

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

NOVEMBER 7, 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
Mark Higgs, COE Investigator II
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:

Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Romano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Kristin A. Vara-Garcia, Vice Chair Michael S. Kridel,
Commissioner Peter L. Cruise, and Commissioner Rodney G.
Romano

Absent: Commissioner Michael H. Kugler

IV. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

There were no introductory remarks.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

MOTION to approve the September 5, 2024, minutes. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 4-0.

VI. Executive Session:

RECESS

At 1:35 p.m., the chair declared the meeting recessed.

- a. **C24-002**
- b. **C24-010**
- c. **C24-011**

RECONVENE

At 2:43 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Chair Vara-Garica, Vice Chair Kridel, Commissioner Cruise, and Commissioner Romano present.

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

In re: Daniel Dugger, Case C24-002:

Complainant, Tenille DeCoste, filed the above-referenced complaint alleging that Respondent, Daniel Dugger, City Manager for Boynton Beach, used his official position in a manner that may have violated Palm Beach County Code of Ethics (Code) Section 2-443(a), Misuse of Public Office or Employment, Section 2-443(b), Corrupt Misuse of Official Position, and/or Section 2-445, Anti-Nepotism.

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 November 7, 2024, the Commission conducted a probable cause hearing. After reviewing the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation and considering 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, Daniel Dugger, is hereby **DISMISSED**.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on November 7, 2024.

In re: Raymond Shaw, Case C24-010

After the completion of a preliminary inquiry, the Commission on Ethics filed a self-initiated complaint against Respondent, Raymond Shaw, an employee of the West Palm Beach Police Department. The complaint alleged that Respondent may have violated Section 2-444(a)(1), Gift Law, 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 November 7, 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, 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, Raymond Shaw, is hereby dismissed.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on November 7, 2024.

In re: William Griffin, Case C24-011

After the completion of a preliminary inquiry, the Commission on Ethics filed a self-initiated complaint against Respondent, William Griffin, a vendor with the city of West Palm Beach. The complaint alleged that Respondent may have violated Section 2-444(a)(1), Gift Law, 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 Code of Ethics.¹ On November 7, 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, 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, William Griffin, is hereby **DISMISSED**.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on November 7, 2024.

VII. PROCESSED ADVISORY OPINIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

- a. **RQO 24-014**
- b. **RQO 24-015**
- c. **RQO 24-016**

MOTION to approve the consent agenda. **Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 4-0.**

VIII. ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

No items were pulled from the consent agenda.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Ms. Kelley reported the following updates:

1.

COE remained in discussion with the appellate attorneys regarding the Book appeal. Ms. Giger would be preparing staff, and Ms. Kelley would keep the commission updated as it progressed.

2.

Staff participated in several outreach events during the months of September and October.

3.

Ms. Giger provided ethics training to the Delray Beach DDA.

4.

Ms. Martin delivered several presentations to various municipalities.

5.

Ms. Kelley and Norman Ostrau, Ethics Officer for the City of West Palm Beach, had provided a joint training for the Palm Beach County League of Cities.

6.

Staff had attended and completed all municipal meeting requirements for the year until January.

7.

A fall newsletter was prepared and published thanks to the assistance of Ms. Levesque and Ms. Martin.

8.

Next month's COE meeting would be followed by the Office of the Inspector General meeting.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTS

1.

Commissioner Cruise inquired if the pending investigation on the Ron Book appeal would delay the related party investigation.

Ms. Kelley confirmed that the related party investigation could continue separately.

2.

Commissioner Cruise asked about the status of the West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority.

Ms. Kelley responded saying that staff was preparing a sample memorandum for understanding for review.

3.

Commissioner Cruise questioned how much knowledge an individual would need to have if they wanted to report a potential violation.

Ms. Kelley said that the hearsay definition was limited. It would be best if there was public record of the potential violation; however, if anyone wanted to submit a complaint, the COE would review it to determine if it met the hearsay threshold.

Mr. Cruise confirmed with Ms. Kelley that the complaint had to be based on personal knowledge of a violation instead of rumor or gossip. If it was determined that the violation

was based on rumor or gossip, the COE would advise the individual that they would not be able to accept the complaint.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Je'Rise Hansen thanked the COE staff for their trainings, and she relayed Mr. Radcliffe's apologies for his absence.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

At 2:53 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair