

Lake County Illinois

*Lake County Courthouse and Administrative Complex
18 N County Street,
Waukegan, IL 60085*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

11:00 AM

Assembly Room, 10th Floor

Ethics and Oversight Committee

1. Call to Order

Chair Pedersen called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Present 5 - Chair Pedersen, Vice Chair Mathias, Member Calabresa, Member Taylor and Member Wilke

Others present:

Barry Burton, County Administrator

Steve Carlson, County Board Member

Aaron Lawlor, County Board Chairman

Rodney Marion, Human Resources

Amy McEwan, Deputy County Administrator

Steve Rice, State's Attorney Office

Jennie Vana, Communications

Blanca Vela-Schneider, County Board Office

Tom Weber, County Board Member

Jeff Werfel, County Board Member

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Member Pedersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes**3.1 [17-0134](#)**

Ad Hoc Ethics Committee minutes from May 3, 2011.

A motion was made by Member Wilke, seconded by Member Nixon, to approve the meeting minutes. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Aye: 6 - Chair Pedersen, Vice Chair Mathias, Member Calabresa, Nixon, Member Taylor and Member Wilke

4. Addenda to the Agenda

There were no items added to the agenda.

5. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

6. Chairman's Remarks

There were no remarks from the Chairman.

7. Old Business

There was no old business to conduct.

8. New Business**8.1 [17-0132](#)**

Amendment to the Lake County Ethics Ordinance, previously amended on May 10, 2011.

County Administrator Barry Burton reported that the County reviews and updates its ethics ordinance every five years. One recommendation is to require department heads to follow the same provisions contained in the ethics ordinance as elected and appointed

officials.

Human Resources Director Rodney Marion provided a brief history of the ethics ordinance, noting that the last time the ordinance was amended was in 2011. The ordinance outlines prohibited election activity, identifies the enforcement and complaint process, and prohibits elected county board members from the hiring and purchasing decisions.

Mr. Marion indicated the proposed new provision would prohibit department heads, supervisors, and administrators from influencing the hiring and purchasing decisions outside of their direct authority. It also prohibits the hiring of immediate family members. The ordinance outlines potential consequences of those who violate the provision. Those who are believed to have violated the provision be reviewed in accordance with the Ethics Policy and could be subject to disciplinary action. This ordinance extends to individuals appointed by the County Board chairman to commissions and boards.

Mr. Marion clarified that the ordinance does not prohibit anyone from providing a recommendation, if a reference is requested. Mr. Burton suggested that the County administrator position administer disciplinary action to employees who violate any provision of the ordinance. He reported that the County administrator, in turn, will report the disciplinary action to the County Board. Member Wilke questioned whether disciplinary action of employees should include the County Board chairman. Discussion ensued. County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor stated that the ethics ordinance should be consistent with the County Board Rules of Order and Operational Procedures, which identifies that County administrator be responsible for enforcing disciplinary action and communicating disciplinary actions to the County Board members. Discussion continued regarding revised language.

Mr. Lawlor remarked that Senator Link introduced Senate Bill (SB) 0669 which proposes making the Lake County Board chairman seat an elected countywide position in 2020. He stated that there is a need to balance the countywide accountability of the chairman position and provide the authority to be able to do so. He proposed adding language in the proposed ordinance for the creation of a task force to evaluate fair maps in Lake County and to protect professionalism over patronage.

The Committee reviewed the inquiry and complaint process and the mechanisms in place for the County Board including an ethics advisor and ethics investigator. The Committee discussed criminal violations versus disciplinary violations. The consensus of the committee is that any disciplinary action of department heads from the Ethics Ordinance be provided to county board members, in writing, within a reasonable timeframe from the disciplinary action. The Committee discussed how to enforce violations of appointed members of commissions and boards. Mr. Lawlor noted that appointed members of the commissions and boards are required to adhere to a standard of conduct and that violations should go to the Ethics Committee for review and potential disciplinary action. Discussion continued.

The Committee reviewed language regarding family members and suggested that the

language be consistent with the definition of family members in the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Significant discussion ensued.

Mr. Lawlor suggested that a purpose statement be included in the ordinance to stress the County's values. He recommended that there be language that requires a reasonable separation of time between the departure of a board member and/or department head and the acceptance of a position with a firm that has a vested interest with Lake County. Mr. Lawlor added that it might be prudent to clarify that County board members should not hold two elected positions simultaneously.

Mr. Burton stated that he will incorporate the suggested recommendations and will bring back amended language for the Committee's consideration.

9. Executive Session

The Committee did not enter into Executive Session.

10. County Administrator's Report

There were no remarks from the County Administrator's Office.

11. Members' Remarks

There were no remarks from the members.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Blanca Vela-Schneider.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Ethics and Oversight Committee