



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Investigative Report

Investigator: Karl Ross

**CASE  
CLOSED**

Case No.: K13-120	Case Name: Sweetwater towing contracts	Date Open:	
Complainant(s):	Subject(s): Mayor Manuel Marono, et al.	Sept. 27, 2014	Date: <u>5/27/14</u>

Allegation(s):

CEO Executive Director Joseph Centorino received information regarding possible irregularities with respect to the towing of vehicles in Sweetwater; in particular, a company linked to former Mayor Manuel Maroño (Southland Towing).

Relevant Ordinances:

The Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance (Sec. 2.11.1 of the Miami-Dade County Code) prohibits *exploitation of official position* in subsection (g), prohibits *transacting business with the [city] through a corporation* in subsection (d), and prohibits *conflicting employment that would impair independence of judgment* in subsection (j), among the various provisions of the county's ethics code that might be applicable.

**Investigation:**

***Interviews***

On or about Oct. 22, 2013, COE spoke to law enforcement sources regarding the extent of any state and federal investigation into the towing situation in Sweetwater, and inquiries were made on behalf of COE, indicating that an investigation was in fact under way. This fact was subsequently confirmed in media reports in October and November.

As a result of the situation noted above, a decision was made to place the COE investigation on "monitor" status on November 25, 2013. This continued through May 2014.

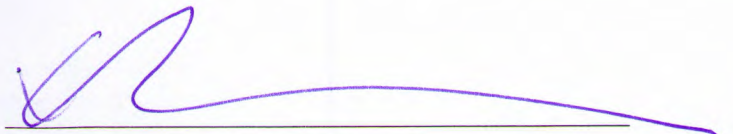
Further inquiries were made with federal and local authorities on May 5, 2014, and, based on the information provided, it was decided the COE case should be closed.

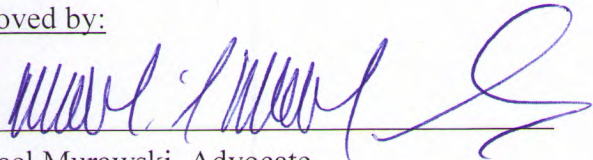
***Document/Audio/Video Review:***

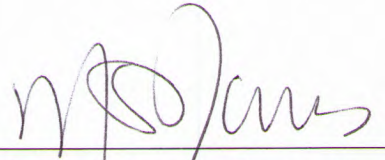
City vendor applications and related documents pertaining to towing services were reviewed, as were Florida incorporation documents, and also internal memos from former Sweetwater Police Chief Roberto Fulgueira to towing vendors and to former Mayor Maroño.

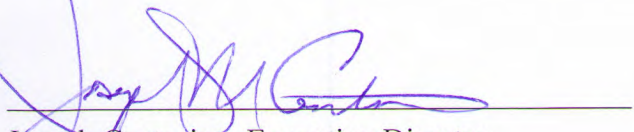
**Conclusion(s):**

Based on the foregoing, the investigation should be closed at this time.

  
Karl Ross, COE Investigator

Approved by:  
  
Michael Murawski, Advocate

  
Miriam S. Ramos, Deputy General Counsel

  
Joseph Centorino, Executive Director

5/27/14  
Date