

TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT, COOK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SISAVANH BAKER
DIRECTOR



COOK COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS

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BOARD OF ETHICS MEMBERS

DR. SUSAN GAFFNEY
VON MATTHEWS, VICE CHAIR
ANTARA NATH RIVERA
HON. MARCUS SALONE
THOMAS SZROMBA, CHAIR

OPEN SESSION MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
August 25, 2022

OPEN SESSION I:

- A. Call to Order:** The August 25, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Cook County Board of Ethics (“Board”) was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

Board Members Present: Dr. Susan Gaffney, Antara Nath Rivera, Von Matthews, and Thomas Szromba

Staff Members Present: Director S. Baker, Deputy Director J. King, Investigator J. Brown, Investigator O. Cobbins, Investigator A. Cahn, Investigator J. Jones, Outreach and Training Coordinator J. Epplin-Zapf, Executive Assistant A. Sumpter and Office Manager K. Johns

B. Agenda Approval

Director Baker presented a motion to amend the agenda for the August 25, 2022, executive session, which passed by unanimous voice vote. The board also approved the agenda for the open session.

C. Statements by the Public

Todd Thielmann addressed the board regarding his termination as a result of a Board investigation. He stated the Freedom of Information Act request for Open Meetings Act training certificates, which was filed on July 28, 2022, was not fulfilled. He called for the Board’s resignation. Chair Szromba stated Mr. Thielmann’s comments would be taken into consideration.

D. Approval of the June 2, 2022, Regular Meeting Open Minutes

A motion to approve the July 14, 2022, regular meeting open minutes was made and adopted by unanimous vote.

E. Introduction of DHRE Legal Counsel

Director Baker introduced the new DHRE legal counsel, Kinza Khan.

F. Board of Ethics Meeting Schedule- 2022

Director Baker stated that the board should consider scheduling a meeting for November 17, 2022, to maintain a regular schedule for the remainder of the year. Chair Szromba stated that Board staff should hold November 17 as a potential meeting date in case there is work for the Board members to do after the October 6 meeting.

F. Director’s Report

Director Baker reported the data has remained consistent between the July 14 and August 25

meetings. She stated the number of inquiries has increased while the number of complaints has decreased. Director Baker attributed this to County employees inquiring ahead of potentially violating the Ethics Ordinance. She also reported that the Ethics Proposed Rules are still under review by the Rules and Administration Committee and that she would provide updates when they become available. Chair Szromba requested that Director Baker follow up with a committee member to check the status of the proposed rules.

Deputy Director King reported that Board staff completed the political contribution audits for Q1 2022, resulting in three violations. She stated that notices were sent either requesting the excessive amount of the contribution be cured, that the contribution did not exceed the limit, or that the individual contributor was not subject to the limits as outlined in the Ordinance. She explained that the responses would be due around September 16, 2022, and that a full report at the October 6 Board meeting.

The Outreach and Training Coordinator reported that Board staff is in the process of developing a second permanently available training regarding prohibited activities during election season, which would be available for any County employee to take. She stated that there is ongoing training rollout for senior administrative personnel. She also reported that 900 individuals received training throughout the year.

At 2:25 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss matters regarding specific investigations, litigation, and approval of minutes for prior closed sessions, pursuant to sections 2(c)(4) of the Open Meetings Act.

At 3:31 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to reconvene into open session.

OPEN SESSION II:

A. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes of the July 14, 2022, Regular Meeting

A motion to approve the July 14, 2022, executive session minutes was made and adopted by unanimous vote.

B. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items

A motion to open investigations 2022I002 and 2022I003 were approved by unanimous vote. A motion to adopt Advisory Opinion 2022A003 was also approved by unanimous vote.

Adjourn

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:36 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Board Staff.