

Meyers, Robert (COE)

TNO 08-156

From: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 3:57 PM
To: Magill, Ron (MDPR)
Subject: RE: Complimentary meals

Dear Mr. Magill:

It doesn't bother me to address your concerns. In fact, the charge to the Ethics Commission is to provide advice to those who fall within our purview. I won't hold myself out as an expert on the County per diem policy, but the explanation you were given seems correct. If your actual expenditures are under the per diem amount, you are permitted to keep the difference. Alternatively, if your expenditures exceeded the per diem amount, you would not be eligible for any additional reimbursements. The reason why you were under does not really matter.

Gifts must be reported if they exceed \$100 from a single donor. In the case of food, you would have to consume at least \$100 worth of food in a single sitting to have a reportable event. Given the facts you have presented to me, you have nothing to report. Since you did not solicit the gifts and the value is under \$100, you have not committed any ethics violations.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director
 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

From: Magill, Ron (MDPR)
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 9:54 AM
To: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Subject: Complimentary meals

Dear Mr. Meyers,

I recently returned from the National Zoo Convention in Milwaukee and have two issues for which I need some clarification from you. First, I was advanced per diem meal money that exceeded the amount I actually spent (it was less than \$10.00 but it's the principal that I am concerned with). Upon my return, I tried to return the unused portion but was told that as a "per diem" I was not required to do so. It was explained that per diems do not require receipts or other justifications other than the fact that you have traveled on an approved trip. I donated the unused funds to our Conservation Fund at the zoo because I simply did not feel comfortable keeping the money but would like to have your definition of what the per diem is and the accountability required.

Secondly, the main reason I had funds left over (the reality is that the County per diem is quite low in the real world of big city conference venues) is that some of my meals were complimentary because I was recognized as a public figure through my television appearances and the restaurant/hotel refused to charge me. Though I insisted on paying, they would not accept the payment. The meals totaled approximately \$75.00. What do I need to do to insure that I am not liable for any ethics violations?

I am sorry to bother you with these concerns but I need to be sure that I am not unwillingly violating any policy. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Ron Magill
 Communications & Media Director
 Miami Metrozoo
 12400 SW 152 Street

9/24/2008