

2024



Tallahassee
Independent Ethics
Board

Annual Report

“Ethical Decision Making”



Prepared by:
Tasker Leverson-Green

Presented by:
Dwight Floyd

Board Members

Kristen Costa
Chairwoman

Patrick Kelly
Vice Chair

Rica Calhoun
Board Member

Adam Komisar
Board Member

Carlos Roy
Board Member

Bryan F. Smith
Board Member

Caroline Klancke
Board Member

Executive Staff

Dwight Floyd
Executive Director

Tasker Levenson-Green
Administrative Specialist II

John Reid
Board Attorney



Mission Statement & Core Values

Mission

To promote the actual and perceived integrity of our city government and to prevent unethical conduct before it occurs.



Core Values

- Integrity- Adhere to strong moral and ethical principles and values.
- Honesty- Be transparent and truthful when communicating with others.
- Commitment- Be dependable, fair, thorough, and objective.
- Excellence- Hold oneself accountable.
- Respect- Be courteous to others and treat each person with equal value.



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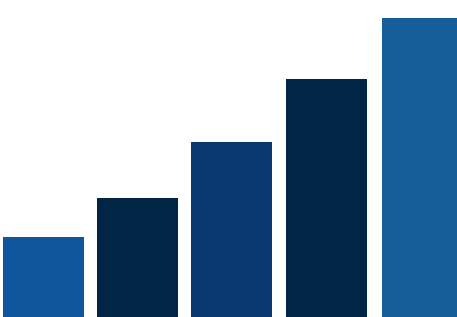
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Word from the Chairwoman


When I applied for the Vacant At-Large seat for the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, I did so with the idea that I wanted to make a difference. At the time I was appointed in 2020, it was when there was community perception that corruption was occurring in our local government, and there were even arrests and trials on the heels of some significant allegations. I, as a concerned citizen of the City of Tallahassee, wanted to help change that community perception of our local government and help deter, as well as examine, uncover, or even clarify any allegations of impropriety. By serving in my seat on the Ethics Board I have been afforded the opportunity to do just that.

Since first serving on the Ethics Board, I have seen a lot of great accomplishments. We have strived to carry out the charter as voted on by the people of the city. In 2022 we met with the City Commission at their ethics workshop to ask about making changes to the Charter. Through many Workshops and Commission meetings, we finally get to see some of our persistence come to fruition. In this recent November election, we have seen some of our amendments on the ballot. The first one being to give the Ethics Board jurisdiction over members of the City Commission when they are serving as board members of outside agencies by reason of their commission roles. The second being establishing the role of the Inspector General which came out of our push for granting and supporting Whistleblower protection. Both of these amendments passed overwhelmingly.


I am extremely proud of the current Board we have. They are well-versed in many areas, professional, keen, and all-around top-notch. This Fall we welcomed two additional appointments to our Board to bring us to a full Board again. The City of Tallahassee appointed Bryan Smith, who is no stranger to the Ethics Board, as Mr. Smith had served and even Chaired our Board previously, as the FAMU appointee. Caroline Klancke is the recent appointee for FSU. This seat was vacant for over a year, so we are happy to have her make our Board complete again. She brings with her a vast array of ethics experience. We have an incredible administrative team, led by Dwight Floyd, and additionally comprised of Tasker Levenson-Green and John Reid. They keep us apprised of any ethics matters and assure that we are able to carry out our tasks at hand.

The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board is honored to serve the citizens of Tallahassee. I assure you we are committed to the continued improvement and strengthening of the public's perception of City government. We do not take this task lightly and will do this with integrity and with the goal of continued transparency. Thank you for your continued trust in us.

Kristen Costa
Chair



Word from the Ethics Officer



Safeguarding Public Trust: The Unyielding Role of the Ethics Board

In a 2015 survey, 22 percent of the U.S. population said they trusted the government. In a more recent survey, that number was 20 percent. At a time when less than 25 percent of the U.S. population says they trust the government, exemplifying organizational values and upholding ethical standards is the best way to earn public trust. The Ethics Board and staff are committed to that end here in Tallahassee.

I am reminded of the years I served as an employee of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). FDLE maintained a stellar reputation. Quite often, when an action by a local law enforcement agency required scrutiny, FDLE was where the public turned to investigate. Every employee strived to exemplify the organizational values. You had to uphold the organizational values and ethical standards if you wanted to be promoted. The public trust required constant recognition of our role to serve, taking responsibility for executing our duties, and being good stewards of the state's resources. As the city's ethics officer, I am committed to ensuring that kind of trust at the local level.

