

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

April 7, 2022

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

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS:

Peter L. Cruise
Carol E. A. DeGraffenreidt – via teleconference
Michael H. Kugler, Vice Chair
Rodney G. Romano, Chair

STAFF:

Gina A. Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Julie Burns, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller's Office

MOTION to allow Commissioner DeGraffenreidt to attend the meeting telephonically. Motion by Vice Chair Kugler, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 3-0. Commissioner DeGraffenreidt abstained.

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Commissioner DeGraffenreidt thanked the board members for allowing her to participate in the proceedings telephonically.

Chair Romano stated that the pledge of allegiance would be incorporated into the COE meetings going forward.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBURUARY 3, 2022

MOTION to approve the minutes from November 2021, December 2021, and January 2022. Motion by Vice Chair Kugler, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 4-0.

(CLERK'S NOTE: The dates of the minutes to be approved were inadvertently stated incorrectly.)

MOTION to approve all past minutes listed in Item IV. Motion by Commissioner Cruise, seconded by Commissioner DeGraffenreidt, and carried 4-0.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Chair Romano noted that the vote to approve past minutes encompassed Items IV and V.)

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 10, 2022

See Item IV.

RECESS

At 1:34 p.m., the chair declared the meeting recessed for an executive session.

RECONVENE

At 1:58 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Chair Romano, Vice Chair Kugler, Commissioner Cruise, and Commissioner DeGraffenreidt present.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a. C22-002

Vice Chair Kugler read the following into the record regarding Palm Beach County COE, *In Re: Juli Casale*, Public Report and Final Order of Dismissal:

Complainant, Charles G. Halberg, filed the above referenced complaint on December 20, 2021, alleging Respondent, Juli Casale, violated §2-443(a), Misuse of public office or employment, and §2-443(b), Corrupt misuse of official position, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics by using her position on the City of Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to attempt to have the approval of funding for his client contingent on Complainant ceasing all criticism of the CRA online.

Pursuant to §2-258(a)1 of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Ordinance, the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics is empowered to enforce the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. On April 7, 2022, the Commission conducted a hearing and reviewed the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation submitted by the COE Advocate. After an oral statement by the Advocate [and Respondent], the Commission concluded that probable cause does not exist because there was no evidence that Respondent's actions violated the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Therefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Juli Casale, is hereby DISMISSED.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on April 7, 2022.

By: Rodney Romano, Chair

VII. PROCESSED ADVISORY OPINIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

a. RQO 22-004

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

VIII. ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA – None

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Gina Levesque, COE Intake and Compliance Manager, provided some brief updates on behalf of COE Director III Christie Kelley, who was not in attendance. The following points were made:

A.

DISCUSSED: General Counsel Interview Process

Ms. Levesque indicated that the interview process was coming to a close and that the general counsel position would be filled soon.

B.

DISCUSSED: Supplemental Budget Request

Ms. Levesque stated that a supplemental budget request for the following year's budget had been submitted for a COE community outreach and marketing coordinator.

C.

DISCUSSED: Ordinance Review Committee

Ms. Levesque reported that the Ordinance Review Committee was scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, to review the language that the commission had approved the prior month to replace the Palm Beach chapter of the Florida Institute of CPAs as an appointing entity. Once the final version of the language had been approved by the committee, it would be sent to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTS

A.

DISCUSSED: Port of Palm Beach

Commissioner Cruise indicated that the Port of Palm Beach was not covered under the ethics ordinance and was therefore not under the jurisdiction of the COE.

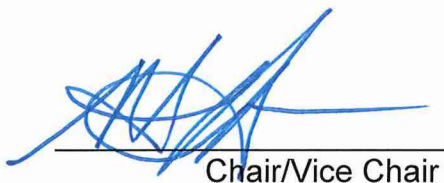
Ms. Levesque explained that the Port of Palm Beach was an independent constitutional office over which the COE had no authority.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

At 2:04 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair