

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE



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MARY BLAND LOVE

**ETHICS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, October 26, 2020

Zoom

No Physical Location

The meeting was called to order by Joseph Rogan, Chair of the Ethics Commission, at 4:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

Commission Attendees: Joseph Rogan, LaTonya Lipscomb Smith, Mary Bland Love, Ellen Schmitt, Dr. George Candler, Darcy Galnor, J.J. Dixon, and Imani A. Boykin. Excused Absence: Carlton DeVooght. Other attendees: Carla Miller, Director, Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight (“OECO”); Kirby Oberdorfer, Deputy Director, OECO; Cherry Shaw Pollock, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel (“OGC”); and Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO.

Public in Attendance: Walette Stanford, Ethics Officer, JEA and Laura Boeckman, Assistant General Counsel, OGC.

The meeting began with Mr. Rogan leading the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Miller shared the Ethics Thought.

Minutes Approval:

September 30, 2020 Ethics Commission meeting minutes: Ms. Schmitt made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously with a vote of 8-0.

Staff Reports:

OECO: Ms. Miller referred to the document circulated by email consisting of the top ten OECO activities completed so far this year. The OECO staff conducted ethics training for more than 200 JEA middle management personnel. A survey was sent to participants after each training. Ms. Miller shared a summary of the feedback. Ms. Oberdorfer opined the JEA training was the most impactful training OECO and Ms. Miller has ever conducted. Ms. Stanford thanked OECO for the training. Ms. Miller expressed appreciation for JEA’s support. Ms. Oberdorfer stated the post-training surveys also showed the attendees have high hope for an ethical culture at JEA in the future. In summation, Mr. Rogan stated OECO had a busy 2020 even through the pandemic.

OGC: No report.

Complaints Committee Report: Ms. Schmitt announced the Complaints Committee will have a public meeting soon to update the Ethics Commission Complaint Procedures.

**Office of Ethics, Compliance & Oversight
117 W. Duval Street, Room 225
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone: (904) 255-5507 HOTLINE: 630-1015**

New Business:

Review of Potential Legislation for Travel and Gifts: Ms. Miller gave a history of the draft travel and gift legislation circulated by email to the Ethics Commission members before the meeting (the draft legislation was shown on the screen during the meeting). The draft legislation was originated two years ago by former Council President Anna Lopez Brosche and was subsequently redrafted at the request of former Council President Scott Wilson. Ms. Miller summarized the requirements in paragraph (d) of the draft legislation, including the development by OECO of a reporting form for City officials to disclose travel paid by a third party. Ms. Miller recommended the draft travel legislation be changed to apply to travel paid by any entity and not limited to travel paid by a political committee as currently stated in the draft legislation, and also require disclosure of the purpose of the travel. A discussion occurred regarding additional requirements that may be included in the draft legislation to further transparency regarding travel paid by third parties on behalf of City officials. Ms. Miller and Ms. Oberdorfer will work with Ms. Pollock on revising the draft legislation.

Future of Zoom Meetings and Sunshine Law: Mr. Rogan asked the Ethics Commission members for input regarding continuing the use of Zoom for future Ethics Commission meetings. Mr. Rogan opined that using Zoom to conduct meetings has resulted in efficient and convenient meetings and also greater access to the meetings. Mr. Rogan recommended the Ethics Commission consider joining other ethics commissions in the state to request the Florida Legislature change the Sunshine Law to allow local boards and commissions to meet by communications technology such as Zoom. Ms. Love agreed virtual meetings are a good idea. Ms. Boykin noted her agreement with Ms. Love. Dr. Candler also agreed and added possibly meeting face to face in person twice per year. Ms. Miller stated Florida law allows state boards and commissions to use communications technology to conduct meetings and suggested asking the Florida Legislature to extend this capability to local government boards and commissions. Ms. Miller then asked Ms. Oberdorfer to discuss a project she is working on with OGC to provide guidance to City boards and commissions on conducting hybrid in-person and virtual meetings beginning next month. Ms. Oberdorfer stated she has heard comments that participation has grown among boards and commissions meetings using Zoom. Mayor Curry has formed an ad hoc committee led by Lori Boyer to develop guidance for boards and commissions transitioning to hybrid meetings. Dr. Candler made a motion to issue a resolution encouraging the Florida Legislature to amend the Sunshine Law to allow local government boards and commissions to conduct virtual public meetings. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. Mr. Rogan asked for public participation. There was no public participation provided. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously with a vote of 8-0.

Election of Vice Chair for 2021: Mr. Rogan asked if any Ethics Commission members were interested in serving as Vice Chair next year. Ms. Galnor expressed her interest and Mr. Rogan inquired if any other member wished to serve as Vice-Chair. Only Ms. Galnor expressed interest in being Vice Chair. Ms. Schmitt made a motion to elect Ms. Galnor as Ethics Commission Vice Chair for 2021. Ms. Boykin seconded the motion. Mr. Rogan asked for public participation. There was no public participation provided. Discussion occurred regarding whether Ms. Galnor should abstain from voting and it was determined that she should not abstain. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously with a vote of 8-0.

2021 Strategic Planning: Ms. Miller referred to the following documents circulated by email to the Ethics Commission members prior to the meeting: (1) Ethics Commission Strategic Goals 2017-2018 Update and (2) Summary of Ethics Commission Committee Potential Work. Ms. Miller encouraged the Ethics Commission members to read over the documents and contact Ms. Oberdorfer to schedule a meeting during the month of November to discuss 2021 strategic planning.

2021 Committee Preferences: Mr. Rogan and Ms. Schmitt requested the Ethics Commission members email Ms. Miller, Ms. Oberdorfer or Ms. Homrighouse with their preference rankings of all four standing committees and committee leadership roles for 2021.

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Public Comment:

Mr. Rogan requested public comment. None was given.

Announcements and Scheduling of Future Meetings: Ms. Miller recognized Dr. Candler for his service on the Ethics Commission. Dr. Candler expressed his thanks. Ms. Miller recognized Mr. Rogan for his service as Chair of the Ethics Commission. Mr. Rogan expressed his thanks. No specific date has been decided yet for the next Ethics Commission meeting.

Adjourn: There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO

Date of Approval

This is a summary of the meeting and not a verbatim transcription. A recording of these proceedings is available at <http://www.coj.net/departments/ethics-office/notices.-agendas-minutes>.