



CITY OF CHICAGO



BOARD OF ETHICS

CONFIDENTIAL

January 24, 2023

[City official]

Chicago, IL 606

Re: Case No. 23007.C; Letter of Admonition; Prohibited Political Activities; Unauthorized Use of Real or Personal City Property

Dear ,

On Saturday, January 14, 2023, you emailed and called me, explaining that you had, in error, within the previous hour, emailed to just under one hundred recipients , from your official City of Chicago email account, but from your personal, non-City laptop computer, political fundraising emails, and that you had already sent recall notices to each recipient. You said you wished to self-report this violation. I emailed you back and advised that you keep record of all such emails, and forward me a sample (which you did), and that I would present the matter to the Board at its January 23, 2023 meeting with the recommendation that the Board determine this to be a minor violation of the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance (the "Ordinance"), and that, if the Board so determines, you would be sent this letter of admonition advising you not to repeat the mistake.

At its meeting yesterday, and as I advised you on the phone, the Board considered this matter, and determined that your sending these emails did constitute a "minor" Ordinance violation.¹ The Board then directed me, pursuant to §2-156-070(b) of the Ordinance, to send you this confidential letter of admonition. Accordingly, you are hereby admonished that §2-156-135(b) of the Ordinance prohibits City officials or employees from "intentionally misappropriat[ing] any property or resources of the City in connection with any prohibited political activity." Intentionally using a City email account to send political content is prohibited. The determination of a minor violation is consistent with Board Cases 20008.C and 21037.C, where the Board respectively advised a City employee and elected official that they had committed a minor violation by inadvertently forwarding emails with political content from their City of Chicago email account as well. *See*

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/AOMinorViolations/20008.C.pdf>; and

¹ In Case 14006.A, the Board set out the factors to consider as to whether a violation is minor: (i) would determining that the violation was minor still uphold the spirit of the Ordinance; (ii) would a third party view the violation as technical; and (iii) was there a pattern evidencing a negligent disregard of the Ordinance.

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/AO_PolActvty/21037L.pdf.

Please also be advised that, if this minor violation is repeated, the Board would be required by law to consider it a non-minor violation and would then advise you that you may self-report it to the Office of Inspector General, and, if you did not, the Board would be required to do so and make *this* minor violation part of the record of *that* report.

On behalf of the Board, I appreciate your honesty and desire to comply with the standards embodied in the Ordinance. Please contact me with any questions.

Yours very truly,

[signed]

Steven I. Berlin, Executive Director