinate take her daughter to a medical appointment. Furthermore, the complaint alleged that Ms. Denham-Carter hired a family friend for a clerical position even though her friend was not the top-ranked candidate.

The Ethics Commission noted that there has since then been a revision to the County's Conflict of Interest Disclosure for hiring panelists, managers, or persons making hiring recommendations. Going forward, these persons must disclose "any personal relationships that may affect their ability to be impartial in the process and which may present a potential conflict of interest in the recruitment process."

The Ethics Commission also directed staff to engage with the League of Cities with the goal of making the new County procedure a best practices model in all of 34 cities in Miami-Dade County.

Complaint Filed Against Town of Coral Surfside Commissioner Dismissed

C 21-12-05: A complaint filed against Town of Surfside Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer was found to be Not Legally Sufficient and was dismissed. The complaint alleged that Commissioner Salzhauer violated the Truth in Government section of the Citizen's Bill of Rights when she knowingly posted false information about the Surfside Mayor on the Nextdoor app.

Complaint Filed Against Village of Miami Shore Vice-Mayor Dismissed

C 21-14-05: A complaint filed against Village of Miami Shores Vice-Mayor Daniel Marinberg was found to be Not Legally Sufficient and was dismissed. The complaint alleged that Vice-Mayor Marinberg violated the County Ethics Code when he published personal information on the Nextdoor app about the complainant's father with the intent of "bullying" the complainant.

Complaint Filed Against County Commissioner Dismissed

C 21-16-06: A complaint filed against Miami-Dade County Commissioner Eileen Higgins was found to be Not Legally Sufficient and was dismissed. The complaint alleged that Commissioner Higgins violated the County Ethics Code when she was engaged in "bias, discrimination and abuse of power" involving a plan regarding a proposed street closure.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of training, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.