

OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

AUGUST 5, 2021

THURSDAY
1:30 P.M.

COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENT AL CENTER

I CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS:

Peter L. Cruise, Chair
Michael S. Kridel, Vice Chair
Carol E. A. DeGraffenreidt
Michael H. Kugler
Rodney G. Romano

STAFF:

Mark E. Bannon, Commission on Ethics (COE) Executive Director
Mark A. Higgs, COE Investigator II
Abigail Irizarry, COE Investigator II
Christie E. Kelley, Esq., COE General Counsel
Gina A. Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Marisa Valentin, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller's Office

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 8, 2021

MOTION to approve the July 8, 2021 minutes. Motion by Rodney Romano, seconded by Michael Kugler, and carried 5-0.

RECESS

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

RECONVENE

At 2:31 p.m., the meeting reconvened, and at Chair Cruise's request for a roll call, Commissioners DeGraffenreidt, Kridel, Kugler, and Romano were present.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION - C21-005

Vice Chair Kridel read the following Public Report and Final Order of Dismissal:

Complainant, Christopher Mitchell, filed the above referenced complaint on March 16, 2021, alleging Respondent, Juli Casale, violated §2-443(b), Corrupt misuse of official position, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics by using her position as a city of Delray Beach commissioner to harm, or attempt to harm, his business.

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 August 5, 2021, the Commission conducted a hearing and reviewed the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation submitted by the COE Advocate. After an oral statement by the Advocate and Respondent's attorney, 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, Juli Casale, is hereby DISMISSED.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on August 5, 2021.

By: Peter L. Cruise, Chair

(CLERK'S NOTE: The clerk added the language as printed in the Public Report and Final Order of Dismissal.)

VI. PROCESSED ADVISORY OPINIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

a. RQO 21-010

b. RQO 21-011

MOTION to approve the consent agenda. Motion by Michael Kugler, seconded by Rodney Romano, and carried 5-0.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Mark Bannon, COE Executive Director, stated that:

- Staff was working closely with the County Attorney's Office in establishing that hearing officers may be able to receive remuneration under the same type of contracts as code enforcement.
- Five new applications for the position of hearing officer had been received.
- He submitted his letter of retirement effective December 31, 2021.

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chair Cruise, Vice Chair Kridel, and Commissioners DeGraffenreidt, Kugler, and Romano expressed their gratitude and well wishes for Mr. Bannon on his impending retirement.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

At 2:40 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



ChairNice Chair