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"A Public Office is a Public Trust"

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PRESS RELEASE

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TALLAHASSEE—October 30—Meeting in Tallahassee on October 25th in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 46 matters, Chair Luis M. Fusté announced today. Seven 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 a complaint filed against Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Volunteer Fire Department Pension Board Chair and Candidate for the Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Commission **KENNETH BRENNER**. Probable cause was found to believe he violated Florida's Constitution and financial disclosure law by filing

an inaccurate 2023 Form 6 disclosure. No probable cause was found on allegations that he failed to accurately file his 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 Form 1 disclosures.

The Commission considered a complaint against St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer **BRYAN BEATY**. The Commission found no probable cause to believe Mr. Beaty misused his position or used information not available to the general public for his personal benefit or to benefit someone else when he searched St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office archives for photographs to use in a campaign.

The Commission also considered a complaint filed against **JAMES "JIMMY" PERRY WILLIAMS**, Union County Coordinator. No probable cause was found to believe he violated the constitutional amendment prohibiting abuse of office to obtain a disproportionate benefit or misused his position when he directed County Building Officials to backdate a building inspection and insert building permit applications into the permit files for residential homes his company was involved in building. An allegation he had a conflicting contractual relationship that created a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his private interests and the performance of his public duties was dismissed with a finding of no probable cause.

No probable cause was found to believe Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools **EYDIE TRICQUET** misused her official position to benefit herself or another person when she appeared in a promotional video to share her experience with a product that had been purchased and used by the district.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against **TONY WHITE**, Industrial Program (IPP) Coordinator for the City of St. Petersburg. No probable cause was found to believe he misused his position when he participated in interviews and made

recommendations for a vacancy in the IPP that resulted in a promotion for an employee with whom he was alleged to have had a financial relationship.

The Commission considered a complaint filed against Washington County School Board Member **CINDY JOHNSON BROWN**. It was alleged that she misused her position when she provided speech language pathology testing services, in her private capacity, to a child attending a school in the district. The complaint also contained allegations she had a contractual relationship that created a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between her private interests and the performance of her public duties or impeded the full and faithful discharge of her public duties. No probable cause was found on both allegations.

No probable cause was found to believe Lake Wales Chief of Police **CHRIS VELASQUEZ** misused his official position to benefit himself or another when decisions were made about the announcement and promotion of a sergeant to lieutenant within the police department.

The Commission reviewed 39 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: **STEVEN BAPP**, City of Debarry Growth Management Director; **RAELIN STOREY**, Hollywood Assistant City Manager; **JOHN "JAY" HATCH**, Branford Town Council President; ten complaints against **JULIE MARCUS**, Pinellas County Supervisor

of Elections; **ALIAN COLLAZO**, Candidate for Florida House of Representatives;
MAYRA URIBE, Orange County Commissioner; **MICHAEL W RODEN**, Lake County
Building Services Licensing Investigator; **BARBARA KING**, South Bay City
Commissioner; **SHANNON SHEPP**, Florida Department of Citrus Executive Director;
KAITLIN C. LUSTGARTEN, Assistant State Attorney, 19th Circuit; **HOMER D.**
DELOACH, Putnam County Sheriff; **ALFRED "CHOPPER" DAVIS**, City of New Port
Richey Mayor's Chief of Staff; **DEBBIE L. MANNS**, City of New Port Richey City
Manager; **ERIK JAY**, City of New Port Richey Code Enforcement Supervisor;
KENNETH WELCH, Mayor of St. Petersburg; **LINDA HUDSON**, City of Ft. Pierce Chief
of Staff; **JEREMIAH JOHNSON**, Ft. Pierce City Commissioner; **CURTIS JOHNSON,**
JR., Ft. Pierce City Commissioner; **MICHAEL BRODERICK**, Ft. Pierce City
Commissioner; **ARNOLD S. GAINES**, Ft. Pierce City Commissioner; **JOSEPH**
LADAPO, State of Florida Surgeon General; **ROSEANN HARRINGTON**, Orange
County Chief of Staff; **SHERITTA JOHNSON**, Former City of Fort Pierce Risk Manager;
ANTHONY SNYDER, Preserve at South Branch CDD Supervisor; **DAVID**
SILVERSTEIN, Preserve at South Branch CDD Supervisor; **JON CREAMER**, Florida
Wildlife Commission NW Regional Director; **STUART TETTEMER**, Mayor of Panama
City Beach; **STACEY HECTUS**, Former Levy County Planning & Zoning Director; **SEAN**
WILCOX, Coquina Water Control District Board Member; and **DAVID ALFIN**, Mayor of
Palm Coast.

PUBLIC SESSION

During its public session meeting, the Commission denied a Motion to Reconsider Whether Probable Cause Exists in a complaint filed against Florida State Representative **RANDALL FINE**.

The Commission adopted a formal opinion that provides guidance to Member Services Liaison in the Florida House of Majority Office. The opinion finds the employee would not be prohibited from representing clients before the Florida Senate within two years of leaving employment with the Legislature, but it would prohibit him, during that two-year period, from representing clients before the Florida House of Representatives.

The Commission also adopted an opinion finding a current member of the Ave Maria Board of Supervisors and a former member of the Collier County Planning Commission would not be prohibited from representing persons and entities for compensation on land use matters before his former agency.

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.