Our work may not always be popular, especially among city officials or those who find it bothersome to complete ethics training once a year. However, it's important to remember that our efforts are not in vain. Just as cyber security measures are necessary to prevent severe threats, our work is critical in safeguarding against corruption. Even one unchecked corrupt individual can lead to severe consequences for our city. This underscores the importance of public awareness and involvement in our work. We actively encourage the community to report potential issues, as your involvement is crucial to our mission.

The Ethics Board investigated four sworn complaints in the past fiscal year, and in every case, we found the city official or employee not guilty of breaching public trust. But that was not the end of it. By conducting a thorough and independent investigation, we assured the public that the accusations were untrue. Should someone be emboldened enough to breach the public trust and a witness able and willing to report it, we will be there to isolate the offender and address the problem.

The existence of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, despite the low number of ethics complaints, is a testament to our unwavering commitment to upholding the integrity of our local government. This steadfast dedication is the cornerstone of our mission, doing what we can to ensure that the government's resources are used to enhance the quality of life of Tallahassee residents and not for any City official or employee's personal gain.

Dwight Floyd
Ethics Officer/Executive Director

About Us

In 2014, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board was established through a citizen referendum. The City Commission funds the Ethics Board within its discretionary budgetary authority at a level sufficient to discharge the Board's responsibilities. The Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body whose members are registered City of Tallahassee electors with appropriate subject matter expertise, none of whom are officers or employees of local government. The Board consists of seven volunteers, five selected by the City Commission, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, State Attorney's Office Second Judicial Circuit, and the Public Defender's Office Second Judicial Circuit, and two at large members selected by the Board. Each member may serve up to two full three-year terms.

The City Charter established the Ethics Hotline to receive calls that allege a violation of the ethics code. The Ethics Office receives the complaints, determines if there should be an investigation, and facilitates the process for administrative hearings. The Ethics Office conducts extensive ethics training for elected officials and city employees, City Commission-appointed advisory committees, commissions, and boards. At the request of City officials and employees, the Ethics Board is authorized to provide written opinions on the application of the ethics code. The Ethics Office administers the Campaign Contribution Refund Program, which was established through the referendum. Through this program, registered voters who live within the City limits may claim a refund of up to \$25 during an election cycle when they donate to a City Commission or Mayor's campaign.

The City Charter also established the Ethics Office. The Executive Director and Ethics Officer are one and the same and oversee the functions of the Ethics Board. The Ethics Officer receives complaints, conducts investigations, develops and coordinates training, and oversees every function of the Board. There is an administrative assistant who maintains the budget, handles purchases, coordinates the Board's monthly meetings, and develops and coordinates training. The Board contracts with an outside attorney for legal matters.



Meet the Board Members



KRISTEN COSTA
CHAIRWOMAN

Kristen Costa is a Physician Assistant at Southeastern Plastic Surgery in Tallahassee. She is a national trainer for injectables, a faculty member at the Allergan Medical Institute, and Florida State University in the Physician Assistant Program. She worked previously as a Neurosurgery Clinical Coordinator at the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and the Organ Procurement Coordinator in Gainesville. She has served as the liaison between the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the Secretary for the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants, Treasurer for the Fellowship of Christian Physician Assistants, Youth Leadership Tallahassee Development Steering Committee, and President of Lakeshore Gardens Homeowners Association. She currently serves on several boards, including the Young Actors Theatre, Treasurer for the Association of Plastic Surgery Physician Assistants, Advisory Board Member for Alpha Chi Omega, and the House of Delegates for the American Academy of Physician Assistants. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Florida State University and a Masters Degree in Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Florida.



PATRICK KELLY
VICE-CHAIR

Patrick Kelly manages prevention programs and conducts investigations into controlled substance prescription fraud and diversion for a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical and healthcare organization. He has over 30 years of public service experience, including chief executive law enforcement positions with two different Florida municipalities and the Florida Attorney General's Office. He also served as a long-time member and Chair of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. He has his Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from Florida State University, a Master of Science in Management from St. Thomas University, and an Educational & Human Resource Development Doctorate, ABD, from Florida International University. In addition, he has years of law enforcement consulting experience and has trained police and corrections professionals in diversity, cross-cultural communications, conflict resolution, leadership, and ethics. He is also a graduate of the Florida Martin Luther King Jr. Institute for Nonviolence and has taught undergraduate and graduate business and criminal justice courses for the University of Phoenix Online for over 20 years.



CARLOS REY
BOARD MEMEBER

Carlos Rey is the General Counsel for the Florida Senate. Before becoming general counsel, he served as a Senior Attorney on the Florida Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections. As a Senior Attorney, Mr. Rey drafted and analyzed bills concerning the state ethics code and election laws. Earlier in his career, he served as an Assistant General Counsel for the Florida Department of State, and as an Assistant Attorney General prosecuting Medicaid fraud. He is a 2004 graduate of the Florida State University Law School and a 2012 graduate of their Applied Economics Masters Program.

Meet the Board Members



RICA CALHOUN
BOARD MEMBER

Rica Calhoun serves as Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer at Florida A&M University. She is responsible for collaborating with University stakeholders throughout the institution to promote ethical decision-making and compliance with the law, regulation, and policy. Prior to her arrival at FAMU, she served as General Counsel, Ethics and Freedom of Information Officer for Western Illinois University (WIU). She also served as a member of the enterprise risk management committee, which identified and analyzed risk and compliance across WIU. She received her Juris Doctor from the College of William and Mary Marshall-Wythe School of Law in Virginia. She graduated from Florida State University with a Master's Degree in International Affairs and received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida.



ADAM KOMISAR
BOARD MEMBER

Adam Komisar is an attorney practicing criminal defense and civil litigation with Komisar Spicola, P.A. in Tallahassee. A graduate of Chiles High School, he attended the University of Florida, where he received an undergraduate degree in Business Finance and a Law Degree. After law school, he returned to Tallahassee, where he served as an Assistant State Attorney from 2010-12. He is the current president of the Tallahassee chapter of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys and a former Chair of the Florida Bar's local grievance committee.



BRYAN F. SMITH
BOARD MEMBER

Bryan Smith is the associate vice president for student affairs and ombudsman for Florida A&M University (FAMU). In February 2013, he became FAMU's special assistant to the president for anti-hazing. Prior to joining FAMU, he served for ten years on the DeKalb County Ethics Board, and as a mediator throughout the State of Georgia. Smith received his Juris Doctor from John Marshall Law School, Master of Applied Social Science, with a concentration in Public Administration from FAMU, and a bachelor's degree in political science from North Carolina A&T State University.

Meet the Board Members



CAROLINE KLANCKE
BOARD MEMBER

Caroline Klancke is an attorney, ethicist, author, and lecturer. She serves as Florida State University’s Associate Compliance Officer and Director of Ethics and Integrity Programs, where she also teaches Public Service Ethics. Ms. Klancke has served as General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics where she assisted the agency in its constitutional mandate to interpret and enforce the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees. Prior to her tenure with the Florida Ethics Commission, she served as Chief Ethics Officer and Senior Attorney with the Florida Public Service Commission.

In 2022 she founded the Florida Ethics Institute, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing ethics in government through education. She is the author of the Florida Ethics Handbook: A Public Servant’s Guide to the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees—the only comprehensive guide to governmental ethics regulations in Florida. She has lectured extensively for the Florida Commission on Ethics, the Florida Bar, Florida Association of Counties, and others on ethics, open government, and other compliance requirements.

In 2015, the Florida Government Bar Association selected her as a finalist for Government Attorney of the Year. In 2023 the Florida Association of County Attorneys honored her with the Ethics in Government award.

Meet the Executive Staff



DWIGHT FLOYD
DIRECTOR/ETHICS
OFFICER

Dwight Floyd joined the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board in February 2020 as the Executive Director and Ethics Officer. Before joining the City of Tallahassee, he served thirty-four years with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). During his tenure, he directed the training of law enforcement officers, corrections officers, and correctional probation officers statewide. He gave oversight to the development and administration of entry-level testing and state officer certification examinations. He also managed officer discipline cases for administrative hearings. He is native to Tallahassee, where he attended public schools before completing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science with Concentration in Public Administration from Florida A&M University. He is a member of the Council on Governmental Ethics and Laws.



TASKER LEVERSON-GREEN
ADMIN SPECIALIST II

Tasker Levenson-Green joined the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board in February 2023 as the Administrative Specialist II. Before joining the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, she served fifteen years with the City of Tallahassee Disbursement Services Department as an Accounts Payable Specialist/Purchase Card Administrator. During her tenure, she conducted purchase card training for new cardholders. She gave oversight to all City of Tallahassee purchase card holders. She also managed and updated the purchase card policy and procedure manual and was the liaison between the City purchase cardholders and the bank. She is a native of Quincy, Florida where she attended public schools before completing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Flagler College.

Meet the Executive Staff



JOHN L. REID
BOARD ATTORNEY

John L Reid is an attorney with decades of legal experience and is the founder of the Law Office of John Reid PLLC. His practice encompasses government and administrative law as well as family law, civil litigation, state appeals, and governmental relations. He also serves on the Federal Judicial Nominations Conference, which is tasked with recommending judicial nominees and other federal officials to the President of the United States.

