



Honesty - Integrity - Character

Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics
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Commissioners

Michael H. Kugler

Vacant

Peter L. Cruise

Michael S. Kridel

Rodney G. Romano

Executive Director

Christie Kelley

General Counsel

Rhonda Giger

Intake and Compliance Manager

Gina A. Levesque

Investigator

Mark A. Higgs

Investigator

Abigail Irizarry

Agenda

July 6, 2023 – 1:30 p.m.
Governmental Center,
301 North Olive Avenue, 6th Floor
Commissioners Chambers

Meeting will begin at 1:30pm
Executive Session will begin at 1:45pm
Regular Agenda will resume immediately
following Executive Session

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Introductory Remarks
- IV. Swearing-in ceremony for Kristin A. Vara-Garcia, appointed by the Palm Beach County Association of Chiefs of Police. Swearing-in by Judge Sherri Collins, 15th Judicial Circuit of Florida
- V. Roll Call
- VI. Introductory Remarks
- VII. Nomination and election of new Vice Chairperson
- VIII. Approval of Minutes from June 8, 2023
- IX. Executive Session Re: C23-009
- X. Executive Director Comments
- XI. Commission Comments
- XII. Public Comments
- XIII. Adjournment

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by this Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, (s)he will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, (s)he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS (COE)
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

JUNE 8, 2023

**THURSDAY
1:30 P.M.**

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

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

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Rhonda Giger, COE General Counsel
Mark. A. Higgs, COE Investigator II
Abigail Irizarry, COE Investigator II
Christie E. Kelley, COE Director III
Gina A. Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Sherriff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Chair Michael H. Kugler, Vice Chair Danielle A. Sheriff,
Commissioner Peter L. Cruise, and Commissioner Rodney G.
Romano

Absent: Commissioner Michael S. Kridel

IV. Introductory Remarks

Chair Kugler, Vice Chair Sherriff, and Commissioner Cruise welcomed the FAU summer interns to the meeting.

V. Approval of Minutes from April 13, 2023

MOTION to approve the April 13, 2023, minutes. Motion by Commissioner Romano, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 4-0.

VI. Approval of Minutes from May 4, 2023

MOTION to approve the May 4, 2023, minutes. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 4-0.

VII. Processed Advisory Opinions (Consent Agenda)

- a. RQO 23-012
- b. RQO 23-013
- c. RQO 23-014
- d. RQO 23-015

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as published. Motion by Vice Mayor Sherriff, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 4-0.

VIII. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

No items were pulled.

IX. Executive Session Re: C23-002

RECESS

At 1:33 p.m., the chair declared the meeting recessed for an executive session.

RECONVENE

At 2:27 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Chair Kugler, Vice Chair Sherriff, Commissioner Cruise, and Commissioner Romano present.

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

In Re: Edward Lynch

Christie Kelley, Executive Director of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE), filed the above-referenced complaint on January 5, 2023, against Respondent, Edward Lynch, a Palm Beach County Building Code Advisory Board member, alleging that Respondent improperly used or attempted to use his position as an advisory board member to give himself a special financial benefit, in violation of Section 2-443(a) of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Pursuant to §2-258(a)1 of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Ordinance, the COE is empowered to enforce the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. On June 8, 2023, the Commission conducted a probable cause hearing and reviewed the Memorandum of Inquiry, the Report of Investigation, and the Probable Cause Recommendation submitted by the COE Advocate. After an oral statement by the Advocate and the Respondent, the Commission determined that probable cause exists to believe that the Respondent may have violated §2-443(a) of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that probable cause exists and the complaint against Respondent, Edward Lynch, will be set for a final hearing within 120 days to be coordinated between the parties.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on June 8, 2023.

X. Executive Director Comments

Ms. Kelley provided the following updates:

1.

Ms. Kelley thanked Inspector General John Carey for serving as a volunteer advocate for the COE during a probable cause hearing.

2.

Since the last meeting, staff had spoken at various municipality meetings within the county and conducted several in-person ethics committee meetings.

3.

Ms. Kelley expressed sentiments of gratitude to Vice Chair Sherriff for her time on the commission, and she added that Palm Beach County was in good hands with her serving as a judge.

XI. Commissioner Comments

1.

The commission and State Attorney Aronberg congratulated Vice Chair Sherriff on her recent appointment as judge.

2.

Mr. Aronberg recognized the accomplishments of commission members and staff that had worked at the State Attorneys office.

3.

Chair Kugler presented Vice Chair Sherriff with an award for her dedication and service to the commission.

4.

Vice Chair Sherriff expressed sentiments of her time serving on the commission.

XII. Public Comments

No comments were made.

XIII. Adjournment

At 2:35 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:

Chair/Vice Chair