



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Investigative Report

Investigators: Manuel W. Diaz, Breno Penichet

Case No.:	Case Name:	Date Open:	Date Completed:
K14-041/ C14-022	Whistleblower Blaha		
Complainant(s): Anthony Blaha	Subject(s): Daniel Edwards	1/16/14	4/30/14

Allegation(s):

Anthony Blaha (Blaha), a Miami-Dade County employee, filed a COE complaint alleging retaliation for his Whistleblower activities.

Relevant Ordinances:

Division 6. Protection of Employees Disclosing Specified Information

Secs. 2-56.28-16, 2-56.28.17, Miami-Dade County Code (Copy in investigative file)

Investigation:

Interviews

Anthony Blaha (Blaha) – Engineer 2 - Miami-Dade County Department of Public Works (DPW)

Blaha was interviewed by the COE. He advised that in 1998 he assisted the Miami-Dade Inspector General's Office (OIG) and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office (SAO) in the criminal prosecution of a Miami-Dade County vendor. At the time, he was employed by the County and assigned to the Miami-Dade Airport (MIA).

Blaha explained that since his assistance, he has been identified as a trouble maker and received a number of intradepartmental transfers. Blaha provided the COE with a binder containing supporting documentation for his allegation. (The binder has been made part of the investigative file.)

Blaha advised that the most recent alleged retaliation is in the form of a Disciplinary Action Report (DAR) issued on March 4, 2014, by his supervisor Daniel Edwards (Edwards).

Daniel Edwards, DPW Master Planning Section Chief

Edwards was interviewed by the COE. He explained that Blaha was transferred to his section in September 2013, as the result of an organizational restructure. Blaha was transferred from another department because of his seniority with the County. Blaha replaced a less senior but more experienced employee. Blaha currently occupies a supervisor position, but because of his lack of technical expertise in the field, is currently assigned to perform entry level functions. Edwards assigned a section employee to train Blaha until he gains the necessary proficiency.

According to Edwards, he assigned Blaha and another employee to complete a project required as part of the recent Consent Decree agreed upon between Miami-Dade and the U.S. Federal Courts. Edwards estimated that the project would take nine days for two employees to complete. He explained that the project consisted of a transfer of data in Excel using a Miami-Dade Atlas. Blaha failed to complete his portion of the project and absented himself during the period without excuse. (See DAR in file for further explanation) Blaha, according to Edwards, is a salaried employee.

Edwards wrote Blaha the DAR for lack of performance and for the manner in which he addressed his supervisors. He consulted with Miami-Dade Human Resources at each level of the process.

Edwards explained that Blaha was transferred to his section. Prior to his transfer Edwards was given no information concerning his training and technical expertise. He had never met Blaha prior to the transfer.

According to Edwards, the first time that he heard that Blaha had assisted law enforcement, was during a meeting requested by Blaha to address the allegations in the DAR. The meeting was held on March 4, 2014. During the meeting, Blaha's attorney presented a two-page summary of Blaha's allegations of retaliation while a Miami-Dade employee.

Edwards denied the allegation of retaliation and was clear that the DAR was issued as a result of Blaha's failure to perform a directive.

Documents reviewed.

Binder provided by Blaha with allegations and supporting documentation.
Disciplinary Action Report (Copy in file)

Conclusions:

Report turned over to Ethics Commission Advocate for probable cause recommendation.