

AUG 29 2022

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**BEFORE THE  
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

**In re: Robin Hatcher,**

**Respondent.**

**Complaint No. 22-060**

**JOINT STIPULATION OF FACT, LAW, AND RECOMMENDED ORDER**

Respondent, Robin Hatcher, and the Advocate for the Florida Commission on Ethics enter into this Joint Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order with respect to the above-styled Complaint. Subject to acceptance by the Commission on Ethics, the parties agree that they enter into this stipulated settlement in lieu of further hearings in this cause. The parties stipulate as follows:

**STIPULATED FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Respondent serves as the City Clerk for the City of Bristol and, therefore, is subject to the provisions of the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes.

2. On April 11, 2022, a sworn Complaint was filed with the Commission on Ethics alleging that Respondent violated the Code of Ethics.

3. Pursuant to Section 112.322, Florida Statutes, the Executive Director of the Commission on Ethics found that the Complaint was legally sufficient and on April 29, 2022 ordered a preliminary investigation of the Complaint for a probable cause determination of whether Respondent had violated Article II, Section 8(g)(2), Florida Constitution, and Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes. The Report of Investigation was released on June 6, 2022.

4. On July 27, 2022, the Commission on Ethics found probable cause to believe Respondent violated Article II, Section 8(g)(2), Florida Constitution, and Section 112.313(6),

**Florida Statutes.**

**The Allegations are:**

**I. Respondent violated Article II, Section 8(g)(2), Florida Constitution, by abusing her public position to obtain a disproportionate benefit for herself.**

**II. There is probable cause to believe that Respondent violated Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes, by using City funds for a personal purpose.**

**5. Respondent admits the facts as set forth in the Report of Investigation, with exception to paragraph five of the Report of Investigation, as to Allegations I and II as incorporated by reference in this Joint Stipulation.**

**6. Respondent disputes paragraph five in the Report of Investigation which states, in pertinent part: "The Complainant alleges that, on Friday, January 21, 2022, the Respondent took \$200 out of the cash drawer at City Hall" and "[o]n Tuesday, January 25, 2022, the Respondent put \$200 in the cash drawer at City Hall to replace the \$200 that she had taken on Friday, January 21, 2022." Respondent maintains that she took the \$200 on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, and returned it the same day.**

#### **STIPULATED CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

**7. Respondent is subject to the provisions of Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees.**

**8. The Commission on Ethics has jurisdiction over the Complaint as filed in this proceeding and over Respondent.**

**9. Respondent admits Allegations I and II as set forth in paragraph four (4) of the Stipulated Findings of Fact, above.**

**10. Respondent violated Article II, Section 8(g)(2), Florida Constitution, and Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes, by using City funds for a personal purpose, thus, abusing her public position to obtain a disproportionate benefit for herself.**

### **STIPULATED RECOMMENDED ORDER**

11. The Advocate accepts Respondent's admission in this proceeding.

12. The Advocate and Respondent have entered into this Joint Stipulation and urge the Commission on Ethics to approve it in lieu of further hearings in this cause.

13. Therefore, the parties request and the Advocate recommends that:

(a) The Commission on Ethics approve this Joint Stipulation, embodying the stipulations, admissions, and recommendations of the parties;

(b) The Commission on Ethics enter a Final Order and Public Report finding that Respondent violated Article II, Section 8(g)(2), Florida Constitution, and Section 112.313(6), Florida Statutes, and recommending:

(1) Public censure and reprimand of Respondent; and

(2) A civil penalty of:

\$1,000 for Allegation I; and

\$1,000 for Allegation II.

Total \$2,000.

### **FURTHER STIPULATIONS**

14. Respondent and the Advocate stipulate and covenant that they have freely and voluntarily entered into this Joint Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order with full knowledge and understanding of its contents. Respondent and the Advocate further stipulate and covenant that this Joint Stipulation constitutes the full agreement of the parties and that there are no oral or written understandings between the parties other than those contained in this Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order.

15. Respondent and the Advocate stipulate and covenant that, in consideration of the


provisions of this Joint Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order, they accept and will comply with the above-referenced Final Order and Public Report of the Commission on Ethics.

16. Respondent and the Advocate stipulate that this Joint Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order is submitted to the Commission on Ethics for its consideration and ratification. In the event that it is not approved by the Commission on Ethics as written, this document shall be of no purpose and effect and shall not be deemed an admission by Respondent.

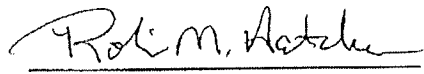
17. Respondent enters into this Joint Stipulation with the understanding of the seriousness of the allegations and gives her assurance that this proceeding has affected the manner in which she will conduct herself as a public official in a positive way.

18. Effective upon approval of this Joint Stipulation of Fact, Law, and Recommended Order by the Commission on Ethics, Respondent waives all time, notice, hearing rights, requirements, and entitlements, as to all subsequent hearings in this proceeding.

Signed, dated, and entered into:  
this 29<sup>th</sup> day of August 2022.

  
Elizabeth A. Miller  
Advocate for the Florida  
Commission on Ethics  
Florida Bar No.: 578411  
Office of the Attorney General  
The Capitol, PL-01  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
(850) 414-3300, Ext. 3702

Signed, dated, and entered into:  
this 26<sup>th</sup> day of August 2022.

  
Robin Hatcher  
Respondent  
12444 NW Virginia Weaver Street  
Bristol, Florida 32321  
(850) 643-2261

**BEFORE THE  
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

**In re: Robin Hatcher,**

**Respondent.**

**Complaint No.: 22-060**

**PERSONAL STATEMENT OF ROBIN HATCHER**  
*(to accompany Joint Stipulation)*

Dear Commissioners:

Please accept this as my sincere personal statement regarding the ethics complaint filed against me.

I admit that I took money from the City's funds for personal use and repaid the money the same day. The Commission's Report of Investigation states that I took the \$200 on Friday, January 21, 2022, and returned the money on Tuesday, January 25, 2022. Respectfully, that statement is incorrect because I took the money at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 25 and repaid the money at 9:30 a.m. the same day.

I take personal responsibility for my misdeed. I apologize for my ethics violation and express deep remorse for my action. This experience has changed my life and I have learned from it. Below I will explain how this process has affected me, my family, and my colleagues.

• **How has my behavior impacted my team of coworkers?**

My inappropriate actions particularly impacted my professional relationship, as well as my personal relationship with my co-worker, Assistant Clerk Nicole Day. Our ability to communicate effectively was significantly diminished. She really didn't want to acknowledge my presence in the office, which was difficult. I understand that I put her in a very difficult position professionally and that her confidence in me was tarnished. She has since left my office for a tremendous opportunity to advance her career with the City of Boca-Raton, Florida. I have joyously shared in her professional accomplishments and in the accomplishments of her children throughout the past eight years. I am quite remorseful that I will not be able to share in and watch her grow in this new venture. I have prayed often and continue to pray for her heart to heal, and that she will be able to offer me grace and forgiveness as she recognizes my sincere regret for my actions.

Other coworkers have continued to work with me without appearing to be impacted, but I am ever mindful that there is an impact, whether spoken or not, when someone whom you trust and hold to high standards betrays those trusts.

• **How has my behavior affected my family?**

My family has actually been very supportive of me, although, I felt anguish and shame as I individually and personally acknowledged my actions to my good husband, my four children, my brother and his wife, well in advance of the Commission's Finding of Probable Cause because

1) I wanted them to understand what I had done, why it was wrong, why Nicole was correct in reporting my misdeed, and why it is appropriate that I be held accountable for my actions; and 2) so that they would not be blind-sided later, but would know in advance about my misdeeds.

Because they have seen how much time and effort I have invested in our small and understaffed City and away from my family, late nights...early mornings...weekends, and because they know how much I love the people I serve, and they know me...my character, my servant's heart, the many good deeds I quietly do throughout our community and outside of our community, they have readily forgiven me. It hurts me to know that they too, by association with me, will be publicly censured, not that they are being reprimanded for their actions, but in a real sense they will have to face public shame for my actions.

• **How has my behavior impacted my agency?**

My behavior has added an undue burden on our Mayor, Council, and Attorney as they will have to address internal disciplinary action related to my misdeeds. Although I recognize that no one is indispensable, I could be terminated in the near future, and they could (and likely will) find someone to fill my position, a transition to a new clerk will be particularly difficult because with no city manager, my office is the hub of all city functions, the bulk of which has to cross my desk for action. We are a two person office and the Assistant Clerk is a new hire with no prior government experience. With so many post Hurricane Michael and COVID related grants in progress, some very vital and exciting projects obligated for funding, and several vital grants in the application phase, this City that I love and have worked so hard to secure necessary funding for, could be at risk of losing millions of dollars in funding if they are unable to meet grant requirements. When I think about the impact my actions could have on my community, my anxiety almost overwhelms me, internally my heart and chest become so hot that it makes me think of the scriptures referring to "eternal torment" for the unrepentant. I can and do pray that feeling away several times daily, but the potential impact on my community could indeed be devastating if these once in a lifetime monies are jeopardized.

Furthermore, if I am not immediately removed from office, I am no longer comfortable in my skin when sitting in my seat where I have confidently served the public these many years. I will not seek re-election. My goal at this point is simply to ensure a successful transition to a new clerk when I exit this seat.

• **How has my omission affected my direct reports?**

I do not think my direct reports were previously affected by my omission. I have never tried to float money or withhold making deposits or directed my assistant clerk who prepares the deposits to hold deposits for me. I am guilty of being task oriented; I am guilty of not being a clock watcher in anticipation of the end of a work day; I am guilty of focusing on work when I am at work with little thought of my personal agenda; and I am guilty of occasionally forgetting to set a reminder to remind me to stop, take my break, take my lunch, take time for my personal errands; I am admittedly guilty of putting IOUs in the cash drawer on occasion, a clear violation of public code of ethics which I am to be held to, as I somehow rationalized it was in the City's best interest because the City benefited from me staying late. I also know that rationalizing does not justify my actions which were clearly wrong and violated codes of conduct related to use of public funds. On the occasion when I placed an IOU in the drawer, funds were promptly replaced so that reports

were not affected or my misdeeds detected in my direct reports, but I recognize that public funds are not to be used for personal loans no matter how short the term.

The Mayor is now monitoring daily deposits for timely reporting of funds collected.

• **What impact has my oversight had on my team of coworkers?**

My oversight requires my co-worker (Assistant Clerk) to close reports in our billing software daily, reconcile the cash drawer and petty cash daily, and transport the deposit to the banking institution daily.

• **How has my action affected the agency's way of doing business?**

The cash collected is deposited in the bank on a daily basis rather than weekly. The petty cash is reconciled daily.

• **How has my decision caused unintended consequences?**

I realize that my actions could result in losing my position as City Clerk. I will lose my creditability with some members of my community. Additionally, I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where I teach a lesson to the women's organization on Sundays on a rotating schedule and I can barely stand the thought of standing in front of women whom I revere to discuss the Savior and gospel principles when I am guilty of using such poor judgment.

I love my membership and activity in the Church and the blessings and joy it brings me. I have a testimony of a loving Savior who not only allows us to suffer consequences but expects us to suffer consequences for our actions so that we can grow and learn from our mistakes, but my confidence is shaken, and I'm not certain that I can freely share that testimony with others for fear of them thinking that I am less than genuine. I'm uncertain if this will affect my standing in the church for some period of time, but I recognize that I could lose the right to full membership in the Church.

Please accept this statement as my sincere expression of contrition.

Date: 8/26/2022

Robin Hatcher  
Robin Hatcher