

BOARD OF ETHICS

Open Session Minutes

June 17, 2009 - 3:04 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 May 20, 2009 meeting.

II. Chair's Report

None.

III. Executive Director's Report

A. Education-Classes

Since the last Board meeting, staff has conducted 2 regularly scheduled classes for persons required to attend ethics training. 11 attended on May 21, and 9 on June 4. There are currently 25 scheduled for June 18, 23 for July 2 and 31 for July 16.

On May 28, at the request of the Mayor's Office and the Department of State, staff made a 60 minute presentation to two visiting government officials from the Republic of Indonesia; one from the island of Lombok, the other from the Island of Java (City of Jogjakarta).

On June 24, staff will participate in a panel discussion at the Chicago law firm of Ungaretti & Harris, at the invitation of the firm. The panel will focus on state law changes and City ethics and lobbying ordinances. About 50 persons are scheduled to attend.

At the request of Alderman Tunney, on June 25 staff will make a 60 minute presentation on ethics and campaign financing to contractors and employees of the 44th Ward.

At the request of the Commissioner of Aviation, on June 26 staff will make the second of 4 presentations to 200 Department of Aviation contractors working at O'Hare.

B. Mandatory Annual Ethics Education

To date, 22,325 employees have completed the 2009 annual mandatory ethics training program. This is approximately 61% of the total expected number for the year.

This afternoon, the aldermanic program is set to “go live.” Letters will be sent tomorrow to each alderman and his/her Chief of Staff, with log-in instructions.

C. Statements of Financial Interests

As of this afternoon, there remain 50 employees and 14 appointed officials who have still not filed their forms by May 31, as required by law. There will be more on these individuals in closed session. I am pleased to report that the number of non-filers as of today, June 17, 2009, represents a decrease of more than 50% from the number (132) on June 18, 2008.

To date in 2009, the office has collected \$6,820 in late filing fees.

D. Lobbyist Registration

There are currently **605** lobbyists that have registered with the City for this year. To date, approximately **\$125,600.00** in lobbyist registration fees have been deposited with the Department of Revenue.

On June 22, staff will send reminders to all registered lobbyists of the upcoming semi-annual lobbyist activity report-filing deadline, which is July 20. Of the 605 lobbyists, all but about 12 of them will receive this notice via email; those 12 will receive it via first class mail.

E. Proposed Ordinance Amendment

As will be discussed further in closed session, Alderman Burke introduced an Ordinance that will require all registered lobbyists to complete an annual ethics education program developed by the Board. The lobbyist registration fees would also be increased to \$350 from \$200 per person identified in the lobbyist registration as engaging in lobbying activity, and there would be a charge of \$75 for each client identified after the first. Chicago will be the first municipality to require annual ethics training for all registered lobbyists. These new fees and requirements would take effect for the 2010 registration year. The proposal is currently before the Finance and Rules Committees.

F. Illinois Freedom of Information Act

Since the last regularly scheduled Board meeting, the office has received 7 new requests under the Freedom of Information Act: 1 request for this agency’s correspondence with 2 State officials, 1 request for about 200 aldermanic disclosures, 72 lobbyist filings, and 9 Statements of Financial Interests. This all resulted in production of approximately 227 records and the copying of 15 records.

G. Preliminary Budget

On June 12, staff submitted its 2009 preliminary budget. It is based on the assumption that the Ordinance proposed by Alderman Burke will be adopted into law (perhaps with minor changes) and that the Board will begin administering the annual lobbyist education program. It shows an increase of \$24,500, to \$626,885. The documents are here for your review.

IV. Old Business

None.

V. New Business

None.

The Board VOTED 4-0 to adjourn into Executive Session at 3:13 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.