



**Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics**
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News Release

For Immediate Release
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November 8, 2013
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Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on November 7, 2013

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following action at its monthly public meeting held on November 7, 2013.

Three (3) advisory opinions were approved. The full opinions are published and available at: <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/opinions.htm>

RQO 13-018: A municipal human resources director asked whether all employees who accept outside employment are required to complete the part-time employment conflict of interest waiver form.

The COE opined as follows: Employees accepting part-time employment with an employer who is a vendor of the employee's public employer are required to complete and comply with the waiver requirements. Employees who work for a business that does not contract with the employee's public employer are not required to complete an outside employment waiver form.

RQO 13-019: A county employee asked whether she was prohibited by the Code of Ethics from soliciting donations from personal friends (in no way connected with a county vendor, lobbyists or principal or employer of a lobbyist) on behalf of a nonprofit organization.

The COE opined as follows: based upon the facts submitted, the described solicitations (gifts) are not prohibited or reportable.

RQO 13-020: A municipal advisory board member asked whether her membership on a non-decisional, purely advisory board would prevent her outside employer from contracting with the city.

The COE opined as follows: This matter was previously addressed by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in RQO 12-040. Municipal advisory board members are not prohibited from having a contractual relationship with the government they serve provided that the advisory board member's contract is disclosed at a public meeting of the municipal governing body and the advisory board *provides no regulation, oversight, management, or policy-setting recommendations regarding the subject contract or transaction.*

The COE discussed Executive Director Steven P. Cullen's appearance before the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee and Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections. Senator Joseph Abruzzo, chair of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee appeared by phone.

Staff submitted revisions to the COE Rules of Procedure. New Rule of Procedure 1.6 codifies the COE's current disclosure practice. Changes to Rule 4.2 allow sworn complaints that are found *not* to be legally sufficient by the COE Executive Director to be dismissed without presentation to the COE as provided for by the Commission on Ethics Ordinance. Finally, revisions to Rule 6.4 allow respondents to raise issues of bias, prejudice or other interest at any time prior to an official proceeding.

A detailed explanation of all agenda items is available at <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/meetings.htm>

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