

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

DECEMBER 4, 2025

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

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

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

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The commissioners recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Chair Kridel, Vice Chair Cruise, Commissioner Kugler, and Commissioner Vara-Garcia

Absent: Commissioner Romano

IV. Introductory Remarks

No comments were made.

V. Approval of Minutes from November 6, 2025

MOTION to approve the minutes. Motion by Vice Chair Cruise, seconded by Commissioner Kugler, and carried 4-0.

VI. Executive Session – C24-021

RECESS

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

RECONVENE

At 2:15 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Chair Kridel, Vice Chair Cruise, Commissioner Kugler, and Commissioner Vara-Garcia present.

In re: Tenille Decoste

C24-021

Commissioner Kugler read the following final order into the record:

Complainant, Daniel Dugger, filed the above referenced complaint against Respondent, Tenille Decoste, a former employee of the City of Boynton Beach, alleging that Respondent used or attempted to use her position in a manner that may have resulted in a special financial benefit to herself or her outside business, in violation of Sec. 2-443(a) of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. It was further alleged that Respondent attempted to interfere with and/or obstruct an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Commission on Ethics, in violation of Sec.-2-447, Noninterference, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics (Code).

Pursuant to Sec.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 December 4, 2025, during the probable cause hearing, the Commission considered the report of investigation and the probable cause recommendation. The Commission also reviewed the negotiated settlement agreement whereby Respondent agreed to a finding of probable cause for allegations 1 and 9 and the issuance of a corresponding letter of reprimand. Pursuant to Sec. 2-448 of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics, a finding by the Commission on Ethics of a violation of any part of this article shall subject the person or entity to public reprimand. The agreement further provided for the dismissal of all remaining allegations without additional findings.

After hearing the statement from the Advocate and the Respondent's written statement, the Commission accepted the negotiated settlement agreement of the parties, finding probable cause on Allegations 1 and 9, issued a letter of reprimand, and made no findings on all remaining allegations.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Tennille Decoste, is hereby closed with the issuance of a letter of reprimand for the two separate violations of the Code.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on December 4, 2025.

VII. Executive Director Comments

Ms. Kelley reported the following updates:

1.

Staff was in the process of selecting an intern from Florida Atlantic University (FAU). Ms. Martin was thanked for her efforts to assist with the process.

2.

Staff continued to work with the Graphics department to finalize the COE's annual report that will be presented at the COE meeting in January.

3.

Ms. Martin would be attending the COGEL Conference in Atlanta, GA, which provides an opportunity to review best practices with other ethics agencies across the country.

4.

Staff looked forward to participating in the High School Ethics Bowl at FAU on December 13th.

5.

The OIG meeting will follow the COE meeting in January.

6.

Ms. Kelley wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah.

VIII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Kugler wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Vice Chair Cruise echoed Commissioner Kugler's sentiments.

XI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Kridel wished everyone happy holidays.

At 2:20 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



Peter L. Cruise
Chair/Vice Chair