

**Meyers, Robert (COE)**

FRQ 07-175

**From:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 05, 2007 4:29 PM  
**To:** Bauman, Mike (PWD)  
**Subject:** RE: Ethics Opinion

Mike,

Thank you for your request. I consulted with the Ethics Commission's General Counsel and she and I agree that the ordinance restricting vendors from paying travel or travel-related expenses for County employees would not apply to the cocktail reception or the continental breakfast provided by private sector member companies for several reasons. One, the contribution that each company makes to underwrite the cost of the reception and the breakfast is fairly inconsequential and I gather that not all of these companies who are contributing to pay for the reception and breakfast are currently doing business with the County. Secondly, the actual benefit to you as a County employee that the vendor is covering represents a very small percentage of the overall cost of the meeting. I assume the major costs associated with this meeting such as transportation, lodging and registration fees are being paid for the County or a non-vendor. Finally, the ordinance restricts County vendors from paying for meals and a cocktail reception doesn't fall within the definition of a meal. Similarly, I do not believe the intent of the ordinance was to cover a continental breakfast, either. I sense the ordinance was meant to prevent County vendors from picking up the tab for lavish dinners.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust  
 (305) 350-0613

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**From:** Bauman, Mike (PWD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 05, 2007 10:22 AM  
**To:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Subject:** Ethics Opinion

Mr. Meyers,

I am requesting your opinion on my participation in an event described below.

The Public Works Department, Causeways Division is a member of a statewide association of the toll industry known as Team Florida or TEAMFL (Transportation and Expressway Authority Membership of Florida). TEAMFL has over 200 member organizations from the public and private sectors and was created to develop standards and share information across the toll industry. We have been members since approximately 2001 and I currently serve as the organization's Chairman. Regular 2 day quarterly meetings are held at different locations throughout the State. Each quarterly meeting is comprised of focus sessions on the first afternoon and a General Session on the following morning. The focus sessions are followed by a cocktail reception from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm and the General Session is preceded by an informal continental breakfast.

Both the cocktail reception and the continental breakfast are provided by a group of 6 to 10 private sector member companies and are open to all that attend the meetings. The cocktail reception offers drinks and light hors d'oeuvres. Breakfast is coffee, juice, and Danish rolls or muffins.

My question - Is there a problem with my participation in the cocktail reception and continental breakfast? If there is a problem with my participation, is there a legitimate way for me to participate understanding that I am the current Chairman of the Board?

12/5/2007

Thank you,  
Mike

Michael R Bauman, Chief  
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