

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

SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

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

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

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

COMMISSION ON ETHICS STAFF PRESENT:

Rhonda Giger, General Counsel
Abigail Irizarry, 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:

Alyssa Berg, 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 AUGUST 1, 2024

MOTION to approve the August 1, 2024, minutes. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 5-0.

VI. Executive Sessions:

- a. C24-005
- b. C24-009

RECESS

At 1:31 p.m., the chair declared the meeting recessed for executive session.

RECONVENE

At 3:21 p.m., the meeting reconvened with all members present.

Vice Chair Kridel read the public reports and final orders into the record:

In Re: Thomas Turkin

C24-005

Complainant, Phillip Terrano, filed the above referenced complaint alleging that Respondent, Thomas Turkin, Vice Mayor of Boynton Beach, used his elected position for personal gain, in violation of Section 2-443(a), Misuse of public office or employment, or Section 2-443(b), Corrupt misuse of official position, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Pursuant to Section 2-258(a) of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Ordinance, the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics is empowered to enforce the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. ¹ On September 5, 2024, the Commission conducted a probable cause hearing. After reviewing the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation and listening to statements by the Advocate and Respondent's attorney, the Commission concluded that probable cause does not exist because there was no evidence that Respondent took any action that violated the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED and ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Thomas Turkin, is hereby **DISMISSED**.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on September 5, 2024.

Christie Kelly, Executive Director of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE), filed the above-captioned complaint against Ronald Book (Respondent) alleging that Respondent, a registered lobbyist in Palm Beach County, provided a gift or gifts valued at over of \$100 to a prohibited person, to wit: A Palm Beach County Commissioner , in violation of Section 2-444(a)(2) of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. Pursuant to Section 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 September 5, 2024, the Commission conducted a probable cause hearing and reviewed the Memorandum of Inquiry, the Report Investigation, and the Probable Cause Recommendation submitted by the Advocate. Additionally, the Commission heard argument regarding the applicability of SB 7014 to a self-initiated complaint filed prior to the effective date of the statute. After statements and argument by the Advocate and Respondent's Counsel, the Commission determined that Sb 7014 should not be retroactively applied and determined that probable cause exists to believe that the Respondent may have violated Section 2-444(a)(2) of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

The Advocate recommended the issuance of a letter of instruction and a dismissal of the complaint. The Advocate recommended this resolution based on Respondent's statement acknowledging that failing to cash the checks within 90 days of providing the gifts was an oversight and a mistake. After listening to the statements by Advocate and the Respondent's attorney, the Commission found that the alleged violation appeared to be inadvertent or unintentional and issued a letter of instruction. Pursuant to Commission on Ethics Ordinance Section 2-260.3(b), Dismissal of complaints, the complaint may be dismissed and a letter of instruction issued at any stage of the proceedings if the Commission finds that the violation was inadvertent, un intentional, or insubstantial.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Ronald Book, is hereby **DISMISSED** and a Letter of Instruction is issued.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on this 5th day of September 2024.

VII. PROCESSED ADVISORY OPINIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

a. RQO 24-013

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

VIII. ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

No items were pulled from the consent agenda.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

1.

Ms. Kelley stated that staff recently delivered presentations to the Lake Worth Beach Rotary Club and various municipalities.

2.

Ms. Kelley announced that the meeting scheduled for next month would be on October 12, 2024, which would fall on the second Thursday of the month.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments were made.

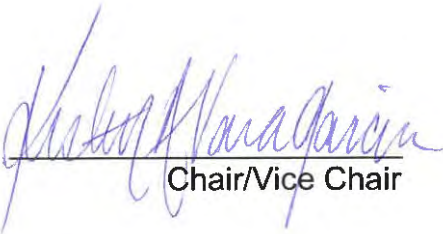
XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

At 3:28 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:


Chair/Vice Chair