**CONFIDENTIAL**

February 19, 2015

Alderman

121 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, IL 60602

**Re: Case No. 15015.Q, Travel**

Dear Alderman

Yesterday, February 18, you requested an advisory opinion addressing whether the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance allows you to accept travel expenses offered by A to attend its Policy Conference, in Washington, D.C. . You emailed us the conference program. According to it, it appears that other attendees and conference speakers include legislators, especially those who are leaders within the community.

Based on this information, and prior Board cases involving aldermen traveling to Washington and [a foreign country] on trips sponsored by either the [B] or [A] itself, we conclude that this trip conforms with the requirements of §2-156-142(10) and (12), and that the Ordinance allows you accept these expenses. *See* Case Nos. 07053.Q, 07020.q, 92017.Q, 89105.Q, 90017.A, and 88134.A. There are two conditions, however, that are imposed by the Ordinance, as it was amended effective November 1, 2012: (i) you may accept only reasonable travel expenses related to the business purpose of the trip, such as coach airfare, ground transportation, lodging, course or meeting registration fees (if applicable), and meals included for all participants, but may not accept any gifts or honorarium for your participation; and (ii) you must report to our office your acceptance of these expenses within 10 days of the event or meeting (an email will suffice, indicating who paid, where and when the meeting was, and its purpose). We also note that you are not required to report this trip on your 2016 Statement of Financial Interests. This is because, our Board has recognized in these prior cases, these expenses are not a “gift,” but are educational or reasonable hosting expenses offered as reimbursement for your attendance or participation in your official capacity.

Our conclusions are based solely on the application of the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance to the facts summarized in this letter. If these facts are incorrect or incomplete, please notify our office immediately, as any change may alter our conclusions. Please also note that this letter does not address any reporting requirement to which you may be subject under the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act (5 ILCS 420/4A-101 et seq.) or the Statement of Economic Interests filed pursuant to that Act. We advise you to seek independent legal advice as to how that law may affect you.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to advise you and your conscientiousness. If you have any questions about this or any other ethics-related matter, please contact me.

Yours very truly,

Steven I. Berlin,

Executive Director