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# News Release

For Immediate Release

December 10, 2013

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## Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on December 9, 2013

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following actions at its monthly public meeting held on December 9, 2013.

One (1) advisory opinion was approved. The full opinion is published and available at: <http://www.palmbeachcountyetics.com/pdf/Opinions/2013/RQO-13-022.pdf>.

**RQO 13-022:** The Assistant Village Attorney for the Village of Wellington asked if the Mayor and two (2) Village Council Members could vote at the December 10, 2013 Village Council Meeting on the reimbursement of legal fees each had incurred because of issues with the March 2012 municipal elections. The Mayor and one (1) Councilmember had petitioned the Village Council for reimbursement. The two (2) reimbursement petitions would be listed separately on the agenda and required separate votes by the Village Council. While the overall circumstances regarding how the legal fees were incurred were based on election issues surrounding the same March 2013 municipal election, there were separate and distinct factual circumstances that would be considered on an individual basis for both requests. The third Councilmember, who also incurred legal fees based on this election, had not at this time made a request for reimbursement.

The COE opined as follows: So long as the requests for reimbursement are discussed and voted on as individual agenda items by the Village Council, and neither Mayor Margolis nor Councilmember Greene participate in discussions or vote on their individual requests for reimbursement, the Code of Ethics does not prohibit them from participating in or voting on the reimbursement request of another member of the same governing body, even where the circumstances appear to be based on a similar set of facts that surround the March, 2012 municipal election and subsequent lawsuits. Using this same reasoning, Councilmember Matt Willhite would not be prohibited from voting on either request for reimbursement currently before the Village Council.

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

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