

TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT, COOK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



BOARD OF ETHICS MEMBERS
DR. SUSAN GAFFNEY
VON MATTHEWS
HON. MARCUS SALONE
THOMAS SZROMBA, CHAIRPERSON

SISAVANH BAKER
DIRECTOR

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS
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OPEN SESSION MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
August 26, 2021

OPEN SESSION I:

A. Call to Order: The August 26, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Cook County Board of Ethics (“Board”) was called to order at 2:07 p.m.

Board Members Present: Dr. Susan Gaffney, Von Matthews, Honorable Marcus Salone and Thomas Szromba

Staff Members Present: Director S. Baker, Legal Counsel J. King, Investigator J. Brown and Administrative Analyst K. Johns

Staff Members Absent: Investigator L. Fisher

B. Agenda Approval

A motion to approve the agenda was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

C. Statements by the Public

Patrick McDonough commented that on August 25, 2021, he witnessed Commissioner Luis Arroyo driving a City of Chicago Department of Water management dump truck at 2002 North California. Mr. McDonough stated he believes all Cook County Commissioners should be on the job, at the office ready to do work. Mr. McDonough expressed concerns about Commissioner Luis Arroyo holding two government positions and receiving two pensions. He expressed his hopes that the Cook County Board of Ethics will address it.

Albertina Donaldson stated that she works for the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and that on December 4, 2020 she suffered a workplace injury. Ms. Donaldson alleged that her manager disclosed personal medical information to at least one other manager and colleagues. Ms. Donaldson found this disclosure is egregious and immoral and is asking the Board to hold her manager accountable under Cook County personnel rules 10.4. Chairperson T. Szromba noted that the Board has no jurisdiction over any actions taken that do not implicate or involve the Ethics Ordinance.

Alisa Kaplan, Executive Director of Reform for Illinois expressed that her organization hopes to see real progress on strengthening the Cook County Ethics Ordinance and looks forward to seeing the proposed changes to the Ordinance implemented soon. She further hopes that the Ethics Board will do whatever is necessary to complete the examination of campaign contributions and ensure that no candidate or elected official has received more than the amount legally allowed by the current Ethics Ordinance. Finally, she encouraged the Board to oppose increasing the campaign contribution cap from \$750 to \$1,500.

David Orr representing Good Government Illinois stated that he hopes that the Board acts expeditiously on passing a strong ethics ordinance. Mr. Orr suggested that for any time period campaign finance reform audits were not able to be conducted, and the Board should go back to those periods and conduct those audits. Finally, he recommended that the Board oppose raising the threshold that elected officials can receive from those who do business with the County.

D. Approval of the July 1, 2021 Regular Meeting Open Minutes

A motion to approve the July 1, 2021 regular meeting open minutes was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

E. Director's Report

Director S. Baker reported that there are currently five open investigations and five have been closed. She stated that routine inquiries are significantly higher this year as opposed to last year. Director Baker reported that staff is in the process of completing 297 D2 audits and has received numerous contract compliance reviews. She further reported that staff has completed 45 late lobbyist registration reviews. Director Baker made an oral correction to the report stating all lobbyists have filed. She noted that one lobbyist did not file, and that staff is bringing action against that lobbyist in Administrative Hearings to be handled by the State's Attorney's Office. She noted that staff is seeking approximately over \$70,000.00 in fines and fees. Finally, she stated that she hopes to conduct training for all elected officials and staff.

G. Illinois Ethics Reform Bill – Status Update

Director Baker stated that Staff is reviewing how the Bill may impact the Ethics Ordinance once passed. Legal Counsel J. King will confirm the date by which the Governor must act on the bill pending signature.

At 2:40 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss matters regarding specific investigations, public litigation, and approval of minutes for prior closed sessions, pursuant to sections 2(c)(4) of the Open Meetings Act.

At 3:16 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to reconvene into open session.

OPEN SESSION II:

A. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes of the July 1, 2021 Regular Meeting

A motion to approve the July 1, 2021 regular meeting closed minutes was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

B. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items

A motion to adopt the denial of reconsideration in 2016I006 was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

A motion to approve the Notice of Determination in 21I002 was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

A motion to approve and adopt the amended advisory opinion in 21A004 was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

C. Adjourn

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:29 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Board Staff.