

Luis M. Fusté
Chair
Paul D. Bain
Dr. James Bush, III
Michael H. Hellman
Laird A. Lile
Ashley Lukis
Jon M. Philipson
Jeremy M. Rodgers
Linda Stewart



State of Florida
COMMISSION ON ETHICS
P.O. Drawer 15709
Tallahassee, Florida 32317-5709

325 John Knox Road
Building E, Suite 200
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

"A Public Office is a Public Trust"

Kerrie J. Stillman
Executive Director

Steven J. Zuilkowski
Deputy Executive Director/
General Counsel

(850) 488-7864 Phone
(850) 488-3077 (FAX)
www.ethics.state.fl.us

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
July 30, 2025

CONTACT PERSON:
Lynn Blais or
Kerrie J. Stillman
850.488.7864

May be accessed online at www.ethics.state.fl.us

TALLAHASSEE—July 30—Meeting in Tallahassee on July 25 in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 35 matters, Chair Luis Fusté announced today. Eleven 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.

No probable cause was found on an allegation that **ALEX REY**, St. Pete Beach City Manager, misused his position by making payments to a vendor that exceeded his expenditure authority, awarded contracts without the required Commission approval, and failed to provide oversight of P-card transactions.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against Lake Worth Beach City Commissioner **REINALDO DIAZ**. Probable cause was found to believe Mr. Diaz failed to timely file his 2023 Form 1, Statement of Financial Interests. An allegation that he failed to timely file his 2022 Form 1, Statement of Financial Interests, also resulted in a finding of probable cause, however, the Commission will take no further action on the late-filed 2022 Form 1 due to the particular circumstances of the matter.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against **JOSEPH CHAISON**, Executive Director for the Jupiter Inlet District. No probable cause was found to believe that Mr. Chaison abused his position to obtain a disproportionate benefit or misused his position by failing to report or document paid time off, increasing benefits without approval, and lying about staff salary increases.

No probable cause was found on an allegation that **DALE "DOC" DOUGHERTY**, City Manager of Deltona, abused his position to obtain a disproportionate benefit or misused his position by sexually harassing an employee and retaliating against the employee after the alleged incidents were reported to human resources.

The Commission held a probable cause hearing on allegations regarding Cooper City Commissioner **RYAN SHROUDER**. No probable cause was found on allegations to believe Mr. Shrouder misused his position when he conditioned his support for a non-profit's request for a change in a City policy affecting the organization, on the resignation of the non-profit's president, whom Mr. Shrouder believed was stealing funds from the organization.

Probable cause was found to believe that **RON TERRIOUS GREEN**, Gadsden County Commissioner, had a conflicting contractual relationship that created a

continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his private interests and the performance of his public duties, when he approved multiple contracts for his landlord.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against Key West City Commissioner **MONICA HASKELL**. No probable cause was found to believe Ms. Haskell had a voting conflict when she voted on a measure affecting dock usage that could affect her son's business.

No probable cause was found on allegations that **RICHARD CARNELL**, Fellsmere Water Control District Board of Supervisors, was doing business with the District, had employment or a contractual relationship with an entity doing business with the District, or had a voting conflict regarding the hiring of a company in which Mr. Carnell was an officer. No probable cause also was found on similar allegations in a complaint filed against the Fellsmere Water Control District Board of Supervisors Member, **GREG NELSON**, regarding a business in which he had an ownership interest.

In a complaint filed against Key West City Commissioner **SAMUEL KAUFMAN** the Commission found no probable cause to believe Mr. Kaufman had a prohibited business relationship or a conflicting contractual relationship that created a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his private interests and the performance of his public duties, or had a voting conflict when the City Commission allocated funds to 18 non-profit service providers, including the Florida Keys Outreach Coalition where Mr. Kaufman serves as a board member.

A self-initiated investigation – required by statute – to determine if **BEN GAINER**, who formerly served on the Board of Supervisors for the Cypress Mill Community Development District, willfully failed to file his 2020 Form 1, resulted in a finding of

probable cause. However, the Commission elected to take no further action on the allegation due to the particular circumstances of the matter.

The Commission reviewed 24 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 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: **AL TAYLOR**, Titusville Board of Adjustment/Appeals Chairman; **WAYNE ANDERSON**, Village Community Development District 8 Supervisor; **DON KING**, Kenneth City Town Manager; **MEGAN ZEMAITIS**, Kenneth City Mayor; **LINDA HUDSON**, Fort Pierce Mayor; **RACHEL TENNANT**, Fort Pierce Utilities Authority Director; **VIRGINIA GIANAKOS**, Lake St. Charles CDD Supervisor; **HALINA DEV**, Florida Commission on Human Relations Investigator; **STEVE BELDEN**, Fort Myers Director of Community Development; **GARY ROBINSON**, Fort Myers Code Enforcement Officer; **BOB STEVENS**, Marshall Creek CDD Supervisor; **GENECE MINSHEW**, Fernandina Beach City Commissioner; **DEAN BLACK**, Member of the Florida House of Representatives; **BRANDON NEWSOM**, Holmes County Commissioner; **MICHAEL CLARK ECKERT**, Marshall Creek CDD Attorney; **MIKE NORRIS**, Palm Coast Mayor; **DANIEL VIAUD**, Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works Administrative Officer; **TROY THOMPSON**, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Chief of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement/FHP; **NANCY BENAVIDES**, Florida State

University Dean, College of Law; **SARAH ELIZABETH ROBINSON**, Brevard County School District Principal; **MIKE WILLIAMS**, Brevard County School District Resource Officer; **HEATHER LEGATE**, Brevard County School District Principal; **DUKERSON JEAN-PAUL**, Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Protective Investigator Supervisor; **PIERRE EDOUARD**, Young Men's Preparatory Academy Principal.

PUBLIC SESSION

During its public session meeting, the Commission adopted a formal opinion indicating that a City Commissioner must file a Form 9 gift disclosure if they personally receive event tickets worth over \$100, when the tickets are obtained using City discretionary funds. However, under the circumstances provided, gifts provided to the official as a result of his role on a private organization's board are not considered reportable gifts.

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.