



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Investigative Report

Investigator: Karl Ross

Case K17-009	Case Name: Sasha Tirador/ Motorola Solutions LLC	Date Open:	Date Closed:
Complainant(Subject(s): Sasha Tirador, Lourdes Sori, Steven Marin	Nov. 15, 2016	CASE CLOSED
		Date: _____	10/31/17

Allegation(s):

It came to the attention of COE during a September 2016 sworn statement with Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez, that political consultant Sasha Tirador may have improperly lobbied the mayor on behalf of Motorola Solutions Inc. (hereinafter "Motorola").

At the time, Motorola was seeking to enter into an agreement with Hialeah to purchase a public safety radio system. A contract had been awarded to Motorola in late 2014 through an RFP; however, the City was unable to execute the contract for budgetary reasons.

The mayor claimed in his statement that Ms. Tirador accompanied Motorola representatives during a meeting at his office to lobby him to secure funding for the contract.

Relevant Ordinances:

The Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance, Sec. 2-11.1, states, in applicable parts, Subsection (s)(2), *Lobbying ...*, that: "All lobbyists shall register with the Clerk of [City] within three (3) business days of being retained as a lobbyist or before engaging in any lobbying activities, whichever shall come first."

Investigation:

Interviews

Lourdes Sori, Sr. Account Manager

Motorola Solutions Inc.

Jan. 13, 2017

Ms. Sori appeared at COE offices for a voluntary statement regarding her apparent unregistered lobbying activity, as well as to discuss Tirador's role in representing Motorola as it sought to secure a City of Hialeah contract for a public safety communications system. She said the system would serve both the police and fire-rescue departments.

Ms. Sori stated that she was unaware of any requirement to register in Hialeah, but said that she had taken County ethics training and that she was, in fact, registered to lobby the County and the City of Miami. She said she had not seen any notices on the City of Hialeah's website regarding lobbyist registration and said that she would be willing to do so, if required.

Ms. Sori said that, as an account executive, about 90 percent of her work involves servicing existing contracts and responding to technical questions. However, she said that about 10 percent of her job does entail lobbying as it did with respect to the RFP for a new radio system in Hialeah. She said the contact to install such a system is worth about \$5 million.

Ms. Sori advised that the city's Selection Committee recommended awarding the contract to Motorola over Harris Corp., an industry rival. She said she recalled a public meeting before the Selection Committee, but not any such meeting before the City Council. She was shown a copy of a Jan. 13, 2015, City Council agenda identifying her and Stacy Schick as being there on behalf of Motorola. She said she could not recall if she addressed the council on that occasion. She said Schick works in "strategic projects" as it relates to sales.

Ms. Sori further advised that the City Council never acted on the Selection Committee's recommendation to formally award the contract and that she believed that funding issues prevented the procurement from going forward. She acknowledged that she did write a letter to city officials on or about June 1, 2016, urging the city to make the radio system a priority in the upcoming budget cycle. She said that some time *before* writing that letter she did have a meeting with Mayor Hernandez at his office, along with Tirador and Schick.

Ms. Sori stated that Tirador was retained through Motorola's government relations team, in particular a co-worker named Matt Dalaida. (She wasn't sure about the spelling of his last name.) She said that government relations hires any lobbyists retained by Motorola in connection with procurement matters. She said she assumes that Tirador was hired to act as a lobbyist and that she was paid, but did not know any of the particulars.

Ms. Sori said she could not recall how Dalaida, who is based outside of Florida, would have gotten in touch with Tirador or become aware of her influence as a political operative in the City of Hialeah. She said she could not recall discussing her hiring with him. She said that, prior to the meeting with the mayor, she may have met with Tirador once over "a cup of coffee." She said she could not recall any conversations from that meeting.

Ms. Sori said she could not recall, furthermore, the extent of Tirador's involvement in the meeting with Mayor Hernandez, except to say that she set it up. She said that Tirador was hired to help get the meeting and that the meeting was more of a "relationship-building" meeting than any overt attempt to influence the mayor to support the pending deal. She said that, of course, it was her employer's hope that the city would finalize the contract. She said that she told the mayor that the city's existing communications system was outdated, and urged him to invest in a new system such as the one Motorola was offering.

Ms. Sori said she would provide contact information for Schick and Dalaida, and ask Dalaida about how it was that Tirador came to be retained by Motorola.

Ms. Sori reiterated that most of her job is service related, but advised that on occasion, when "opportunities" arise such as those in Hialeah and the City of Miami to replace an obsolete radio system, that she does act in the capacity of a lobbyist. She said the opportunity with the City of Miami is comparable to the one in Hialeah, noting she did register in Miami.

Sasha Tirador, consultant
Governmental Strategic Access LLC
175 Fontainebleau Blvd, Suite 1-N6
Aug. 8, 2016

During an interview on the above date in connection with another investigation (COE PI 16-027, since closed), Tirador categorically denied that she was or had ever been employed as a lobbyist in Hialeah. Tirador expressed her disdain for lobbying: "I do not lobby politicians because it's the same as asking them for favors, and I don't like to do that."

When it was suggested that she may wish to meet with the Ethics Advocate to discuss whether she needed further guidance, she stated it would not be a productive meeting. "I see no point in sitting with this man to tell me how to bake a cake when I am not a chef," Tirador said.

Mayor Carlos Hernandez
City of Hialeah, Florida
Sept. 28, 2016

During a sworn statement on the above date, Mayor Hernandez indicated that he may have been improperly lobbied by Ms. Tirador. A copy of his remarks were added to the file.

Steve Marin, lobbyist/ political consultant

Marin and Sons

Phone: (305) 971-3711

May 26, 2017

During an interview at the office of his attorney, Robert Fernandez, Mr. Marin advised that Sasha Tirador was retained as a lobbyist to represent Motorola Solutions on a procurement item in Hialeah. He said he enlisted her assistance with the engagement because of her widely publicized ties to that town's political leaders. He said that the purpose of the engagement was for Tirador "to lobby, to communicate, to influence" Hialeah's elected leaders. He said that he represented Motorola on a similar procurement in Miami Beach because he was connected to that city's elected leaders, while Tirador was dispatched to Hialeah because of her access. He said that Tirador mostly reported to Lourdes Sori at Motorola, and that he did not give her much direction once the engagement was under way. He said he would provide COE with copies of all payments to Tirador related to the Motorola engagement, as well as any pertinent emails, correspondences or other work product. He said he did not lobby anybody in Hialeah, and could not say for sure what Tirador did to advance Motorola's interests in Hialeah.

Sasha Tirador, subject

July 11, 2017

Ms. Tirador was contacted by text message on July 11 at 4:15 p.m. regarding an email the previous week. She referred the inquiry to her attorney, Jose "Pepe" Herrera. She provided an office number of (305) 445-1100, and a cell phone of (305) 799-5006.

Mr. Herrera was contacted by cell phone, (305) 799-5006, on July 17 and advised that he was aware of the email COE sent to his client and was willing to address the matter. He said he was in trial and not available, but would respond to a requested meeting later in the week. He said that it was his position that Ms. Tirador is not and has never acted as a lobbyist.

Mr. Herrera was re-contacted on his cell phone on July 31, 2017, but he stated he was unable to talk at the time. A second call was made on Aug. 1, 2017, and Mr. Herrera was unable to speak but said he would call back after his hearing ended.

On Aug. 1, 2017, attorney Diana Mendez of Llorente & Heckler P.A. met with Ethics Advocate Murawski to discuss a settlement on behalf of Ms. Sori. It was agreed that Ms. Sori, who is no longer acting in a lobbying capacity, would plead no contest to one count of unregistered lobbying in Hialeah and that she would also pay a \$500 fine.

Document/Audio/Video Review:

On Nov. 15, COE made a public records to Hialeah City Clerk Marbelys Fatjo for records relating to a proposed Motorola communications system for the city's fire department. She responded with a number of relevant documents on Dec. 1, but advised that a fee would be required to research requested email communications and that another city official would be contacting COE with an estimate for the labor costs prior to fulfilling the request.

