

City of Atlanta Board of Ethics Minutes--November 17, 2005

The regular monthly meeting of the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair John D. Marshall, Jr., on Thursday, November 17, 2005, at 6:08 p.m. in City Council Committee Room 2. Attending the meeting were board members Susan Housen, Lawrence Levin, Jacquee Minor, and Kenyatta Mitchell. Leah Janus was absent. Ethics Officer Ginny Looney and Gate City Bar nominee John Lewis, Jr. also attended the meeting.

City Municipal Clerk Rhonda Johnson gave the oath of office to Ms. Housen, Ms. Minor, and Mr. Lewis.

Ms. Housen moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Levin seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Following a discussion of the proposed formal advisory opinion on the use of city property by candidates for city office, the opinion was amended to state that a councilmember may not hand out a city-funded newsletter while soliciting votes "after filing for reelection." With that amendment, Mr. Marshall asked for a vote and the board adopted the opinion unanimously. The opinion concludes that city elected officials and employees may not use city property to promote any candidate for political office, except when the property is made available for use by all candidates or the general public or the use is trifling or trivial.

The board next discussed sections 2-801 and 2-815 in the Code of Ethics, which address expense reimbursements as an exception to the ban on gratuities. The board directed Ms. Looney to draft an opinion defining a "speaking engagement" for which a city official or employee may be reimbursed by a non-city source. The board agreed that officials and employees must disclose reimbursements from all non-city sources, whether they are prohibited sources or not.

The board also discussed section 2-819 which prohibits the disclosure of confidential information. Ms. Looney is to draft an opinion for the board to consider based on the examples discussed.

The board adopted the following schedule for meetings in 2006:

January 19, 2006
February 16, 2006
March 16, 2006
April 20, 2006 -- hearings, if needed
May 18, 2006
June 22, 2006 -- Board retreat
July 20, 2006
No meeting in August
September 21, 2006
October 19, 2006
November 16, 2006
No meeting in December

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ginny Looney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ginny Looney, Ethics Officer
Approved January 17, 2006