



# Milwaukee County Ethics Board

DATE: March 30, 2021

TO: Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Chairman Anthony Staskunas, Milwaukee County Judiciary, Safety and  
General Services Committee  
Supervisor Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Vice Chair, Milwaukee County Judiciary,  
Safety and General Services Committee  
Members of the Milwaukee County Judiciary, Safety and General Services  
Committee  
Interested Parties

FROM: Adam Gilmore, Executive Director, Ethics Board

RE: Ethics Board Findings Contained in 2020 Annual Report and Potential  
Applicability to Other Factual Situations

---

## BACKGROUND

After review of the 2020 Milwaukee County Ethics Board Annual Report, the Chair of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors requested a supplemental report discussing the potential applicability of the Ethics Board's 2020 determinations and advisories to Milwaukee County officials and employees.

## POTENTIAL APPLICABILITY TO MILWAUKEE COUNTY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

The Ethics Board is the primary source of interpretation of the Milwaukee County Ethics Code (Chapter 9 of the Milwaukee County General Ordinances). Some of the duties of the Board include:

- Providing Advisory Opinions
- Assessing Potential Ethical Issues
- Providing Periodic Ethics Education
- Enforcing the Ethics Code through Investigations, Hearings, and other Resolution Processes

Each year, the Ethics Board releases its Annual Report, summarizing their yearly advisory opinions, investigations requests, and verified complaints. This is done in an effort to inform and educate the public as to matters that are generally before the Board and the

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

Board Members  
CHRISTOPHER MEULER · Chair  
CHRISTINE HANSEN · Vice Chair  
DANA GUTHRIE · CLARENCE P. NICHOLAS · RACHEL YATES

Board's determinations in those matters. Any opinion or response issued by the Ethics Board applies solely to the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular request. The summaries in the annual report are written in a manner that protects the integrity of the closed session discussions of the Board and the confidentiality of the subjects of opinions and responses. The Board's findings vary on what may initially appear to be relatively similar scenarios, due to the particular facts and circumstances that are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. *The summaries are for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon as authoritative advice for other facts and scenarios.*

The scenarios referred to in the Annual Report are reflective of the most commonly asked questions of the Ethics Board through the years, relating to topics such as:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Gifts
- Use of Government Position and Resources
- Outside Employment
- Post-Employment
- Political Activity

Conflicts of interest matters continue to be the most prevalent area that advisories and determinations were sought in, while questions regarding gifts saw the greatest increase. Most noticeable was the fifty percent drop in overall inquiries from 2019. The Board sees this downswing as an effect of the ongoing crisis; with the lack of activity and events in the year, there were fewer situations where employees and officials found themselves in need of the Board's advice. There was also an uptick in investigation requests (from three to five). As always, the Board welcomes all inquiries and guarantees their confidentiality.

Submitted by,

/s/ Adam Gilmore

Adam Gilmore, Executive Director  
Milwaukee County Ethics Board

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Executive's Office  
Allyson Smith, Coordinator, Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee