

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS (COE)
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

**THURSDAY
1:30 P.M.**

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

Michael H. Kugler, Chair
Kristin A. Vara-Garcia, Vice Chair
Peter L. Cruise
Michael S. Kridel
Rodney G. Romano

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Rhonda Giger, General Counsel
Mark. A. Higgs, COE Investigator II
Abigail Irizarry, COE Investigator II
Christie E. Kelley, COE Director III
Gina A. Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager
S. Lizabeth Martin, COE Communication and Education Manager

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk

(CLERK'S NOTE: Vice Chair Vara-Garcia acted as chair in the absence of the chair.)

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Romano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Vara-Garcia, Commissioner Peter L. Cruise, Commissioner Michael S. Kridel, and Commissioner Rodney G. Romano

Absent: Chair Michael H. Kugler

IV. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

No remarks were made.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 8, 2023

MOTION to approve the August 8, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion by Michael Kridel, seconded by Peter Cruise, and carried 4-0.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION RE: C23-025

RECESS

At 1:31 p.m., the vice chair declared the meeting recessed for an executive session.

RECONVENE

At 1:55 p.m., the meeting reconvened with all members present.

Commissioner Cruise read the Public Report and Final Order:

In Re: Robert Schultz

Complainant Alex Freeman, filed the above referenced complaint, alleging Respondent Robert Schultz, who at the time of the complaint was the interim Police Chief for the Town of Jupiter Inlet Colony, violated Section 2-443(b), Corrupt misuse of official position, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics, by using his using his position as a public employee to corruptly secure a special benefit.

Pursuant to §2-258(a)^[1] of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Ordinance, the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics is empowered to enforce the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. On September 7, 2023, the Commission conducted a hearing and reviewed the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation submitted by the Commission on Ethics.

After an oral statement by the Advocate and Respondent, the Commission concluded that probable cause does not exist because there was no evidence that Respondent's actions violated the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Robert Schultz, is hereby **DISMISSED**.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on September 7, 2023.

VII. PROCESSED AFVISORY OPINIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

- a. **RQO 23-018**
- b. **RQO 23-019**
- c. **RQO 23-020**
- d. **RQO 23-021**
- e. **RQO 23-022**

MOTION to approve the consent agenda. Motion by Rodney Romano.

Commissioner Cruise inquired about the additional processed advisory opinion copy, and Ms. Kelley responded stating there was a scrivener's error that was corrected.

Motion seconded by Peter Cruise and carried 4-0.

VIII. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

- a. No items were pulled from the consent agenda.

IX. Executive Director Comments

1.

Ms. Kelley welcomed and introduced S. Lizabeth Martin as the new Communications and Education Manager, who would oversee the day-to-day education and marketing initiatives to expand awareness of the COE's mission, vision, programs, and services. She added that they looked forward to working alongside her.

2.

On August 22, 2023, Ms. Kelley, Ms. Giger, and Ms. Levesque had a productive meeting with the staff of Boynton Beach's Office of Internal Investigations and Accountability.

3.

Ms. Kelley reported that Ms. Giger had conducted several successful in-person ethics trainings, and staff was in the process of completing ethics trainings in municipalities.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments were made.

XI. Public Comments

League of Cities Deputy Executive Director, Je'Rise Hansen, introduced herself and expressed that Mr. Richard Radcliffe sent his regrets that he was unable to attend.

X. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn. Motion by Peter Cruise, seconded by Rodney Romano, and carried 4-0.

At 2:01 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair