

BOARD OF ETHICS
Open Session Minutes
October 17, 2007 - 3:07 p.m.
740 North Sedgwick, Suite 500

Board Members Present

Miguel A. Ruiz, Chair
Thomas McCarthy
Mary Beth S. Robinson
John L. Wilhelm, M.D.

Michael F. Quirk, Absent

Staff Present

Steven I. Berlin, Acting Executive Director
Richard J. Superfine, Legal Counsel
Briana Billingslea, Attorney-Investigator
Edward Primer, Program Director
Pally Casillas, Staff Assistant

Upon Board members being seated (Michael F. Quirk, absent), Steven I. Berlin, Acting Executive Director, addressed the Board to report the following: "I am honored to report that the Mayor has designated Miguel Ruiz as the new Chair. On behalf of the entire staff, I extend our congratulations to him. We look forward to the agency's success under his leadership." Miguel Ruiz stated how honored he was and thanked everyone for their good wishes.

I. Approval of Minutes

The Board VOTED 4-0 (Michael F. Quirk, absent) to approve the Open Session minutes of the September 12, 2007 meeting, as amended.

II. Chair's Report

None.

III. Acting Executive Director's Report

A. Board Members

I am also pleased to report that the Mayor has appointed a new Board member, Alison Chisolm, who is Development Director at the Young Women's Leadership Charter School in Chicago. Her name was submitted to City Council at its September 27 meeting, and IGA has advised us that her nomination was passed to Committee and her confirmation could occur at the October 31 City Council meeting. We are hoping that her first Board meeting will be November's.

B. Education-Classes

Since the last Board meeting, there have been 3 regularly scheduled and one specially scheduled class for persons required to attend ethics training. On September 19, 47 attended; on September 26, staff made a presentation to Alderman Brookins, at his request; on October 3, 18 attended, and on October 17, 32 attended.

There are currently 31 scheduled for November 7, and 24 scheduled for November 21.

At the request of the Mayor's Office of Protocol, staff made a 45 minute presentation on October 5 to a visiting delegation from Beijing, PRC.

At the request of the Commissioner of Buildings, staff made 3 ethics presentations to all building inspectors and senior department staff on October 9th, 10th and 15th. A total of 116 department employees attended. Staff will make 2 more presentations on October 22nd and 23rd.

C. Mandatory Annual Ethics Education

As of today at 12 pm, approximately 34,587 employees and 19 aldermen--approximately 92.5% of the City's workforce--have completed the 2007 on-line ethics training program. All departments have begun their training, and 18 have reached 100%.

D. Statements of Financial Interests

Currently there remain 28 employees who, despite having been found in violation of the Ordinance by the Board, have failed to file their 2006 Statements of Financial Interests by May 31, as required by law. In closed session, staff will recommend that 9 of these cases be closed, and 8 cases vacated.

Of the employees found in violation of the Ordinance by the Board at the August meeting for failure to file their 2007 Statements of Financial Interests, 49 have filed, and we await their department's response as to appropriate discipline taken, and 44 have not yet filed. In closed session, staff will recommend that 1 of these cases be closed, and 2 be vacated.

Of the 11 Appointed Officials determined to have violated the Ordinance at the last meeting for failure to file their 2007 Statements of Financial Interests, 8 have filed, and 3 have not yet filed. In closed session, staff will recommend that these 8 cases be closed.

To date, staff has collected \$16,220 in late filing fees for 2007.

Staff continues to work closely with each department's ethics liaison or a senior manager to achieve 100% compliance with this requirement, and this past month has seen some success.

E. Record Retention and Destruction

The Board's application for authority to dispose of local records beginning December 1, 2007, under Certificate 98:017C, as amended, was approved by the State of Illinois Local Records Commission on October 11, 2007. Accordingly, staff will begin shredding records on December 1, 2007. The records to be destroyed are lobbyist filings, Statements of Financial Interests, requests to review various Board records and inquiry phone logs, all dating from December 1, 1999 through December 1, 2000.

D. Lobbyist Registration

There are currently **564** lobbyists that have registered with the City for this year. Since the last meeting **3** lobbyists terminated their registration. To date, \$ **125,000.00** in lobbyist registration fees have been deposited with the Department of Revenue.

E. Illinois Freedom of Information Act

Since the last regularly scheduled Board meeting, the office has received three requests under the Freedom of Information Act. Two were for lobbyists' forms, which resulted in twenty-one records being produced. The third was for an employee's Statements of Financial Interests, which resulted in eight records being produced.

The first request was for EIGHTEEN forms. The forms were all lobbyist filings for one lobbyist. All records were available, produced and copied. The second request was for THREE forms. It was a request for all lobbyist filings for one lobbyist for 2007. All records were available, produced and copied. The third request was for EIGHT forms. It was a request for one employee's Statements of Financial Interests from 2000-2007. All records were available, produced and copied.

F. 2008 Budget

On October 10, the Mayor's Office and Office of Budget and Management released their recommendations for the agency's 2008 budget. They accepted the Acting Executive's proposal to eliminate two vacant positions: Staff Assistant and Deputy Director, and in return to increase salaries for the four remaining legal positions. This resulted in an overall decrease of 9% in the requested appropriation from the agency's 2007 budget. Staff will appear before the City Council Committee on Budget and Government Operations for its annual budget hearing on October 23, 2007.

G. Staff Update

Regretfully, I report that Briana Billingslea has announced that she is resigning from her position effective November 15, 2007, to assume a position with the City's Department of Consumer Services. We all wish her well in her new position, and thank her for her efforts on our staff. We will post the position's vacancy and begin the process of hiring for it as soon as possible.

IV. Old Business

The Acting Executive Director discussed the draft of the Board's Annual Report and its procedural posture as to publication, which is likely to be early December.

V. New Business

None

The Board VOTED 4-0 (Michael F. Quirk, absent) to adjourn into Executive Session at 3:24 p.m. to review matters concerning the conduct of employees and officials of the City that could result in their discipline or dismissal, to review questions concerning matters of professional ethics and performance, to review matters in which litigation is ongoing, and/or to review matters in which the Board finds that litigation against or affecting the Board is probable or imminent.