



# Milwaukee County Ethics Board

DATE: March 9, 2020

TO: Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, 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 2019 Annual Report and Potential Applicability to Other Factual Situations

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## BACKGROUND

After review of the 2019 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 2019 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

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Board Members  
CHRISTOPHER MEULER · Chair  
CYNTHIA HERBER · Vice Chair  
CHRISTIAN B. FLORES · DANA GUTHRIE · CHRISTINE HANSEN · CLARENCE P. NICHOLAS

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.*

That being said, 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

As was the case last year, conflicts of interest and dual employment matters were the most prevalent areas that advisories and determinations were sought in. The common thread in these requests were employees or officials with employment outside of their Milwaukee County position. While the Ethics Code does not prohibit outside employment, the Ethics Board encourages people to contact the Board, as well as their supervisors, with any questions they may have concerning a potential conflict of interest.

The Ethics Board saw an increase of over fifty percent in overall inquiries in 2020, a trend the Board believes is a sign of growing awareness of the Board, its role in Milwaukee County, and the importance of heeding the County's Ethics Code. There was also an uptick in investigation requests (from two to three). 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  
Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Executive's Office  
Allyson Smith, Coordinator, Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee