



Matthew F. Carlucci
Chair

Michelle Anchors
Vice Chair

Daniel Brady, Ph.D.

Matthew J. Carson

Michael Cox

Tom Freeman

Guy W. Norris

Kimberly Bonder Rezanka

Stanley M. Weston

Virlindia Doss
Executive Director

C. Christopher Anderson, III
*General Counsel/
Deputy Executive Director*

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

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

"A Public Office is a Public Trust"

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
December 14, 2016

CONTACT PERSON:

Virlindia Doss or
Kerrie J. Stillman
850.488.7864

May be accessed on the Internet at www.ethics.state.fl.us

TALLAHASSEE—December 14, 2016— Meeting in Tallahassee on December 9th in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 18 complaints, Chairman Matthew F. Carlucci announced today. 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 to believe that Hardee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Executive Director **BILL LAMBERT** had a prohibited business relationship and a conflicting contractual relationship regarding accounts at the First National Bank of Wauchula (FNBW). The Commission also voted to find no probable cause to believe that he received unauthorized compensation or had a

conflicting contractual relationship with FNBW. An allegation that he misused his office to benefit his brother or others also was dismissed with a finding of no probable cause.

The Commission found probable cause to believe that Washington County Commissioner **TODD ABBOTT** had a conflicting contractual relationship regarding the cleaning of offices for the Department of Corrections (DOC) while DOC had a lease for the office space with the County. An allegation that he had a voting conflict on a February 26, 2015, measure concerning the lease also resulted in a finding of probable cause. However, no probable cause was found to believe that he misused his position to make inappropriate comments to a female resident and female County employees.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against High Springs City Manager **ED BOOTH**. No probable cause was found to believe that he misused his position to improperly order City workers to remove a campaign banner and two related signs from City property.

The Commission found probable cause regarding six allegations made against former Gainesville Mayor **EDWARD BRADDY**. Probable cause was found to believe he accepted a prohibited gift valued at more than \$100 from a lobbyist and that he failed to disclose a reportable gift. Probable cause also was found to believe that he solicited a gift from a lobbyist. Additionally, probable cause was found to believe that he accepted things of value that were given to influence a vote or other action in which he was expected to participate, and that he solicited or accepted them, based on an understanding that his official action or judgment would be influenced thereby. An allegation that he misused his position regarding persons or entities that gave him gifts also resulted in a finding of probable cause.

A complaint filed against St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) Governing Board Member **JOHN A. MIKLOS** resulted in a finding of no probable cause. The Commission rejected the recommendation of the Advocate and found no probable cause to believe that Mr. Miklos had a conflicting contractual relationship regarding a company consulting and assisting the City of DeBary in acquiring and developing land zoned for conservation under the care and management of the SJRWMD. Similarly, the Commission rejected the recommendation of the Advocate and found no probable cause to believe that he accepted compensation given to influence his official action.

Probable cause was found to believe that **PERNELL MITCHELL**, former Candidate for Lake County School Board, violated financial disclosure laws by failing to properly disclose income on his 2015 Form 6 that he filed when he qualified for office. However, the Commission will take no further action on the allegation, unless Mr. Mitchell requests a hearing, due to the total circumstances of the matter.

The Commission voted to dismiss a complaint filed against White Springs Mayor **RHETT BULLARD**, because the public interest would not be served by further proceedings before the Commission. The allegations of the complaint concerned internal managerial employment issues within the Town better suited to be addressed by Town government or other persons or entities other than the Commission on Ethics.

The Commission reviewed a number of 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. 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: **BILL McCOLLUM**, alleged Lobbyist and Political Action Committee Chair; **BERNARD NASH**, alleged Lobbyist; **LORI KALANI**, alleged Lobbyist; **REPUBLICAN ATTORNEYS GENERAL ASSOCIATION**, alleged Lobbyist; **REPUBLICAN STATE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE/PAC**, alleged Lobbyist; **REPUBLICAN PARTY OF FLORIDA**, Political Party; **FLORIDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**, alleged Lobbyist; **DAVID L. GREENE**, Cape Canaveral City Manager; **GATOR (HOMER) DELOACH**, Putnam County Sheriff's Office Captain and Candidate for Sheriff; **RICK SCOTT**, Governor; and **SHARON HARRINGTON**, Lee County Supervisor of Elections.

PUBLIC SESSION

The Commission voted in public session to dismiss a self-initiated complaint concerning **JOSEPH MANNERS**, former member of the Board of Supervisors for the Kendall Breeze West Community Development District. He was investigated and probable cause was found that he willfully failed to file his annual financial disclosure form as required by law. The penalty for a willful disclosure failure is removal from office. Because Mr. Manners failed to qualify for re-election and no longer was on the board as of November 22, 2016, the Commission approved the Advocate's motion to dismiss the matter for lack of jurisdiction, as he no longer holds office or employment from which he could be removed.

No probable cause was found to believe that **ROBERT A. COLLINS**, member of the Harbor Bay Community Development District Board of Supervisors, misused his position with regard to decisions concerning the repair of a seawall in the District.

A formal opinion was adopted by the Commission concerning the post public-employment representation of a corporation by a Department of Environmental Protection employee.

Another opinion adopted by the Commission concerned the application of the post public-officeholding representation restriction to a former County Commissioner under numerous scenarios.

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 that include removal from office or employment and fines up to \$10,000 per violation.