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TALLAHASSEE—September 2—Meeting in Tallahassee on August 28 in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 38 matters, Chair Jon M. Philipson announced today. Fifteen of those matters were probable cause hearings. A finding of probable cause is not a determination that a violation has occurred. Such a determination is made only after a full evidentiary hearing on the allegations.

The Commission considered three consolidated complaints against **RANDALL FINE**, who at the time of the allegations served as a Representative in the Florida House of Representatives. The Commission found probable cause on an allegation that then-Representative Fine accepted gifts in excess of \$100 from a prohibited donor and probable cause that he accepted gifts from a political committee. No probable cause was found on an allegation that he failed to accurately report assets and sources of income on his 2023 Form 6, "Full and Public Disclosure of Financial Interests."

The Commission considered three complaints filed against **RUTHIE DAVIS SCHLABACH**, former Citrus County Commissioner. The Commission found probable cause to believe Ms. Schlabach represented another person or entity before a governing body within two years of leaving office. The Commission found no probable cause that she violated the Constitutional prohibition by lobbying, for compensation, her former Commission on an issue of policy within six years of leaving her position.

The Commission found no probable cause to believe that Lee County Sheriff's Office Commander **ROB CASALE**, Chief **JAMES RANKINE**, Major **CHRIS REEVES**, Undersheriff **JOHN HOLLOWAY**, Major **MARK SHELLY**, or Chief **MATTHEW SANDS**, misused their positions to benefit themselves or another person concerning their involvement with a traffic stop and arrest of an off-duty Deputy who had been pulled over for speeding and Driving Under the Influence.

The Commission found probable cause to believe that **JACKIE ESPINOSA**, Mayor of Kissimmee, had an employment or contractual relationship with an entity doing business with her agency when her business accepted grant money that was administered by her agency.

In another complaint filed against the Mayor of Kissimmee, **JACKIE ESPINOSA**, the Commission rejected the recommendation of its Advocate and voted to find no probable cause that Ms. Espinosa failed to report a gift over \$100 on a Form 9, "Quarterly Gift Disclosure," because she had disclosed the gift on the wrong form, based on the advice of the City Attorney.

No probable cause was found to believe **BRYAN RUBIO**, Montverde Town Council Member, had a conflicting contractual relationship by simultaneously serving on

his Homeowners Association Board of Directors, whose members occasionally appeared before the Town Council.

The Commission found no probable cause to believe that **BILL AMOS**, Brevard County Code Enforcement Officer, misused his position to benefit himself or another person when he indicated to a property owner with code violations that he knew someone who might be interested in purchasing the property.

A complaint filed against former Orange City Vice-Mayor **ALEX TIAMSON** was dismissed due to his death.

The Commission reviewed 23 complaints for legal sufficiency. These reviews are limited to questions of jurisdiction and determinations as to whether the contents of the complaint are adequate to allege a violation of the Code of Ethics or other laws within the Commission's jurisdiction, and whether the allegations are based on personal knowledge or information other than hearsay. As no factual investigation precedes the reviews, the Commission's conclusions do not reflect on the accuracy of the allegations made in these complaints. The Commission dismissed the following complaints for lack of legal sufficiency: **MICHAEL ILCZYSZYN**, Cape Coral City Manager; **CORINNE LAJOIE**, Dania Beach Deputy Zoning and Planning Director; **ASHLEE M. HOFBERGER**, Escambia County Commissioner; **REBECCA BAYS**, Citrus County Commissioner; **JEFF KINNARD**, Citrus County Commissioner; **HOLLY DAVIS**, Citrus County Commissioner; **JOHN TWOMEY**, Long Lakes Ranch Community Development District Secretary; **BRENDA HOLT**, Gadsden County Commissioner; **JOSHUA STREET**, Panama City Commissioner; **FABIOLA STUYVESANT**, Altamonte Springs City Manager; **LARIN LEWIS**, St. Lucie County School District Human Resources employee and Notary Public; **MICHAEL FULLER**, Panama City Development Services

Director; **JOHN MEISEL**, West Villages Improvement District Supervisor; **JOHN ANTMANN**, Seminole County Public Schools Human Resources Investigator; **KELLY MASON**, Collier County District School Board; **DAVID GATTIS**, Belleair Beach Mayor; **GREG ST. JEAN**, Collier County Code Enforcement Officer; **JOHN MEISEL**, West Villages Improvement District Supervisor; **PAWEL SZESZKO**, Beach Community Development District Supervisor; **DAVID KLEIN**, Lee Memorial Health System Board Member; **VANESSA OLIVER**, Member of the Florida House of Representatives; **JENNA PERSONS-MULICKA**, Former Member of the Florida House of Representatives and Lee County Supervisor of Elections; and **WALTER GREEN**, City of Dunnellon Mayor.

PUBLIC SESSION

During its public session meeting, the Commission considered a complaint filed against **RANDALL FINE**, regarding alleged conduct during his service as a member of the Florida House of Representatives. The Commission determined that the public interest would not be served by proceeding further on certain allegations in the complaint because it could not be determined from the complaint whether those allegations were based on personal knowledge or information other than hearsay, as required by Section 112.324(1)(a), F.S. Other allegations in the complaint will move forward with a public hearing or stipulation.

The Florida Commission on Ethics is an independent nine-member commission formed in 1974 to review complaints filed under the statutory Code of Ethics and to answer questions from public officials about potential conflicts of interest through its issuance of advisory opinions.

If the Ethics Commission believes a violation of the law may have occurred, it may decide to hold a public hearing. If it concludes a violation has been committed, it may recommend civil penalties including removal from office or employment and fines up to \$20,000 per violation.