
From: Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE)
Sent: Friday, November 07, 2014 8:57 AM
To: Sanchez, Rodzandra (COE)
Subject: Raul Rodriguez, Volunteer/Auxiliary Police Officer, City of Sweetwater (Contracting With City) INQ 14-268

INQ 14-268

From: Raul [mailto:raul@THEFRCG.COM]
Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 1:27 PM
To: Centorino, Joseph (COE)
Cc: Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE); Ralph Ventura (ralphventura@gmail.com)
Subject: Re: INQ - Raul Rodriguez, Volunteer/Auxiliary Police Officer, City of Sweetwater (Contracting With City)

Thank you sir for your time and response.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 6, 2014, at 1:00 PM, "Centorino, Joseph (COE)" <CENTORI@miamidade.gov> wrote:

Mr. Rodriguez:

You have inquired regarding whether there is an ethical conflict in connection with a proposed one-year contract between the Lil Abner Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of which you are founder and President, with the City of Sweetwater for the provision of services in connection with certain city/community events, including a Thanksgiving Day Bash. This request is made in light of your position as a volunteer/auxiliary police officer with the City of Sweetwater for which you are paid \$1/year. It is my understanding that you are considered a qualified police officer in the City of Sweetwater; that you have been issued a badge, gun and uniform; and that you engage from time to time in authorized police/law enforcement activity in Sweetwater as a member of the City's Police Department.

The Lil Abner Foundation, that would be contracting with the City, is a charitable organization dedicated to facilitating access to educational, recreational, and health services to all City of Sweetwater residents. Neither you nor your family members receive any financial compensation or other financial benefit from the foundation. Although the referenced contract between the City of Sweetwater and the Lil Abner Foundation contains a provision stating that you would be "named Director of Community Services and Development" in connection with the contract, I have been informed by City Attorney Ralph Ventura that the title is merely symbolic and does not correspond to any position, classification or designation within the City's personnel records, and, therefore, only references a strictly volunteer status in that capacity.

Although volunteers are not generally classed as City employees, the fact that you have an understanding with the City that permits you to act as an authorized police officer exercising law enforcement authority leads me to consider you in the same category as any fulltime employee of the City, and, therefore, subject to Section 2-11.1(c) of the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. The latter section provides for some restrictions in connection with officials or employees of a City contracting with the City or transacting any business with the City, where the employee or a member of his or her immediate family has a financial interest, direct or indirect. Under

the circumstances you have posited, it would appear that this does not apply in this situation where you have indicated that neither you nor your family members have a financial interest in this contract. Even if such a financial interest did exist, it would still not likely prohibit you from having your foundation contract with the City since your position as a police officer would not involve you in any way in determining the contract requirements or be involved in the enforcement, oversight or administration of the contract, which responsibilities would lie with City personnel outside of the Police Department.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that there is no prohibition under the County Ethics Code to the proposed contract between Lil Abner Foundation and the City of Sweetwater under the circumstances presented by you.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Centorino
Executive Director and General Counsel
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

From: Raul [<mailto:raul@THEFRCG.COM>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2014 4:09 PM
To: Centorino, Joseph (COE)
Subject: Lil Abner Foundation entering into a contract with City of Sweetwater

Dear Joseph Centorino
Miami Dade Ethics Committee,

My name is Raul Rodriguez, founder and President of the Lil Abner Foundation (a 501C3 Non-Profit) in the City of Sweetwater-founded in 2009. Our Mission is dedicated to facilitating access to educational, recreational, and health services to all City of Sweetwater Residents. We do this by providing free after-school tutoring to children from 1st through 12th grade for 2 hours per day from Monday through Thursday. In order to encourage the children to come to tutoring we reward them by allowing them to take the Taekwondo classes that are offered twice a week or our Archery program. We also provide adult English classes and Citizenship classes. These classes are 4 1/2 hours on Saturdays.

The Foundation has applied for a grant/partnership with the City of Sweetwater to produce 2 events for the Residents of Sweetwater. (See attached agreement) One event is a Thanksgiving Bash (Mini-Festival Style Celebration) and the second is a Gala Dinner Celebration.

The City's Commission has approved the funds for the production of the two events but would like clarification from the ethics committee as to whether there is a conflict of interest and precludes the foundation to a contract with the city since I am a volunteer/auxiliary police officer with the City of Sweetwater with a \$1 salary per year which I have never received. I have never and will never receive any benefits or income from the Foundation. Instead, since all services from the Foundation are free to the

residents of Sweetwater, the Foundation has to Fundraise in order to provide these services. Any expenses that are not met are funded by my personal donations.

I would be more than happy to allow your committee to audit the Foundation finances. You can research the foundation on our website at

www.lilabnerfoundation.com or facebook: Lil Abner Foundation.

Please feel free to call me for any other information.

Sincerely,

Raul F. Rodriguez
Managing Member
Luar Investments LLC
2950 NW 7Ave
Miami, Fl 33127
305-636-5500 office
305-513-5202 fax
305-479-3471 cell
raul@luarllc.com

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential, proprietary, and/or privileged information protected by law. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not use, copy, or distribute this e-mail message or its attachments. If you believe you have received this e-mail message in error, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and telephone immediately and destroy all copies of the original message.