



Milwaukee County Ethics Board

DATE: August 20, 2021

TO: Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Interested Parties

FROM: Adam Gilmore, Executive Director, Ethics Board

RE: Amending M.C.G.O. §9.14(2)(a) to Modify the Statement of Economic Interest Form

BACKGROUND

In February 2021, the office of the Ethics Board received a copy of the report by the Office of the Comptroller – Audit Services Division (“ASD”) regarding misconduct by former Register of Deeds John La Fave. Among the recommendations made by ASD in the report was the following:

“The Administrator of the Ethics Board should prepare a resolution to be considered by the County Board to modify the Statement of Economic Interest form to include information regarding the status of a vendor’s relationship with a department when a gift has been received in excess of \$50.”

The content of the Statement of Economic Interest (“SEI”) form is dictated by the Ethics Code in Chapter 9 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances, specifically §9.04 (Items 1-6 of the form) and §9.14 (Item 7 of the form). An amendment to the Ethics Code is necessary to modify the SEI form as requested by ASD.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT

At their May 2021 meeting, the Ethics Board and I discussed the report and recommendation of ASD. While the language of ASD’s recommendation out of context is somewhat vague, the intention is clear given the circumstances of the report. The Ethics Board and I determined that the section of the form ASD is concerned with is Item 7A as it relates to the reporting of gifts received by the filer. The content of this Item is derived from MCGO §9.14(2)(a), which states:

“Except as provided for in paragraph (b), every county public official or employee who is required to file a statement of economic interests, pursuant to section 9.03 and who received

COURTHOUSE, ROOM 212 · 901 NORTH 9TH STREET · MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53233 · TELEPHONE (414) 278-5332 · FAX (414) 223-1897

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any lodging, transportation, money, or other thing with a combined pecuniary value exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00), not including the value of food or beverage offered coincidentally with a talk or meeting, shall report on his/her statement of economic interests the identity of every person from whom the county public official received such lodging, transportation, money, or other things during the preceding taxable year, the circumstances under which it was received, and the approximate value thereof.”

ASD’s preferred change would see a checkmark column added to the reporting sheet for Item 7A where the filer can mark whether they are aware that a gift they received was given by or on behalf of a County vendor that works directly with the filer’s department. (page 5 of the updated SEI form attached). With that in mind, below is the addition the Ethics Board and I recommend the County Board make to MCGO §9.14(2)(a) in the attached resolution:

“Except as provided for in paragraph (b), every county public official or employee who is required to file a statement of economic interests, pursuant to section 9.03 and who received any lodging, transportation, money, or other thing with a combined pecuniary value exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00), not including the value of food or beverage offered coincidentally with a talk or meeting, shall report on his/her statement of economic interests the identity of every person from whom the county public official received such lodging, transportation, money, or other things during the preceding taxable year, the circumstances under which it was received, **whether the gift was given by or on behalf of a County vendor contracted to work with that official or employee’s department**, and the approximate value thereof.”

Submitted by,

/s/ Adam Gilmore

Adam Gilmore, Executive Director
Milwaukee County Ethics Board

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors