



Honesty - Integrity - Character

**Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics**

The Historic 1916 Courthouse
300 N. Dixie Hwy, Suite 450
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
561.355.1915
FAX: 561.355.1904
Hotline: 877.766.5920

E-mail:

ethics@palmbeachcountyethics.com

Commissioners

Rodney G. Romano, Chair
Michael H. Kugler, Vice Chair
Peter L. Cruise
Michael S. Kridel
Danielle A. Sherriff

Executive Director

Christie E. Kelley

General Counsel

Rhonda Giger

Intake & Compliance Manager

Gina A. Levesque

Investigator

Abigail Irizarry

Investigator

Mark A. Higgs

News Release

For immediate release:
Contact:

September 8, 2022
Christie E. Kelley, Executive Director
(561) 355-1937

Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on September 8, 2022

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following action at its monthly public meeting held on September 8, 2022.

The commission approved two advisory opinions. The full opinions are available at <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/opinions.htm>. Below are summaries of the opinions.

RQO 22-017: A municipal employee asked if the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics (Code) prohibits her from accepting prizes she won in a drawing while attending a work conference.

The COE opined as follows: Because the prizes are not from vendors, lobbyists, or principals or employers of a lobbyist who lobby, lease, or sell to her municipal employer, she is not prohibited from accepting the prizes regardless of their value as long as there is no "quid pro quo" or special treatment or other privilege given to or obtained by the entities in exchange for the prizes. However, if the value of the prize exceeds \$100, it must be reported on a county gift form by January 31, 2023.

RQO 22-018: An advisory board member asked if he may represent a client of his law firm in federal court on a discrimination claim when that client has a related complaint that may come before his advisory board.

The COE opined as follows: The Code does not prohibit his representation of this client in federal court as long as the representation is limited to the claim that was filed in federal court. However, when this complaint comes before his advisory board, he would have a voting conflict and would be required to abstain from any discussion or vote on the matter if his firm has provided over \$10,000 in services to the client. However, even if his law firm has not met the \$10,000 threshold and he would not have a per se voting conflict, the COE recommends that he abstain from voting on or participating in this matter when it comes before the advisory board because an appearance of impropriety may exist, especially since the two matters are related.

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

###