

BOARD OF ETHICS

Open Session Minutes

December 17, 2008 - 3:03 p.m.
740 North Sedgwick, Suite 500

Board Members Present

Miguel A. Ruiz, Chair
Thomas McCarthy
John L. Wilhelm, M.D.
Michael F. Quirk

Staff Present

Steven I. Berlin, Executive Director
Richard J. Superfine, Legal Counsel
Courtney L.D. Kimble, Attorney/Investigator
Edward Primer, Program Director
Pully Casillas, Staff Assistant

I. Approval of Minutes

The Board VOTED 4-0 to approve the Open Session minutes of the October 1, 2008 meeting.

II. Chair's Report

Deferred.

III. Executive Director's Report

A. Education-Classes

Since the last Board meeting, staff has conducted 5 regularly scheduled classes for persons required to attend ethics training. 18 attended on October 2; 22 on October 16; 25 on November 6; 22 on November 20; and 38 on December 4. There are 31 scheduled for December 18, 30 for January 8, and 21 for January 22.

At the request of O'Hare Modernization Program's Director, staff made the last of four presentations to 130 OMP contractors on December 12.

On November 3, at the request of the Mayor's Office, staff made a 90 minute presentation to 22 visiting officials from the Zheijang Prefecture in China.

On November 24, staff made a 60 minute presentation to the Visiting Mayor of Rendang, Java, Indonesia, at the request of the Mayor's Office.

B. Mandatory Annual Ethics Education

As of today at 2:30 pm, approximately 33,700 City employees and 37 aldermen have completed their 2008 on-line training. This is approximately 93% of the City's full-time workforce. In the next few weeks, staff will be contacting those aldermen who haven't yet begun their training to remind them of the requirement.

C. Statements of Financial Interests

I am pleased to report that all employees and officials required to file 2008 forms have filed. There will be more on this in closed session.

To date in 2008, the Board collected \$9,920 in late filing fees for the 2008 filing year.

Staff is making arrangements to print the 2009 Statements of Financial Interests and accompanying notices with the Departments of Graphics and Information and Technology. The Notices and Instructions have been redesigned to fit on one legal size sheet so that they can be mechanically folded and stuffed into envelopes, thus saving many hours of staff time. In addition, staff will post on the agency's website an Adobe-based fill-in form which filers may complete on-line, but must print, sign and send to us. About 40% of the forms will be distributed through the departments, thus saving about \$1,900 in postage costs.

D. COGEL Conference

The Board co-hosted the 30th Annual COGEL (Council on Governmental Ethics Laws) Conference here from Sunday, December 7 through Wednesday afternoon, December 10. Attendees included about 400 ethics, campaign financing, lobbying freedom of information and election regulators from state, county and municipal governments, watchdog agencies and private attorneys from 37 states, the biggest US cities, the US and Canadian federal governments, all but 2 of the Canadian provinces, Australia, the UK, Mexico and Kenya. I personally wish to acknowledge all the efforts of our staff, particularly Jef Johnson, in helping to make the Conference a success, and to show off the best of Chicago.

E. Lobbyist Registration

There are currently 645 lobbyists that have registered with the City for this year. To date, \$141,200.00 in lobbyist registration fees have been deposited with the Department of Revenue.

Under the Ordinance, registered lobbyists must file their 2009 statements of registration (or termination notices), and their activity reports, by January 20, 2009. On December 19, 2008, Board staff will send a reminder notice to each registered lobbyist by email. If we have no email address (or it turns out to be a bad address), we will send the reminder notice by regular USPS. Also on December 19, staff will post on our web site the 2009 paper lobbyist filing forms; an Adobe fill-in version has already been posted. Several lobbyists already have used some of the Adobe version forms.

F. Illinois Freedom of Information Act

Since the last regularly scheduled Board meeting, the office has received 16 new requests under the Freedom of Information Act, comprising requests for 14 statements of financial interests for 2 employees, and 195 lobbyist documents for 14 lobbyists. This resulted in copying and production of 120 records.

G. Budget and Staffing

On October 24, the agency had its budget hearing before City Council, and its submission was approved.

At this point, Carolyn Bowens, Administrative Services Officer, joined the meeting.

Next, on a personal note, I am sorry to report that Carolyn Bowens, an employee of the Board since 1986, will have her last day of City employment on December 31, 2008. On behalf of the entire staff, past and present, all of whom have worked with her, I thank her for her many years of service and wish her all the best in the future.

Finally, on another personal note, I am happy to report that earlier this afternoon I was confirmed by the City Council as the Board's Executive Director. It is a great personal and professional honor and privilege, and I look forward to working with our fine and dedicated staff and Board members and to leading the agency in its noble work.

IV. Old Business

None.

V. New Business

None.

VI. Chair's Report (Reconvened)

On behalf of the Board of Ethics members and its staff, I wish to extend our congratulations to Steven I. Berlin for his appointment as the Board's Executive Director.

The Board VOTED 4-0 to adjourn into Executive Session at 3:15 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.