

TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT, COOK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SISAVANH BAKER
DIRECTOR



COOK COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS
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BOARD OF ETHICS MEMBERS

DR. SUSAN GAFFNEY
VON MATTHEWS, VICE CHAIR
ANTARA NATH RIVERA
HON. MARCUS SALONE
THOMAS SZROMBA, CHAIR

OPEN SESSION MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
January 27, 2022

OPEN SESSION I:

A. Call to Order: The January 27, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Cook County Board of Ethics (“Board”) was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

Board Members Present: Dr. Susan Gaffney, Antara Nath Rivera, Von Matthews, and Thomas Szromba

Board Members Absent: Honorable Marcus Salone

Staff Members Present: Director S. Baker, Legal Counsel J. King, Investigator J. Brown, Investigator A. Cahn, Investigator J. Jones, Communications and Training Coordinator J. Epplin-Zapf, and Administrative Analyst K. Johns

B. Agenda Approval

A motion to modify the agenda to discuss procedural rule changes in the executive session, was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

C. Statements by the Public

Alisa Kaplan with Reform for Illinois encouraged the County to seek exemption from the State’s new ethics law that passed last year and suggested the board continue strengthening its lobbyist regulations. Ms. Kaplan inquired if the board plans to go back and audit campaign donations that were made between the time audits were suspended in 2018 and when they resumed in 2021.

D. Approval of the December 16, 2021, Regular Meeting Open Minutes

A motion to approve the December 16, 2021, regular meeting open minutes with a typo that would be identified a later time during the meeting was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

E. Nomination and Vote – Chair and Vice Chair

A motion to nominate Thomas Szromba as Chair was made, voted on and approved by unanimous voice vote. A motion to nominate Von Matthews as Vice Chair was made, voted on and approved by unanimous vote.

F. Director’s Report

Director S. Baker reported that since the last board meeting staff hasn’t opened any new investigations or closed any investigations. She noted that there were a few staff opinions and 17 routine inquiries. She also noted that staff continues to train employees, personnel for Clerk of the Circuit Court and elected officials and their senior staff. She mentioned that staff reviewed 209 campaign contributions, has two cases in administrative hearing and one case in court. Director

Baker reported that staff is working with the Forest Preserve and reviewing their ethics ordinance so that it conforms to the Cook County Board of Ethics ordinance. Finally, she reported staff would be receiving new software and platforms that would allow employees, officials, appointed members, etc., to take training on demand.

G. Proposed Amendments to Ethics Procedural Rules – Board Review and Approval

Chair Thomas Szromba stated that the rule changes will be public facing.

At 2:17 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss matters regarding specific investigations, public litigation, and approval of minutes for prior closed sessions, pursuant to sections 2(c)(4) of the Open Meetings Act.

At 3:49 p.m., the Board voted unanimously to reconvene into open session.

OPEN SESSION II:

A. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes of the December 16, 2021 Regular Meeting

A motion to approve the December 16, 2021, regular meeting closed minutes was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

B. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items

A motion to adopt the Notice of Determination in 2021I003 as modified was made and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

C. Adjourn

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:53 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Board Staff.