



# MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

Summary of Minutes and Agenda Actions

**Meeting of November 10, 2021**

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust (COE) held a meeting on November 10, 2021. Physically present were Chairman Nelson Bellido, Vice Chairwoman Judith Bernier, Commissioner Charlton Copeland, Commissioner Lawrence Schwartz, 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, Karl Ross, and Kelly Reid; and members of the public. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 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 October 13, 2021, meeting. Commissioner Copeland seconded it and it was approved **(4-0)**. *(Chairman Bellido was not present for this vote but arrived shortly thereafter at 10:07AM)*

## **II. Public Comment**

None.

## **III. Summary of Section 8 Landlord Requests**

Staff Attorney Drew Bunker presented two requests from County employees in the month of October wishing to contract under the Federally- funded Section 8 Program. In the case of one individual, neither she nor any of her immediate family members were employed by the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department, so Staff Attorney Bunker recommended approval. In the case of the other individual, the COE had no jurisdiction. Commissioner Schwartz moved to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(5-0)**.

#### **IV. Public Housing and Community Development Housing Assistance Inquiries**

Staff Attorney Bunker presented a request from five individuals for the month of October seeking assistance through a program overseen by the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department. In the case of three of those County employees, since neither they nor any of their immediate family members oversee or administer the program, Staff Attorney Bunker recommended approval. In the case of two individuals the COE had no jurisdiction.

#### **V. Monthly Summary of Inquiries**

Staff Attorney Drew Bunker presented a Summary of Inquiries by the COE for October and presented **INQ 20-21-31**. In this request for an informal opinion, an inquiry was made as to whether a Children's Trust (TCT) board member has a conflict of interest affecting his or her vote or participation in a funding allocation pursuant to the County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics and the TCT Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Policy/Bylaws.

The requester was advised that under the facts, it does not appear that any of the specified TCT board members have a voting conflict because, although they were affiliated with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, they did not have an enumerated relationship with any entity affected by the resolution, nor would any of the board members profit from, be enhanced by, or receive any special benefit from the vote.

#### **VI. Executive Director's Report**

- COE Executive Director Jose Arrojo provided the Ethics Commission with a report regarding the "contract staff" provision in Airport Miscellaneous Construction Contract. This provision of the ethics code allows the Mayor, after consultation with the Ethics Commission, to designate members of County contractors as being covered by certain provisions of the ethics code. This provision of the ethics code has historically been unused by prior administrations.
- Executive Director Arrojo advised the Commission the COE is obligated under section 2-11.38 to do an annual survey of all County board members and to ensure that they have complied with their financial reporting provisions. The ordinance has been amended so that in addition to the COE advising all the various board members that they have not complied as part of the COE's compliance function, the COE is now also obligated to provide each member of the Board of County Commissioners with a list of those board members who have not complied one week prior to the 30-day grace period.

- Executive Director Jose Arrojo provided an update on the ratification of the PBA Rank & File Collective Bargaining Agreement and the fiscal impact on the COE.
- Executive Director Arrojo introduced newly hired staff attorney, Etta Mills Akoni. Staff Attorney Akoni expressed her excitement and appreciation for being given the opportunity to work for the COE.

## **VII. Summary of Closed Investigations**

COE Advocate Radia Turay presented the Commission with a summary of closed investigations. The Advocate and the Commission praised the work of investigator Karl Ross in a case that was initiated at the COE that ultimately resulted in the arrest of former Town of Medley Councilwoman Lilly Stefano.

## **VIII. Complaints (In Executive Session) at 10:30AM**

General Counsel Martha Perez made a recommendation to dismiss complaint **(C 21-24-09)** for lack of legal sufficiency. In open session, Commissioner Schwartz moved to approve the dismissal of the complaint due to lack of legal sufficiency. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(5-0)**.

General Counsel Martha Perez made a recommendation to dismiss complaints **(C 21-27-10)** and **(C 21-28-10)** for lack of legal sufficiency. In open session, Commissioner Schwartz moved to approve the dismissal of the complaint due to lack of legal sufficiency. It was seconded by Commissioner Bernier and unanimously approved **(5-0)**.

General Counsel Martha Perez made a recommendation for a finding of No Probable Cause in complaint **(C 21-26-09)**. In open session, Commissioner Gort made a motion to approve the Finding of No Probable Cause and dismiss the Complaint. It was seconded by Commissioner Copeland and unanimously approved **(5-0)**.

Advocate Radia Turay presented a Motion for Extension of Time in complaint **(C 21-10-07)**. Commissioner Schwartz moved to approve the Motion for Extension of Time. It was seconded by Commissioner Gort and unanimously approved **(5-0)**.

## **IX. Subpoena Requests**

Subpoena requests were made and granted in cases **PI 21-46**, **PI 20-54(a)**, and **PI 21-06**.

**X. Old Business**

None.

**XI. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:51 AM.

---

Prepared by Leonardo Mendoza, Public Information Officer