

Ethics Hotline Subcommittee of the Ethics Commission

Meeting: May 22, 2008, 3:30 – 4:45 pm

Attending: Gene Filbert, Pat Plumlee, Pat Sher, Carla Miller (EO) (Jay Williams joined the meeting for the last 5 minutes)

1. There was a review of the ethics code provisions and authority of the Commission for the Hotline. (see sections 602.903 (d) and (g)).
2. The Ethics Officer explained the 4 stages a complaint moves through once it has been reported to the Hotline. Stage 1 is the initial intake. Many issues come in this way, most not relevant ethics cases (general complaints, referrals to 630-CITY; insufficient information; general questions; tips; or referred to other departments for handling.
3. About 15% of the intakes get to Stage 2, for a more thorough review and discussion for handling. This has been done with the IG and the Ethics Officer. Some of these cases go to Stage 3 for a full investigation. Stage 4 is when the case is completed.
4. It was discussed and decided that it would be best to get the Call Center to answer all Hotline calls so they can be immediately handled by a “live person”. The Ethics Officer says they now have a confidential cell phone to forward the Hotline phone on her desk, so this is possible. The Ethics Coordinator, Christine, has been handling these calls to date when the EO is not in the office.
5. It was decided that all cases going on to Stage 2 be numbered and monitored for timely outcomes. Stage 2 cases should be reviewed and a plan of action determined within 30 days from the date of the complaint. Stage 3 cases (investigations) should be given 60 days before a report to the Commission is requested. The Ethics Commission should be informed, in closed sessions, as to these Stage 3 and 4 cases. The Ethics Commission would be able to refer back to Stage 2, or for more work to be done on Stage 3, before they make any of their recommendations before the case is closed out.
6. Carla is to talk to the JEA Hotline coordinators to go over their procedures.
7. All pending matters shall be referenced in the Commission’s minutes so there can be follow up.
8. If citizen complaints come into the Ethics Commission, either in writing, or by a person coming to a meeting, it will be handled in the same flow as the Hotlines cases above. The EC bylaws have to be amended to show this procedure. All procedures shall be reviewed by General Counsel’s office to make sure they comply with the law.