



Honesty - Integrity - Character

**Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics**

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News Release

For immediate release:
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February 3, 2022
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Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on February 3, 2022

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following action at its monthly public meeting held on February 3, 2022.

The Executive Director presented an overview of the COE's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

The COE discussed the need to amend the Commission on Ethics Ordinance regarding one of the appointing entities and to establish a Review Committee. The COE recommended two candidates for consideration to the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for the Review Committee.

Two advisory opinions were approved. The full opinions are available at <http://www.palmbeachcountyetics.com/opinions.htm>.

RQO 22-001: A county employee asked if the Code of Ethics prohibits him from accepting work in his private capacity for a company as a consultant on various 911 technologies and operations.

The COE opined as follows: As long as he does not enter into any contract or other transaction for goods or services with the county or with a county vendor, other than where an exception applies, and he performs his consulting work outside of his county work hours and does not use county resources, software, or equipment, the Code does not prohibit him from working as an independent contractor for the company.

The employee has an ongoing responsibility to refrain from using his official position with the county to give a special financial benefit to himself or his outside business. This would include using his position to influence another person to take some action, which would give a special financial benefit to himself or his outside business, soliciting business during his county work hours, or identifying himself as a county employee in an attempt to obtain a customer, including providing any written or verbal communication using his title or position with the county.

RQO 22-002: A municipal employee asked if the Code of Ethics prohibited him from serving on the board of a nonprofit organization that has previously been cited for code violations by the city of Belle Glade when he works as a code enforcement officer for the city.

The COE opined as follows: The Code does not prohibit him from serving on the board of the nonprofit organization as long as he does not use his official position as a city code enforcement officer in any way to give the nonprofit organization a special financial benefit or to corruptly secure a special benefit for the nonprofit organization. Thus, while on duty, he must treat the nonprofit organization in the same manner as he would treat any other property or business within the city. For example, he cannot ignore any city ordinance or code violations by the nonprofit organization while on duty, and he cannot ask another

city employee to ignore any violations by nonprofit organization. However, to avoid the appearance of impropriety, any cases assigned to him that involve the nonprofit should be reassigned to another code enforcement officer.

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

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