

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

AUGUST 6, 2026

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

**COMMISSION CHAMBERS
WEISMAN GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

MEMBERS:

Rodney G. Romano, Chair
Alan I. Blass, Vice Chair
Peter L. Cruise
Michael H. Kugler
Kristin A. Vara-Garcia

COMMISSION ON ETHICS STAFF PRESENT:

Rhonda Gieger, COE General Counsel
Abigail Irizarry, COE Investigator II
Christie E. Kelley, COE Director III
S. Lizbeth Martin, COE Communication and Education Manager

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

Samantha Giarratana, Board Meetings Specialist

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Vara-Garcia led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

All members were present.

IV. Introductory Remarks

No introductory remarks were made.

V. Approval of Minutes from July 9, 2026

MOTION to approve the minutes. Motion by Commissioner Kugler, seconded by

Commissioner Vara-Garcia, and carried 5-0.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Item VII was taken up at this time.)

VII. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

No items were pulled from the consent agenda.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Item VI was taken up at this time.)

VI. Processed Advisory Opinions (Consent Agenda)

- a. RQO 26-014
- b. RQO 26-015
- c. RQO 26-016

MOTION to approve the consent agenda. Motion by Commissioner Kugler, seconded by Vice Chair Blass.

RECESS

At 1:31 p.m., the chair declared the meeting recessed for executive session.

RECONVENE

At 2:00 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Chair Romano, Vice Chair Blass, Commissioner Cruise, and Commissioner Vara-Garcia present.

(CLERK'S NOTE: For clarification, the vote for Item VI was retaken at this time.)

MOTION to approve the consent agenda. Motion by Commissioner Vara-Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Cruise, and carried 4-0.

VIII. Executive Session C26-001

Vice Chair Blass read the following final order into the record:

In re: Peggy Wheeler

C26-001

Complainant, DD Halpern, filed the above-referenced complaint alleging that Respondent Peggy Wheeler, former Mayor for the Town of Juno Beach, may have violated Section 2-443(b), Corrupt misuse of official position, and/or Section 2-445(i), Disclosure or use of certain information, of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics (Code) by improperly using her official position to secure or attempt to secure a benefit or

privilege for herself and/or disclosing or using information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of her official position for her personal benefit.

Pursuant to Section 2-258(a) 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 August 6, 2026, the Commission conducted a probable cause hearing. After reviewing the Report of Investigation and the Probable Cause Recommendation and hearing statements from the Advocate, Respondent, and counsel for the Respondent, the Commission concluded that probable cause did not exist because there was no evidence that Respondent took any action that violated the Code.

There for it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the complaint against Respondent, Peggy Wheeler, is hereby **DISMISSED**.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics in public session on August 6, 2026.

IX. Executive Director Comments

(CLERK'S NOTE: Commissioner Kugler joined the meeting.)

Ms. Kelley reported the following updates:

1.

Staff conducted outreach events with various municipalities and organizations through several presentations and community engagements.

2.

The COE was preparing to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the Lake Worth Beach Community Redevelopment Agency in October.

X. Commission Comments

1.

In response to Commissioner Cruise's inquiry regarding the procedure for paying legal fees, Ms. Kelley explained the process and stated that the respondent requested that legal fees be paid by the complainant.

2.

Chair Romano announced the birth of a new family member.

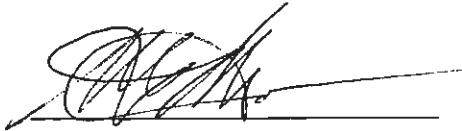
XI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

XII. Adjournment

At 2:05 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. ...", is written over a horizontal line.

Chair/Vice Chair