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PRESS RELEASE

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TALLAHASSEE—September 12, 2018— Meeting in Tallahassee on September 7th in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 27 matters, Chair Guy Norris 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.

The Commission accepted the recommendation of its Advocate, finding no probable cause on an allegation that former Putnam County Commissioner **WALTON PELLICER** misused his position to have construction projects completed on private property using county labor, equipment, materials, and without obtaining the necessary permits or inspections.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against Walton County Commissioner **CECILIA JONES**. The Commission adopted the recommendation of the

Advocate, finding no probable cause to believe Ms. Jones misused her position to disrupt the hiring of a road crew foreman and direct county employees to take no action regarding beachfront property owner rights, in an effort to benefit her son, who was a beach vendor. No probable cause also was found regarding an allegation she misused her position to seek reimbursement for attorney's fees in a legal matter, used her position to influence the actions of code enforcement officers to benefit her friends and supporters, and misused her position and county resources to benefit a candidate she supported in an election.

In a complaint filed against **CONSTANCE THOMAS**, Orange Park Town Council Member, the Commission found no probable cause to believe she misused town property or resources to benefit a candidate she supported in the 2017 election.

The Commission found no probable cause to believe Longwood City Commissioner **MARK WELLER** misused the city seal on his campaign materials.

The Commission found no probable cause in complaints filed against **STEPHEN HINKLE, JOHN A. MEYER, MICHAEL HOWARD**, and **JOHN A. JONES**, members of the Board of Supervisors of the South Indian River Water Control District. The complaints alleged the board members misused their positions to request and accept pay for days they did not work on behalf of the district.

In a complaint filed against **KIMBERLY DANIELS**, Florida Representative District 14 and former Jacksonville City Council Member, the Commission found probable cause to believe she filed inaccurate 2012, 2013, and 2014 Form 6 disclosure forms.

The Commission voted to find probable cause but take no further action regarding a complaint filed against Minneola City Council Member **JOSEPH SAUNDERS** for misusing the city's logo to benefit his reelection campaign.

The Commission reviewed seventeen 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: **LESLIE D. STEELE**, City Manager, Midway; **TRACI L. CALLARI**, City Commissioner, Hollywood; **KEVIN BIEDERMAN**, City Commissioner, Hollywood; five officials with the Town of White Springs: **TONJA BROWN**, Vice Mayor and Town Council Member; **STACY TEBO**, Town Manager; **RHETT BULLARD**, Town Council Member and former Mayor; **PAM TOMLINSON**, Finance Director and Town Clerk; and **WILLIE JEFFERSON**, former Town Council Member; two complaints filed against **JOSE VAZQUEZ FIGUEROA**, Candidate for State Representative, District 62; two complaints against **VALION JOYCE**, Candidate for State Representative, District 61; **LYDIA PISANO**, Mayor, Belle Isle; two complaints against **DAVID BERKMAN**, Mayor, Indialantic; **ADDISON DAVIS**, Superintendent, Clay County School District; and **KEVIN RADER**, Senator, District 29, Florida Senate.

PUBLIC SESSION

During its public session meeting, the Commission adopted a Joint Stipulation entered into between the Commission Advocate and **BRYAN MILK**, former Marco Island Director of Community Affairs. The Commission found Mr. Milk violated the financial disclosure law by failing to disclosure ownership in, or income derived from, two private entities on his 2012, 2013, and 2014 Form 1 disclosure. He also had a conflicting contractual relationship by having a business relationship with entities subject to the regulation of or doing business with the city. The Commission also found he misused his position for his own benefit and that of others connected to him in a private capacity. A civil penalty of \$5,000 and public censure and reprimand will be recommended for imposition by the Governor.

The Commission also adopted a settlement agreement between former Webster City Council Member **PAUL REMIS** and the Commission Advocate. The stipulation finds Mr. Remis failed to complete ethics training in 2015 as required by law. He also violated financial disclosure laws by failing to file his Form 1 within 30 days of his appointment to the City Council and by failing to indicate on the form the method he used to calculate his financial interests. The stipulation also indicates a violation for his failure to file the 2016 Form 1F within 60 days of leaving office. A civil penalty of \$1,500 and public censure and reprimand for the violations will be recommended for imposition by the Governor.

Another joint stipulation adopted by the Commission concerned the former Mayor of Dunnellon, **WALTER GREEN**. Mr. Green was found to have violated Florida's gift law

by soliciting a gift from city vendors. A civil penalty of \$500 and public censure and reprimand will be recommended for imposition by the Governor.

Two complaints filed against **JOSEPH P. HOFFMAN**, Candidate for State Attorney in the 20th Judicial Circuit, were reviewed for legal sufficiency and dismissed. 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 complaints were considered during public session because Mr. Hoffman waived confidentiality.

Contact the Commission's office to obtain rulings on appeals of automatic fines imposed for late submission of financial disclosure reports submitted by public officers and employees. (See Item VI. on the September 7th meeting agenda posted on the Commission's website.)

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 \$10,000 per violation.