

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS (COE)
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA
MARCH 6, 2025**

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

**WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

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. Elizabeth 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. Nomination and Election of new Chairperson (to begin presiding over meeting immediately upon election).

Chair Vara-Garcia opened the floor for the nomination of chairperson.

Commissioner Cruise nominated Vice Chair Kridel as Chair, and Commissioner Romano seconded.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Vice Chair Kridel joined the meeting via telephone.)

Vice Chair Kridel accepted the nomination of chairperson.

No other nominations were made.

Vice Chair Kridel was appointed as chair for the term of one year.

IV. Nomination and Election of new Vice Chairperson

Commissioner Vara-Garcia opened the floor for nominations of vice chairperson.

Commissioner Romano nominated Commissioner Cruise as vice chair, and Commissioner Kugler seconded.

No other nominations were made.

Commissioner Cruise was appointed as vice chair for a term of one year.

V. Roll Call

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

Absent: Chair Michael S. Kridel

VI. Election

MOTION to nominate Michael S. Kridel as the chair. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Romano, and carried 4-0.

MOTION to nominate Peter L. Cruise as the vice chair. Motion by Rodney G. Romano, seconded by Commissioner Kugler, and carried 4-0.

VII. Introductory Remarks

(CLERK'S NOTE: Vice Chair Cruise served as chair in the absence of Chair Kridel.

No introductory remarks were made.

VIII. Approval of Minutes from February 6, 2025

MOTION to approve the February 6, 2025, minutes. Motion by Commissioner Kugler, seconded by Commissioner Vara-Garcia, and carried 4-0.

IX. Processed Advisory Opinions (Consent Agenda)

a. RQO 25-003

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

X. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

No Items were pulled from the consent agenda.

XI. Executive Director Comments

Ms. Kelly reported the following updates:

1.

In February, staff conducted two ethics training courses for Riviera Beach Board members.

2.

Staff participated in several outreach events for Ethical Governance Day.

3.

The cycle for COE staff participation in municipal meetings began in February, with Ms. Giger attending.

4.

Staff continued to work on the COE's social media platforms to recognize their 15th year anniversary.

5.

Ms. Kelly announced that a proclamation recognizing Commission on Ethics Awareness Month would take place at the next BCC meeting, extending an invitation for all to attend.

Commissioner Cruise confirmed with Ms. Kelly that the BCC meeting would begin at 9:30 a.m.

XII. Commission Comments

No comments were made.

XIII. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

XIV. Adjournment

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

APPROVED:


Chair/Vice Chair