The records provided on Dec. 1 included the following:

- A copy of a draft agreement dated Sept. 24, 2014, for the provision of a radio communications system for the city's fire-rescue department, known as the P25 800MHz Trunked Digital Simulcast Public Safety System.
- A copy of the Jan. 13, 2015, City Council Summary Agenda with item 3, a Report of the Selection Committee recommending awarding a contract for the purchase of a communication system, as described above, to Motorola Solutions Inc.
- A copy of a Pre-proposal Conference Sign-in Sheet signed by representatives of numerous prospective vendors, including the two eventual bidders/proposers – Motorola Solutions and Harris Corp. of Lynchburg, VA.
- A copy of a document naming Motorola and Harris as bidders/ proposers.
- A copy of RFP documents relating to the proposed radio communications system, identified as RFP #2014-15-2000-00-001, including a copy of the Advertisement and Request for Proposal setting a deadline for the proposal for Nov. 7, 2014 at 2 PM.

A review of lobbyist registration records on file with the Hialeah City Clerk's Office showed that neither Lourdes Sori nor Sasha Tirador registered to lobby on behalf of Motorola. The years 2014, 2015 and 2016 were reviewed following a public records request.

By contrast, the records showed two individuals registered to lobby on behalf of Motorola's main competitor – Harris Corporation – in September 2014, the time of the RFP. Those individuals were identified as Sylvester Lukis and Chip Iglesias.

A review of lobbyist registration records with the City of Miami Clerk's Office and the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Board found that Ms. Sori did register to act as a lobbyist on behalf of Motorola Solutions in connection with procurements in those jurisdictions.

Copies of the records were added to the investigative file.

On June 26, 2017, an email was sent to Tirador at her email address sashatirador@aol.com and she was advised that COE was in possession of records showing she was retained as a lobbyist in connection with a Hialeah procurement matter. An interview was requested.

On June 26, 2017, Marin was contacted by text message regarding the records he provided reflecting payments of \$17,500 to Tirador between March and July 2014. He was asked whether the absence of any work product was because none was created during Tirador's employment as a lobbyist, and he advised that this was correct and any pertinent communication was verbal rather than in writing.

On June 30, 2017, an email containing a draft complaint was sent to Sori, who did not reply as of July 3, 2017. A phone message requesting a current email was left for Sori on July 3.

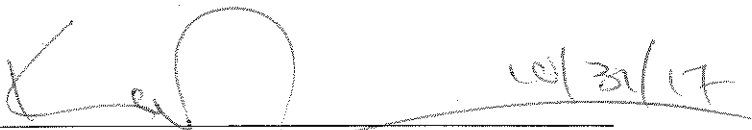
Conclusion(s):

After consulting with the Ethics Advocate it was decided this case should be closed without further action. Motorola Senior Account Manager Lourdes Sori agreed through her attorney to settle a formal complaint for one count of unregistered lobbying in the City of Hialeah with respect to the RFP for a \$5 million public safety communications system.

While the findings of the investigation suggest political consultant Sasha Tirador may have committed a violation of the Miami-Dade County Ethics Code for unregistered lobbying, no formal action is contemplated at this time. The findings indicate she failed to register within three days of being retained as a lobbyist through the firm Marin & Sons in March 2014. Although there is correspondence from Motorola referencing Tirador's involvement with Marin's services, there is no agreement or other documentation signed by Tirador which indicates that she agreed to lobby.

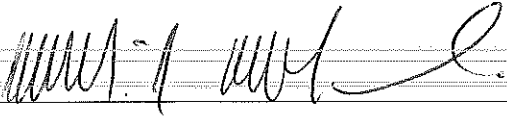
Her employer in this matter, Steve Marin, stated that Tirador was hired by Motorola "to lobby, to communicate, to influence" Hialeah city officials in the matter of the pending contract award. However, Marin himself did not attend the sole documented meeting attended by Tirador. It was decided that since none of the key witnesses, including Sori or Mayor Hernandez, could describe any actual lobbying activity on her part, no further action would be taken. Even so, Ms. Tirador should consider attending ethics training so that she can avoid being the subject of future inquiries into possible unregistered lobbying.

Accordingly this investigation should be closed without further action.

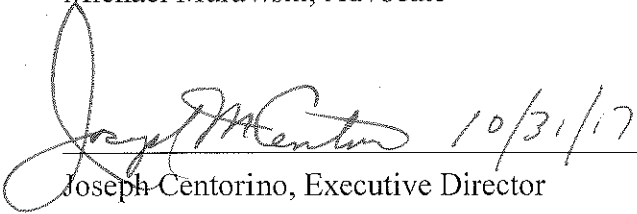


Karl Ross, COE Investigator

Approved by:



Michael Murawski, Advocate



Joseph Centorino, Executive Director