DATE FILED

DEC 2 0 2023

COMMISSION ON ETHICS

CONFIDENTIAL

BEFORE THE
STATE OF FLORIDA
COMMISSION ON ETHICS

In re JOSEPH PINDER, III)
)
Respondent.)
)

Complaint No. 23-225

DETERMINATION OF INVESTIGATIVE JURISDICTION
AND ORDER TO INVESTIGATE

UPON REVIEW of this complaint, I find as follows:

1. This complaint was filed by Cheryl Meads of Hobe Sound, Florida.

2. The Respondent, Joseph Pinder, III, allegedly serves as a member of the Islamorada Village Council in Islamorada, Florida.

3. The complaint alleges that the Respondent "used public funds for his election campaign:" 1) by using a Village contract employee who works for a media company to create and post a video on social media, in which video the Respondent thanked people for voting for him; and 2) by having another Village employee who was on the clock take part in the video. The complaint alleges that the video was created for the purpose of being posting on social media.

WHEREFORE staff of the Commission on Ethics shall conduct a preliminary investigation of this complaint for a probable cause determination of whether the Respondent has violated Article II, Section 8(h)(2), Florida Constitution, and Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes, as set forth above.[1]

December 20, 2023
Date

Kerrie J. Stillman
Executive Director

KJS/kbh

[1] The complaint, as alleged, does not state sufficient facts to support an investigation under Section 112.3145, Florida Statutes, because persons are not required to list their public salaries on CE Form 1 financial disclosures. The complaint, as alleged, also does not contain sufficient facts to support an investigation under Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes, with regard to the Respondent's asking the Complainant for $7,000 because there is no indication the Respondent used or attempted to use his official position when he requested the money. In addition, the complaint, as alleged, does not state sufficient facts to support an investigation under Section 112.313(2), Florida Statutes, with regard to the Respondent's asking the Complainant to give him $7,000 because there are no allegations that there was an understanding that, if the Complainant gave the Respondent the money, his vote, official action or judgment would be influenced thereby. The remaining allegations are not within the jurisdiction of the Commission on Ethics and may more appropriately be brought in other forums.