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Larry Suffredin
Commissioner – 13th District
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Committee Chair

Legislation and Intergovernmental
Relations Committee

Committee Member

Criminal Justice
Emergency Management and
Regional Security
Finance
Sub-Committee on Litigation
Health and Hospitals
Human Relations
Pension
Transportation
Veterans
Workforce, Housing and Community
Development
Zoning and Building

September 24, 2020

Re: Item # 20-4404: Proposed Amendments to the Ethics Ordinance

Dear President Preckwinkle and Commissioners:

Accompanying this letter is the Revised Ethics Ordinance that I have prepared with President Preckwinkle and Commissioner John Daley to be submitted to the Board today. With these amendments to the current Ethics Ordinance, we have attempted to address issues that have been raised by various individuals on how to strengthen our Ethics Ordinance. We are referring this ordinance to the Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee. We expect to have a series of hearings on this draft and welcome your suggestions for change. Here are our suggestions:

1. Sexual Harassment:
 - a. Add a definition of sexual harassment to Sec. 2-562. This section will also reference our existing Sexual Harassment Ordinance.
 - b. Add a section, 2-575, prohibiting officials, employees, or appointees from engaging in, encouraging or condoning behavior that constitutes sexual harassment
2. Improper Influence – Sec. 2-572:
 - a. Reworked language for clarity
 - b. Expanded the prohibitions to include relatives who might had economic interests in the outcome of decisions
 - c. Expanded the scope of improper recipients of transfers to include any person from whom the employee, official or appointee has received or is reasonably expected to receive compensation within the preceding 12 month or following 12 months.
3. Dual Employment – Sec. 2-573:
 - a. Expanded the requirement that no employee shall accept or maintain employment that would impair their independence of judgment or ability to perform County duties and responsibilities.
 - b. Added a requirement that officials, including commissioners, holding employment outside of the County shall disclose that employment to the Ethics Director and the Board of Ethics within 30 days of engaging in

The 13th District includes the following communities

49th & 50th Wards of the City of Chicago, the City of Evanston and the Villages of Glencoe, Glenview, Kenilworth, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Skokie, Wilmette, and Winnetka



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such employment or change of employment. And directed that such disclosures shall be made publicly available on the Ethics Department web-page.

4. Gifts and favors – Sec. 2-574:
 - a. Reworked language for clarity.
5. Conflicts of interest – Sec. 2-578:
 - a. Reworked language for clarity.
 - b. Expanded the prohibition to include situations where the economic benefit has accrued to the employee, official, or appointee or their spouse, domestic partner, civil union partner, dependent, or relative living with them in whatever form that economic benefit attains.
 - c. Requiring employees to report their conflicts of interest to their supervisor.
 - d. Requiring officials, including commissioners, or appointees to report any conflicts of interest to the secretary for the board or commission applicable to them and that said notices be made available to the public.
6. Post-employment restrictions – Sec. 2-580:
 - a. Expanded the restrictions to board or commission appointees.
 - b. Clarified the restriction on post-employment compensation or employment from persons for whom the employee, official, or appointee participated personally and substantially in the decision to award a contract with a value greater than \$10,000 on behalf of the County to that person.
7. Nepotism – Employment of Relatives – Sec. 2-582:
 - a. Clarified and strengthened the language concerning hiring and supervision of any relative of the employee, official, or appointee.
8. Limits on political contributions to candidates and elected officials for County offices – Sec. 2-585
 - a. Clarified that the annual limit on aggregate contributions to a candidate or elected official or committees established to support their candidacy is \$1,500.
 - b. Clarified that during election years, an elected official may not mail at the County's expense newsletters, brochures, PSA, or promotional materials bearing the proper name of the elected official from January 1 through the day after the primary or from September 1 through the day after the general election.
9. Inducement of Others – Sec. 2-589:
 - a. Added provisions prohibiting the inducement or aiding and abetting of others to violate this Division.

10. Board of Ethics – Sec. 2-591:
 - a. Clarified that, except as precluded by law, the Board shall be represented in all civil matters by the Cook County State’s Attorney.
 - b. Provided that settlements falling under the authority of the State’s Attorney to settle as provided by the County Board shall be reported to the Board (of Ethics).
 - c. Provided for approval by the Board of Ethics of any settlement, dismissal, or resolution above the settlement authority provided by the Cook County Board.
11. Fines and Penalties – Sec. 2-602:
 - a. Clarifies that violations of the gift ban provision (2-574) is guilty of a business offense and subject to a fine of \$1,001-\$5,000 separate and distinct from fines imposed under previous sections addressing fines.
 - b. Clarifies that violations of the prohibited political activity provisions (2-583) can be prosecuted for a Class A misdemeanor and is separate and distinct from fines imposed under previous sections addressing fines.
12. Lobbyists – Sec. 2-622:
 - a. Clarifies that lobbying is an attempt to influence an employee, official or appointed for compensation and on behalf of another person.
 - b. Other lobbying provisions remain the same.

We look forward to discussing these proposed changes to our Ethics Ordinance in the coming days and weeks.

Sincerely,



Larry Suffredin
Cook County Commissioner, 13th District