



## MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST

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### MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Phillip G. Edwards, Esq., Senior Research Analyst  
Office of the Commission Auditor

Jacqueline Carranza, Non-Voting Chairperson  
Internal Services Department

**FROM:** Radia Turay, Staff Attorney  
Commission on Ethics

**SUBJECT:** INQ 20-19 [Voting Conflict of Interest § 2-11.1(v); Appearances of  
Impropriety]

**DATE:** March 2, 2020

**CC:** All COE Legal Staff

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Thank you for contacting the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust and requesting our guidance regarding the following proposed transaction.

Facts: We have reviewed your memorandum dated February 27, 2020, prepared in connection with the Appointment of Selection Committee for Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works Request to Advertise for Design-Build Services for Roadway Improvements to NW 107 Avenue from NW 138 Street to NW 166 Street – Project No. DB19-DTPW-02. The memorandum was prepared in connection with Resolution No. R-449-14, directing the Office of the Commission Auditor (OCA) to conduct background checks on members serving on evaluation/selection committees.

The memorandum noted that a member of the selection committee made disclosures on her neutrality/disclosure form that merited submission to the Commission on Ethics for an opinion. Specifically, Ms. Jacqueline Carranza indicated on her neutrality/disclosure form that she was employed by EAC Consulting Inc. (“EAC”), from 2002-2003. EAC is a sub-consultant for a respondent (OHL USA, Inc.) to this project.

We conferred with Ms. Carranza. She confirmed that she was employed by EAC from 2002 – 2003. She stated that the termination of her employment from EAC was amicable. She has no current ownership interest or other formal or financial interest in the company. She does not have any close social, or other relationship with any current employee at the

company. She believes that she can be completely fair and objective in her role as non-voting chairperson of this selection committee.

Discussion: This agency conducts reviews of these issues under Section 2-11.1(v) of the County Ethics Code, which governs voting conflicts by members of County advisory and quasi-judicial boards. We also consider whether there is an appearance of impropriety created and make recommendations based on R-449-14 and Ethics Commission Rule of Procedure 2.1(b).

Specifically, Section 2-11.1(v) of the County Ethics Code states that no quasi-judicial personnel or advisory personnel shall vote on any matter presented to an advisory board or quasi-judicial board on which the person sits if the board member will be directly affected by the action of the board on which the member serves and the board member has any of the following relationships with any of the persons or entities appearing before the board: (i) officer, director, partner, of counsel, consultant, employee, fiduciary or beneficiary' or (ii) stock holder, bondholder, debtor or creditor.

As to Ms. Carranza, she does not have a voting conflict of interest under Section 2-11.1(v), because as the non-voting chair of the selection committee, she will not vote.

Additionally, Section 2-11.1(x) of the County Ethics Code, commonly referred to as the Reverse Two-Year Rule, which bars County employees from participating in contract-related duties on behalf of the County with a former employer for a period of two years following termination of the employment relations, would not apply since Ms. Carranza stopped working for EAC over sixteen years ago. *See* INQ 17-174, INQ 17-183, and INQ 18-229.

Further, as noted above, due to the sensitivity of the procurement process and the need to sustain public confidence in it, this agency also opines concerning whether there may be an appearance of impropriety in a given situation that would justify the removal of a member of an appointed selection committee. *See* Section 2-1067, Miami-Dade County Code, and 2.1(b) of the COE Rules of Procedure.

As Ms. Carranza's employment with EAC ended over sixteen (16) years ago on an amicable basis, and she has no business, or close social relationship with any current employee of the entity, it is our opinion that her prior employment would not create any appearance of impropriety or in any way detract from the County's conducting a fair and objective evaluation for this project. *See* INQ 17-192, and INQ 18-261.

Opinion: Consequently, we see no reason why Ms. Carranza should not serve on this committee because she does not have a conflict of interest under the Ethics Code, and there does not appear to be any appearance of impropriety created by her service on this committee.

This opinion is limited to the facts as you presented them to the Commission on Ethics and is limited to an interpretation of the County Ethics Code only and is not intended to interpret state laws. Questions regarding state ethics laws should be addressed to the Florida Commission on Ethics.

INQs are informal ethics opinions provided by the legal staff after being reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. INQs deal with opinions previously addressed in public session by the Ethics Commission or within the plain meaning of the County Ethics Code. RQOs are opinions provided by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust when the subject matter is of great public importance or where there is insufficient precedent. While these are informal opinions, covered parties that act contrary to the opinion may be referred to the Advocate for preliminary review or investigation and may be subject to a formal Complaint filed with the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust.