Executive Director's Report
August 11, 2025

Dorothy J. Eng, 1942-2025

I am sad to report that Dorothy Eng, who served as the Board's Executive Director from 1991 through September 2006, passed away last week in Florida, surrounded by her family. She was just shy of her 83rd birthday. Dorothy hired me, Paully Casillas, and Doretha Jackson, and many other loyal Board staff who have since retired or moved on to other work in law, academia, and public service. She was a force of nature: a trailblazing attorney, dedicated public servant, and role model for many young professional women. Anyone who met her was struck immediately by her thick Boston (Salem, actually, she was quick to point out) accent, and her piercing intelligence. She had what is known in Yiddish as *sachel* – uncommon common sense. Many of the processes we use to track our activity were her brainchildren. Dorothy was a 1986 graduate of The John Marshall Law School, now the University of Illinois at Chicago Law School.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Board Members

Norma Manjarrez's term expired on July 31; pursuant to the Ordinance, Board members whose terms are expired continue to serve until their successor is appointed and qualifies. I urge the Mayor to reappoint Norma and appoint a new Chair as soon as possible.

Amended Rules & Regulations

On June 18, the Board submitted its revised Rules and Regulations to the City Council. Unless the City Council votes to reject them via a majority vote, they will become effective on August 21, 2025.

Amended Personnel Rules

The Board continues to work with the Department of Human Resources to revise Personnel Rule XXIX, entitled "Conflict of Interest." The current version is dated from 2014 and contains obsolete references that the Board has recommended be removed. We submitted updates to that Rule that coincide with the various provisions of the Governmental Ethics Ordinance to which the Personnel Rules refer.

Amendments to the City's Ethics Laws

On January 24, 2024, The Board's proposals were submitted to the full City Council through the Chair of the City Council's Committee on Ethics and Government Oversight, 47th Ward Ald. Matt Martin. They were designated O2024-0007359, and are posted on the City Clerk's website here: **https://occprodstoragev1.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/matterattachmentspublic/78f11f46-552f-4b49-b357-cdb7b2f130ec.pdf.** We are informed by Ald. Martin's staff that there are no current plans to hold a committee hearing on these proposed amendments. We are unsure of the reasons. This is most disappointing; we believe these amendments are timely and important. We will continue to work toward their passage, and garner support among City Council members and the Administration. If enacted, they would: i) impose tighter regulations with respect to City Council independent contractors; ii) address the use of City property (such as Chicago Police or Fire Department insignia, badges, personnel uniforms, or equipment) in electioneering communications, and, among other things, subject political fundraising committees to the Ordinance's restrictions, thereby granting the Board and Inspector General ("IG") jurisdiction over such committees in this respect; iii) address electioneering communications sent to City employees or officials, and imposed a "stand by your ad" requirement such that candidates for City office must certify that they have reviewed all electioneering communications disseminated by their authorized political fundraising committees; iv) clarify the political activity prohibitions; and v) close a gap in the City's campaign contribution limitations law that allows officers, directors, shareholders, and employees of a person subject to the Ordinance's $1,500 annual contribution limit to elected officials and candidates to contribute on top of contributions made by the person unless they are reimbursed for that contribution. Our peer cities New York and Los Angeles have already closed an analogous gap in their political contribution laws.

Statements of Financial Interests

There remains just one (1) individual who has not filed a Statement of Financial Interests as required. If and when that individual files, the Board will fine them $250 per day, and, if the matter cannot be settled, will refer it to the Law Department for collection.

All forms filed in 2018 and after are posted and viewable here, where they stay for seven (7) years after they are filed: https://webapps1.chicago.gov/efis/search

Sister Agencies

We will meet next in late September with our ethics counterparts from the City's sister agencies and related government units: the Cook County Board of Ethics, CTA, CHA, CPS, Chicago Park District, Chicago City Colleges, Metra, and Cook County Assessor.

Education

Mandatory Online Training

To date, 26,858 employees, 32 elected officials, and 217 appointed officials have completed theirs. Their deadline is before January 1, 2026. For lobbyists, the deadline to complete their training was before July 2, 2025. As required by law, on July 3, we sent probable cause notices to 11 lobbyists that they had not completed the training by the deadline, and, on July 17, determined that eight (8) had not provided a valid reason for failing to complete the training, found them in violation of the law, and are fining three (3) of them $250 per day until they complete it. As required by law, we published their names and violations on our website on July 17.

Mandatory In-person Classes and other presentations

In-person classes began again in May 2024 for those City officials and employees required to attend them once every four years (about 3,600). To date, approximately 3,120 City employees and officials have attended. We held classes in our office on July 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, and 31, and August 6, and will hold more on August 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, and 28, and on September 10.

We will also conduct a class on September 3 for personnel from the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and a Saturday class for Police Department personnel on September 13. These are all in addition to regularly scheduled classes, the schedule of which is posted here: https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/memos/2025%20TRAINING%20SCH.pdf.

COGEL Presentation

On July 15, the Executive Director moderated an online discussion for the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws ("COGEL") about the conviction in U.S. District Court of Michael Madigan and its implications for reforms at the State and Local levels. On the panel will be Chicago-Sun-Times Reporter Jon Seidel, who has covered the Madigan trial and the trials of related individuals affiliated with Commonwealth Edison, and Nathan Rice, Executive Director of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission.

Advisory Opinions

Since the Board's July meeting, we have issued 239 informal advisory opinions. The leading categories for informal opinions were, in descending order: Gifts; Travel; Lobbying; Post-employment; Outside employment; City Property; and Statements of Financial Interests.

The leading City departments from which requesters came in this period were, in descending order: Chicago Police Department/Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)/Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA); City Council; Mayor's Office; Department of Innovation and Technology; Department of Law; Office of Inspector General; and Department of Public Health.

78% of all inquiries came from City employees or elected officials; the remainder came from lobbyists, attorneys, vendors, or potential lobbyists.

Please note also that we continue to receive complaints from members of the public: since the last Board meeting, we have received eleven (11). These are all referred to the appropriate agency: typically, the IG, or a sister agency's IG.

Informal opinions are confidential and not made public, but are logged, kept, and used for training and future advisory purposes. This same practice occurs with our colleagues at the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, who issue roughly the same number of informal opinions. They form the basis for much of our annual and periodic educational

programs. Formal opinions are made public, in full text, with names and other identifying information redacted out. In the past five (5) years, the Board has issued 70 formal opinions.

Summary Index of Formal Advisory Opinions/Text of all Formal Advisory Opinions
The full text of every formal Board opinion issued since 1986 is posted on the Board's website (more than 925), redacted in accordance with the Ordinance's confidentiality provisions, here:
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ethics/auto_generated/reg_archives.html.

Redacted formal opinions are posted once issued or approved by the Board. Summaries and keywords for each of these opinions—and a link to each opinion's text, which we added since the August Board meeting--are available on the Board's searchable index of opinions, here:
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/Publications/AOindex.docx.

A few other ethics agencies have comparable research tools. We are unaware of jurisdictions that make their *informal* opinions public — though, like us, others issue them confidentially and enable requesters to rely on them in the event of an investigation or enforcement.

Lobbyists Filings
772 individuals are currently registered with our office to lobby City employees/officials. We have collected $346,300 in 2025 lobbyist registration fees. On August 7, we posted a current list of registered lobbyists and their clients here:
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/LobbyistStuff/LISTS/lobbyistlist.xls .

Lobbyists' filings dating back to 2014 can be examined here: https://webapps1.chicago.gov/elf/public_search.html.

Second Quarter 2025 lobbying activity reports were due before July 22, 2025. We sent out repeated reminders to all lobbyists of this deadline. On July 24, as required by law, we notified 11 lobbyists that they needed to file their reports before August 8, or they would be found to have violated the Ordinance and fined $250. As of August 8, seven (7) still hadn't filed and were found in violation of the law and fined accordingly. We made their names and fines public earlier today.

Note that the Ordinance provides fines of $250 per day for late filings, and these are capped at $20,000. By contrast, fines are $1,000 per day for any individual who has reached either the quarterly hourly or compensation/expenditure threshold that triggers the requirement to register as a lobbyist but then fails to register as required within five (5) City business days of reaching that threshold. These fines begin on the sixth City business day until the person registers. These fines are not capped.

Waivers
Since July 1, 2013, the Board has had authority to grant waivers from certain provisions in the Ethics Ordinance. The Board has granted eleven (11) and denied three (3) waiver requests. In accordance with the law, all granted waivers are posted here: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ethics/supp_info/Waivers.html.

Summary Index of Board-Initiated Regulatory Actions/Adjudications/pre-2013 Investigations
We post a summary index of all investigations, enforcement and regulatory actions undertaken by the Board since its inception in 1986 (other than those for violations of filing or training requirements or campaign financing matters). It includes an ongoing summary of all regulatory actions the Board undertook without an IG investigation, based on probable cause findings the Board makes as a result of its review of publicly available information, where no factual investigation by the IG is necessary. *See*
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/EnforcementMatters/Invest-Index.pdf

There are two (2) such matters currently pending, Case Nos. 25011. and 25018.C. Both are on today's agenda. The former matter is before the Board for probable cause finding. It involves a referral from a Special Assistant Corporation Counsel/Inspector General requesting that the Board consider finding probable cause that an individual subject to the Ordinance may have violated §2-156-070(a), entitled "Use or disclosure of confidential information." Per §2-156-390, on July 1, the Board notified that individual, through their counsel, that the Board is considering a finding or probable cause, and afforded the subject 10 days from that notice, i.e. until the close of business on July 17, to respond before the

Board considers the matter at its August 2025 meeting. The individual responded through counsel. In Case No. 25018.C, the Board received a referral of matter involving a City elected official who, the information presented to the Board shows, apparently used the City seal as well as other City property at a political fundraising event, in apparent violation of §§2-156-050, -060- and -135(b). If the Board votes to proceed, the official will be notified that they have 10 days from the notice to respond; the Board will consider any response it receives before taking the matter up for a probable cause finding at its September meeting.

The Board makes public the names of all violators and penalties it assesses when authorized by law to do so. But only in those that occurred after July 1, 2013, can the Board release the names of those found to have violated the Ordinance. Since July 1, 2013, there have been 92 such matters.

Summary Index of Ongoing/Past IG/LIG Investigations/Adjudications

There are currently 11 completed IG ethics investigations in various stages of the adjudicative process. More information on these cases is posted here:
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ethics/provdrs/reg/svcs/ongoing-summary-of-enforcement-matters.html.

In the first, 23045.IG, a confidential hearing concluded earlier this year, and Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") Frank Lombardo issued his Confidential Final Report and Recommendations to the Board on May 15. The Board issued its final opinion on June 17, dismissing the matter. The subject filed a petition for attorney's fees and costs, pursuant to §2-156-392(c). That section provides:

> "Upon a final determination by the board that the respondent did not commit a violation of this chapter, the respondent may submit a request to the board seeking reimbursement of reasonable legal expenses and costs incurred in defending the alleged violation. The request for reimbursement shall be granted if the board determines, using established legal principles, that the statement of charges was submitted and pursued in bad faith. If the board determines that the statement of charges was submitted and pursued in bad faith as provided in this section, such finding shall be made publicly available."

The Board awaits a formal response from the City before considering the matter at its September or October meeting.

In the second and third, 23054.IG and 23055.IG, the Board found probable cause at its November 2023 meeting. The Board met in February with the subject's attorney. After that meeting, the Board requested further clarification from the IG, received that clarification, and presented it to the subject's counsel. The Board found 12 violations in 23054.IG and voted to pursue a $60,000 fine (at its April 2024 meeting). In 23055.IG, at its May 2024 meeting the Board found two (2) violations and voted to pursue the maximum penalty of $5,000 per violation. The subject made offers to settle both matters, which the Board rejected. At its June meeting, the Board voted to proceed with a confidential administrative hearing on both matters. The City is represented by Anthony Masciopinto, from the firm of Kulwin, Masciopinto and Kulwin. ALJ Lombardo is assigned to both matters.

In the fourth, 23067.IG.1, .2,.3, and .4, the IG delivered its completed investigation to the Board on December 30, 2023. The matter involves four (4) employees from the same City department (one of whom is now retired). The IG concluded that one of them had a prohibited financial interest in City contracts, and that two of the others knew of this violation but failed to report it to the IG as required by §2-156-018(a). At its January 2024 meeting, the Board voted to refer the matter back to the IG, because the evidence adduced in the IG's investigation appears to show that the *fourth* employee from the same department also violated §2-156-018(a) by failing to report the violation to the IG. The Board requested that the IG review its investigation, and if appropriate, petition the Board for a probable cause finding with respect to that fourth employee. The IG reviewed the matter and then petitioned the Board for a probable cause finding with respect to all four (4) employees; the Board found probable cause as to each subject. One (1) met with the Board in June 2024, another in July 2024; and a third in September 2024. At the Board's October 21, 2024 meeting, it found all four (4) individuals in violation of the Ordinance and assessed a total of $28,500 in fines. Two (2) agreed to pay their fines (in case .01 and .03). The agreements in .01 and .03 are posted on our website. The Board referred cases .02 and .04 to the Law Department for confidential administrative hearings to collect the fines assessed. The Law Department declined to file charges in .04. As to Case No. 23067.IG.02, ALJ Lombardo is assigned to the matter.

In the fifth, 24003.IG, the IG delivered its completed investigation to the Board on February 2, 2024. The matter involves

an investigation into the deletion of comments from an elected official's official social media account. The Board requested and received clarification from the IG on certain factual issues; at its May 2024 meeting the Board voted to seek further clarification from the IG based on the factors set out by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lindke v. Freed*: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/23pdf/22-611_ap6c.pdf . The IG responded, and the matter has been continued, pending guidance from the federal courts regarding the interpretation of *Lindke*.

In the sixth, Case No. 24020.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on August 27, 2024. The IG concluded that a now-former City employee failed to disclose, on Statements of Financial Interests filed for years 2019-2021, that they had a financial interest in real estate located in the City in four (4) instances. The subject never responded to the Board's repeated notices, first of its probable cause finding; then of its finding that the subject violated the Ordinance and is subject to $12,000 in fines—the maximum fines for these years—until January 13, after the Board had voted to refer the matter to the Law Department for a confidential hearing to enforce its determination. ALJ Lombardo has been assigned to the matter. Settlement discussions continue between the subject and Law Department.

In the seventh, Case No. 24025.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on December 2, 2024. The IG concluded that a City official misused their City title and authority in a dispute with a private business. The Board voted to refer the matter back to the IG for further investigation. The IG responded on April 8, 2025. The Board found probable cause at its May 2025 meeting. The subject and their attorney will meet with the Board at its September meeting.

In the eighth, Case No. 24027.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on December 23, 2024, with a request that the Board find probable cause. It involves an employee who owns a company that was a listed subcontractor on a City contract, and which received money through that subcontract, in apparent violation of the Ordinance's prohibition on having a financial interest in a City contract, work or business, and the subject's failure to disclose ownership of that company on their filed Statements of Financial Interests. The subject and their counsel met with the Board at the April meeting, and the Board determined that the subject violated the Ordinance numerous times and assessed total fines of $69,000. The Board and subject agreed to settle the matter for a $50,000 fine; the Settlement Agreement will be posted on our website once it is finalized.

In the ninth, Case No. 25006.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on March 11, 2025, with a request that the Board find probable cause. It involves a former employee who, the IG found, has assisted a post-City employer on the very same matters that in which the employee participated personally and substantially while a City employee. The Board voted to find probable cause at the April meeting; the subject submitted written materials to the Board to attempt to rebut the finding. At its June 2025 meeting, the Board considered the response and fined the subject $6,000. The matter was referred to the Law Department, but may be settled prior to the drafting of charges to collect the fine in a confidential administrative hearing.

In the tenth, Case No. 25013.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on July 18, 2025, with a request that the Board find probable cause. It involves a now-former appointed City official who, the IG found, made comments amounting to sexual harassment in November 2023, in apparent violation of §2-156-149, which prohibits City appointed and elected officials from engaging sexual harassment (as defined), whether by action or inaction. The matter is on today's agenda for a probable cause finding. If the Board finds probable cause, the subject will have the opportunity to meet with the Board at its September or October meeting and present any written materials or arguments to attempt to rebut the finding.

In the eleventh, Case No. 25017.IG, the IG delivered a completed investigation to the Board on July 28, 2025, with a request that the Board find probable cause. It involves a City employee who, the IG found, used their City position, City title, and City emails and office equipment for their outside business which they own, including directly communicating with other City employees over City email to secure City permits, in violation of §§2-156-060 and -090(a) of the Ordinance. The matter is on today's agenda for a probable cause finding. If the Board finds probable cause, the subject will have the opportunity to meet with the Board at its September or October meeting and present any written materials or arguments to attempt to rebut the finding.

More complete summaries of these and all IG cases are available on our website, subject to the Ordinance's confidentiality requirements. We post on our website and continually update an ongoing investigative record showing the status of every completed investigation brought to the Board by both the IG since July 1, 2013, and the former Office of the Legislative

Inspector General ("LIG"), since January 1, 2012, and the status of all 50 petitions to commence investigations presented to the Board by the LIG. We update this record as appropriate, consistent with the Ordinance's confidentiality provisions. *See* https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ethics/provdrs/reg/svcs/ongoing-summary-of-enforcement-matters.html and https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/EnforcementMatters/PulbicScorecard.pdf

Whenever the IG presents the Board with a completed ethics investigation in which the IG believes there have been violations of the Governmental Ethics Ordinance, the procedure that follows is governed by §2-156-385 of the Ordinance: the Board reviews the IG's report, recommendations, and the entirety of the evidence submitted in its completed investigation, including a review to ensure that the IG conformed with the requirement that it complete ethics investigations within two (2) years of commencing them (unless there is evidence that the subject took affirmative action to conceal evidence or delay the investigation), and that the ethics investigation was commenced within five (5) years of the last alleged act of misconduct.

If the Board finds that the evidence presented warrants a finding of probable cause to believe the subject violated the Ordinance, it notifies the subject of the allegations and affords the subject the opportunity to present written submissions and meet with the Board, together with an attorney or other representative present. The Ordinance provides that this meeting is confidential and *ex parte* – no one from the City's Law Department or IG is present. Note that the Board may also request clarification from the IG as to any evidence found in its investigation before making a probable cause finding or refer the matter back to the IG for further investigation (and has done so). The Board cannot administer oaths at this meeting but can and does assess the subject's credibility and the validity and weight of any evidence the subject provides.

If the subject does not rebut the Board's probable cause finding, the Board may enter into a public settlement agreement – or may find there was a violation and proceed to a hearing on the merits that is not open to the public. That hearing is held before an administrative law judge (ALJ) appointed by the Department of Administrative Hearings. The City would be represented by the Law Department (or a specially hired Assistant Corporation Counsel for that purpose), and the subject by their attorney. At the conclusion of that hearing, the ALJ submits findings of fact and law to the Board, which can accept or reject them, based solely on the written record of the hearing. The Board will then publicly issue an opinion in which it may find violations of the Ethics Ordinance and impose appropriate fines, or find no violation and dismiss the matter.

These processes are based on specific recommendations of then-Mayor Emanuel's Ethics Reform Task Force in Part II of its 2012 Report–the primary purposes being to: (i) guarantee due process for all those investigated by the IG; (ii) ensure that only the Board of Ethics could make determinations as to whether a person investigated by the IG violated the Ordinance, given the Board's extensive jurisprudence and unique expertise in ethics matters; and (iii) balance due process for those investigated by the IG with an accurate adjudication by the Board and the public's right to know of ethics violations.

On our website, we have a publication describing this process in detail:
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/Publications/EnforceProcedures.pdf

Note: fines range from $500-$2,000 per violation for non-lobbying or non-campaign financing violations that occurred before September 29, 2019, and $1,000-$5,000 per violation for such violations occurring between September 29, 2019, and September 30, 2022. For violations occurring on or after October 1, 2022, the fine range is between $500 and $20,000 per violation, and the Board may also assess a fine equal to any ill-gotten financial gains as a result of any Ordinance violation. Fines for unregistered lobbying violations remain at $1,000 per day beginning on the fifth day after the individual first engaged in lobbying and continuing until the individual registers as a lobbyist.

Please note, finally, that, in all matters adjudicated or settled on or after July 1, 2013, the Board makes public the names of all violators and penalties assessed, or a complete copy of the settlement agreement. All settlement agreements are posted here: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ethics/provdrs/reg/svcs/SettlementAgreements.html

Disclosures of Past Violations

July 2013 amendments to the Ordinance provide that, when a person seeks advice from the Board about past conduct and discloses to the Board facts leading it to conclude that they committed a past violation of the Ordinance, the Board must determine whether that violation was minor or non-minor. If it is minor, the Board, by law, sends the person a confidential

letter of admonition. If it was non-minor, then, under current law, the person is advised that they may self-report to the IG or, if he or she fails to do so within two (2) weeks, the Board must make that report. In 12 matters, the Board has determined that minor violations occurred, and the Board sent confidential letters of admonition, as required by the Ordinance. These letters are posted on the Board's website, with confidential information redacted.

On August 7, another such matter was presented to the Board by a City official who self-reported a potential Ordinance violation. That matter will be presented to the Board at its September meeting.

Open Meetings Act/FOIA Challenges

The Board is currently involved in five (5) challenges filed with the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor ("PAC"), all filed by the same individual. These challenges request:

(1) A review of the propriety of adjourning into executive session during the Board's September 11, 2023 meeting under the Open Meetings Act ("OMA");

(2) A review of the propriety of adjourning into executive session during the Board's August 14 and September 11, 2023 meetings under OMA;

(3) A review of the Board not producing certain records pursuant to FOIA;

(4) A review of the propriety of the Board's method of taking final action at its April 15, 2024 and May 13, 2024 meetings; and

(5) A review of the Board's proceedings in both Open and Executive Session as to Case No. 24019.Q, at its September 30, 2024 meeting.

The Board has worked with the Law Department and responded to each.

Freedom of Information Act

Since the July 15 Board meeting, the Board received no FOIA requests.