



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Investigative Report

Investigator: Karl Ross

Case PI 15-028	Case Name: Marta Sanchez/ Miami-Dade Transit allegations	<u>Date Open:</u>	<u>Date Closed:</u>
		CASE	
Complainant(s): Marta Sanchez	Subject(s): William Campbell, Lennox Roach, Kenneth Jones, Derrick Gordon	July 31, 2015	CLOSED
		Date:	8/14/2015

Allegation(s):

In a July 28, 2015, e-mail to Miami Dade Transit Director Alice Bravo, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, COE Director Joseph Centorino, and all 13 Miami-Dade County Commissioners, Ms. Sanchez alleged she had been wrongfully terminated from her job at MDT following a lengthy medical leave of absence (since July 2012). She stated she was recently informed of her termination by Barbara Lucky of MDT's Human Resources office, and further alleged harassment at the hands of several current and former transit employees. She stated in her e-mail that MDT is a "snake pit" and a "cesspool of corruption and deceit."

Relevant Ordinances:

Investigation:

Interviews

On August 6, 2015, COE contacted Barbara Lucky, a benefits supervisor at the MDT Human Resources Department, and requested information concerning Ms. Sanchez. COE was advised that the matter was “very sensitive” and suggested that a meeting be scheduled after she first discussed the request with MDT Director Bravo, who was on leave. She stated that she would consult Bravo and get back to COE to arrange a meeting the following week.

On August 13, COE interviewed Arleen Cuellar, director of Human Resources for Miami-Dade County. Ms. Cuellar advised that Ms. Sanchez was on an extended leave of absence dating back to 2012. She said her leave of absence was unusually long because she had medical issues, and “we kept trying to bend over backwards for her.”

Cuellar said that Sanchez was finally terminated because she failed to show up to meetings with county administrators to discuss her employment status. She said the final pre-termination meeting was June 15, and after Sanchez failed to show up for that a letter was sent to her home by certified mail. “From our perspective, once she’s off the payroll system, she’s no longer on a leave of absence,” Cuellar said adding that she believes that Sanchez wrote the e-mail to the mayor’s office and other elected officials as a result of this.

Cuellar said that any labor-related or harassment complaints would be handled by Cathy Lewis in the Miami- Dade Transit Office of Civil Rights. She said she could arrange for a review of Ms. Sanchez’s centralized personnel file on the 20th floor, if requested.

Document/Audio/Video Review:

The e-mail sent out by Ms. Sanchez detailing allegations against co-workers was reviewed for possible violations of the ethics code. None were apparent.

Conclusion(s):

It was determined that Ms. Sanchez was recently terminated from County service after a nearly three-year leave of absence. The county's human resources director opined that her July 28 e-mail was a reaction to her department's decision to formally terminate her employment.

It was further learned that complaints by Ms. Sanchez involving personnel issues and union grievances had been referred to the appropriate departments for follow-up action.

After consultation with the Ethics Advocate, it was decided no further action should be taken and this inquiry should be closed at this time as this seems to be a personnel matter, not an ethics issue.

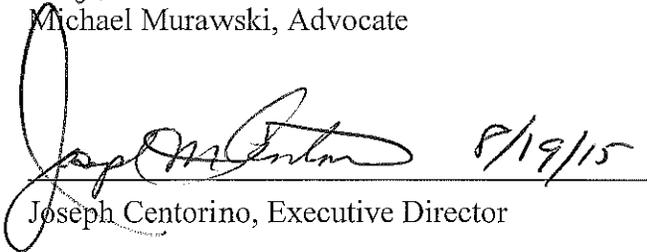


Karl Ross, COE Investigator

Approved by:



Michael Murawski, Advocate



Joseph Centorino, Executive Director