



MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

Summary of Minutes and Agenda Actions

Meeting of October 13, 2021

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust (COE) held a meeting on October 13, 2021. Physically present were Vice Chairwoman Judith Bernier, Commissioner Charlton Copeland, and Commissioner Wifredo Gort. Also present were José Arrojo, Executive Director; Martha Perez, General Counsel; Radia Turay, Advocate, Loressa Felix, Staff Attorney; Drew Bunker, Staff Attorney; Leonardo Mendoza, Public Information Officer; Rachelle Ross, Commission Clerk; Investigators Nilda Olmo, Rodney Vega, and Kelly Reid; and members of the public. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Vice Chairwoman Bernier. A quorum was present.

I. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gort made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2021, meeting. Commissioner Copeland seconded it and it was approved **(3-0)**.

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Summary of Section 8 Landlord Requests

Staff Attorney Gilma Diaz-Greco presented three requests from County employees in the month of September wishing to contract under the Federally- funded Section 8 Program. In the case of these individuals, neither they nor any of their immediate family members were employed by the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department, so Staff Attorney Diaz- Greco recommended approval. Commissioner Copeland moved to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

IV. Public Housing and Community Development Housing Assistance Inquiries

Staff Attorney Diaz-Greco presented a request from fifteen individuals for the month of September seeking

assistance through a program overseen by the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department. In the case of fourteen of those County employees, since neither they nor any of their immediate family members oversee or administer the program, Staff Attorney Diaz-Greco recommended approval. In the case of one individual, an employee of the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department, a denial was recommended. Commissioner Gort moved to approve the recommendations. It was seconded by Commissioner Copeland and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

V. Monthly Summary of Inquiries

Staff Attorney Loressa Felix presented a Summary of Inquiries by the COE for September and presented **INQ 21-121**. In this request for an informal opinion, Juan Prieto, President of the South Florida Engineering Society, inquired as to whether any prohibited conflict of interest that would preclude a County vendor from serving on an advisory board, in this case the Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Advisory Board (BBWMAB).

Mr. Prieto was advised that there is no prohibited conflict of interest that would preclude a County vendor from serving on an advisory board, however board members must adhere to the limitations provided above to avoid potential conflicts of interest and they are encouraged to seek further opinion from the Commission on Ethics should any potential conflicts arise.

VI. Executive Director's Report

- COE Executive Director Jose Arrojo provided the Commission with additional facts regarding **RQO 21-01** involving County Commissioner Raquel Regalado as to whether she can host a radio show that discusses issues of local governance and whether hosting that show would impair her independence of judgment in the performance of her public duties. Commissioner Regalado was present and entertained questions. Commissioner Copeland moved to accept the Executive Director's recommendations in **RQO 21-01**. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.
- Executive Director Arrojo provided the Commission documentation related to a complaint filed in Miro v. City of Miami and Alex de la Portilla, this being a case where there may be a judicial interpretation of a provision of law that the ethics commission is empowered to interpret and enforce.
- Executive Director Jose Arrojo presented his self-evaluation and agency productivity report. Commissioner Copeland moved to approve a 4% increment in the annual salary of Executive Director Arrojo. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.
- Executive Director Arrojo provided an update on the upcoming Ethical Governance Day. He indicated that 70-

75 schools and more than 150 volunteers would be participating in this event that would focus this year on non-partisan civic engagement.

- Outgoing Staff Attorney Gilma Diaz-Greco was recognized for her years of service at the Ethics Commission.

VII. C19-05-02 In Re: John Riley – Corrected Motion for Stay

Defense Counsel James Greason presented a Motion to Stay the enforcement proceedings in **(C 19-05-02)** pending judicial review at the District Court of Appeal. Staff Attorney Loressa Felix had no objection to the motion. Commissioner Copeland moved to approve the Motion to Stay the enforcement proceedings. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

VIII. Complaints (In Executive Session)

General Counsel Martha Perez provided a status report on complaints **(C 21-17-07)** and **(C 21-18-07)** and recommended to dismiss the complaints due to lack of jurisdictional authority. In open session, Commissioner Copeland moved to approve the dismissal of the complaints due to lack of jurisdictional authority. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

General Counsel Martha Perez made a recommendation to dismiss complaint **(C 21-25-09)** for lack of legal sufficiency. In open session, Commissioner Copeland moved to approve the dismissal of the complaint due to lack of legal sufficiency. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

Advocate Radia Turay presented a Stipulation to a finding of Probable Cause and Settlement Agreement in complaint **(C 21-11-05)**. In open session, Commissioner Copeland made a motion to accept the Stipulation to a Finding of Probable Cause, accept the Settlement Agreement and dismiss the Complaint. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**. Chairman Bellido recused himself from this matter.

Advocate Radia Turay made a recommendation for a finding of No Probable Cause in complaint **(C 21-15-06)**. In open session, Commissioner Copeland made a motion to approve the Finding of No Probable Cause and dismiss the Complaint. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

Advocate Radia Turay made a recommendation for a finding of No Probable Cause in complaint **(C 21-13-05)**. In open session, Commissioner Copeland made a motion to approve the Finding of No Probable Cause and dismiss the Complaint. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(3-0)**.

Advocate Radia Turay made a recommendation to ratify a Letter of Instruction in complaint (C 21-11-05).

IX. Subpoena Requests

Two subpoena requests were made and granted in cases **PI 20-45(b)** and **PI 20-45(c)**

X. Old Business

None.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:36 AM.

Prepared by Leonardo Mendoza, Public Information Officer