

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

OCTOBER 5, 2023

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

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

Michael H. Kugler, Chair
Kristin A. Vara-Garcia, Vice Chair
Peter L. Cruise
Michael S. Kridel
Rodney G. Romano

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Rhonda Giger, General Counsel
Mark. A. Higgs, COE Investigator II
Christie E. Kelley, COE Director III
Gina A. Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager
S. Lizabeth Martin, COE Communication and Education 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

Commissioner Cruise led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

All members were present.

IV. Introductory Remarks

There were no introductory remarks.

V. Approval of minutes from September 7, 2023

MOTION to approve the September 7, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion by Commissioner Romano, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 5-0.

VI. Processed Advisory Opinions (Consent Agenda)

- a. RQO 23-023
- b. RQO 23-024
- c. RQO 23-026
- d. RQO 23-027

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as published. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 5-0.

VII. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

No items were pulled from consent.

VIII. Executive Director Comments

Ms. Kelley provided the following updates:

1.

Ms. Kelley discussed the findings of a complaint against Commissioner Cruise regarding his attendance at local political event.

2.

Ms. Levesque had provided an overview presentation about the COE to the Leadership Class of Palm Beach County.

3.

Ms. Giger had conducted an in-person training at the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

4.

In October, Ms. Kelley and Norman Ostrau, Ethics Officer for the City of West Palm Beach, would be presenting a training for the Palm Beach County League of Cities.

5.

Ms. Kelley stated that the OIG meeting would be held in November following the COE meeting.

IX. Commission Comments

1.

Commissioner Cruise thanked Ms. Levesque and Ms. Martin for their attendance at the Civics and Government Day event.

2.

Commissioner Cruise thanked Ms. Kelley and the COE staff for their professionalism and efforts when handling complaints regardless of the complainant's identity or who the allegations might be against.

3.

Chair Kugler thanked Vice Chair Vara-Garcia for conducting the COE meetings in his absence.

4.

Chair Kugler echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Cruise regarding the professionalism displayed in handling complaints.

XI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

XI. Adjournment

At 1:37 p.m., the vice chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair