

City of Atlanta Board of Ethics Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2008

The monthly meeting of the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair John Lewis, Jr., at 6:10 p.m. in the City Council Committee Room 2, 55 Trinity Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303. Attending the meeting were board members Cathy Daniels, MaryAnne Gaunt, and Susan Housen. Also present were staff members Ginny Looney and Nasceas Timms. Board member Jacquae Minor was absent.

OFFICER ELECTION

1. MaryAnne Gaunt was elected vice chair on a motion by Cathy Daniels, which Susan Housen seconded.

MINUTES

2. The Board approved the minutes of the January 24, 2008, meeting. Ms. Daniels made the motion, and Ms. Gaunt seconded it.

FORMAL ADVISORY OPINIONS

3. Ms. Gaunt moved to adopt proposed Formal Advisory Opinion 2008-1 defining prohibited sources. Ms. Daniels seconded the motion, which the Board adopted. The opinion concludes: "A prohibited source includes a person or company that is doing business with the City, is currently seeking the city's business, is actively promoting or opposing city legislation, has a matter pending before a city agency, or is registered as a lobbyist with the State Ethics Commission."
4. Ms. Housen made a motion, which Ms. Gaunt seconded, to adopt proposed Formal Advisory Opinion 2008-2 on the disclosure of conflicts of interest. The opinion states: "Officials or employees have a conflict of interest when they, their employer, or their immediate family have a financial or personal interest in a contract, proposed legislation, or a decision that is pending before them or their agency. All city officials and employees are disqualified from participating in decisions involving their own financial or personal interests, but only city elected officials, board members, and certain employees must file the online Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest form."
5. The Board discussed the proposal to adopt a policy permitting the acceptance of gifts of travel from prohibited sources and agreed to consider a proposed formal advisory opinion on the issue at its next meeting.
6. The Board discussed a request for a formal advisory opinion on when city employees may use city property in the election of city pension board members. The Board asked Ms. Looney to draft a formal advisory opinion clarifying when a city employee who serves on a city pension board is engaged in official city business.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

7. Ms. Looney presented a report showing that 91 percent of the required filers met the February 15, 2008, filing deadline, up from 88 percent in 2007 and 81 percent in 2006.

BUDGET

8. Ms. Looney presented a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2009 of \$454,026. The budget provides for a staff of three --the Ethics Officer, a new Director of Enforcement, and an Administrative Analyst, Senior -- and a 27 percent reduction in operating expenses from the current fiscal year. Ms. Gaunt moved adoption of the budget, Ms. Daniels seconded the motion, and the Board approved it.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m. following a motion by Ms. Housen and a second by Ms. Daniels.



Ginny Looney, Ethics Officer
Approved March 20, 2008