John Reid advises the Board on enforcement responsibilities and training curricula. His work is essential to ensuring that the Board operates in compliance with the mandate provided by the charter and that the training curricula align with the applicable laws, ordinances, and rules. He assists the Ethics Officer in evaluating current administrative procedures, bylaws, and city ordinances. In addition, he reviews complaints for legal sufficiency and probable cause, drafts advisory opinions and final orders, and provides recommendations to the Tallahassee Code of Ethics and the Ethics Board's bylaws and administrative procedures.

Additionally, he serves as the Town Attorney to the Town of Greenville in Madison County. In Greenville, he is responsible for drafting ordinances and advising public officials on all aspects of local government. He has rewritten the Charter and revised the Code of Ordinances for the Town.

A graduate of the University of Miami School of Law, he has been a licensed attorney since 2000. He is admitted to practice law in Florida and the District of Columbia and is admitted to the United States Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Florida. John is a founding member of the North Florida Chapter of the American Constitution Society.

Strategic Planning

The Ethics Code was established through a referendum in 2014, creating the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, a seven-member body appointed by the City Commission, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, State Prosecutor's Office, Public Defender's Office, and two selected at large by the Board members. Staff for the Ethics Office includes a director/ethics officer and administrative specialist. The Board contracts with a legal advisor.

The Board oversees ethics training for City officials, appointees, employees, and advisory board members. The Board has subpoena power and investigates alleged violations of the Ethics Code. The Board relies on citizens, vendors, City employees, and City officials to report violations of the Ethics Code.

The Board reviews its strategic plan at the end of the fiscal year and updates its priorities and strategies. To preserve continuity, the Board maintains a three-year plan. Accordingly, the Board has established the following priorities.

Priorities

- Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.
- Encourage Tallahassee residents, City officials, City employees, advisory board members, and those conducting business with the City to maintain the highest ethical standards and report any perceived violations.
- Make recommendations to the City Commission that strengthen local ordinances governing the conduct of elected and appointed City officials, City employees, vendors, contractors, and lessees.
- Promote citizen participation in the electoral process through the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.



Advisory Opinions

The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board may issue advisory opinions related to ethics, conflict of interest, and any other topic over which it has jurisdiction. An advisory opinion is an interpretation of the City Charter as it applies to a set of facts provided in writing by the individual requesting the opinion. The purpose of an advisory opinion is to guide public officials and city employees before they engage in activities that may be prohibited.

The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board issued these opinions during the 2024 fiscal year:

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts - February 20, 2024

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation and acceptance of a gift by accepting payment from a company which is not a city vendor, in exchange for participating in a consumer satisfaction interview provided by that company when a city vendor may use the findings?

A: This question is answered in the negative.

Misuse of Public Position

Q: Does a city employee violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on the misuse of public position by accepting payment from a company which is not a city vendor in exchange for participating in a consumer satisfaction interview provided by that company when a city vendor may use the findings?

A: This question is answered in the negative.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation and acceptance of a gift by attending at no cost an event held by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and helping to raise money toward that 501(c)(3) nonprofit at the event when the event has been financed by soliciting donations from lobbyists that appear before the City?

A: This question is answered in the negative.

Misuse of Public Position

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on misuse of public position by participating in a community activity sponsored by a local business where he donates a personal item to be included in a scavenger hunt?

A: This question is answered in the negative.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation or acceptance of a gift by participating in a community activity sponsored by a city vendor where the covered individual will receive publicity?

A: This question is answered in the affirmative.

Advisory Opinions Cont'd.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts - April 16, 2024

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation or acceptance of a gift by accepting free lodging paid for by the city vendor to attend an event?

A: This question is answered in the affirmative.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation or acceptance of a gift by accepting free admission to an event sponsored by a city vendor when free admission is made available by that city vendor to similarly situated individuals?

A: This question is answered in the negative.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation or acceptance of a gift by accepting free lodging paid for by the city vendor to attend an event?

A: This question is answered in the affirmative.

Misuse of Public Position-May 21, 2024

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on misuse of public position by serving as a member of an LLC where the LLC assists private individuals seeking municipal funds and the LLC receives a percentage of those funds as compensation?

A: Based on other contingent factors discussed below, this question is answered in the negative.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts- October 15, 2024

Q: Does a covered individual violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code ban on solicitation or acceptance of a gift by accepting free food and beverages from non-profit and for-profit organizations that have no relationship with the City of Tallahassee and offer these meals to all similarly situated employees?

A: The question, as it applies to the specific facts set forth, is answered in the negative.

Ethics Training

Through its staff, the Board delivered cutting-edge training to the City's elected officials, appointees, and other City employees. The ethics office collaborated with City staff to create and deliver an online course about ethical decision-making to every City appointee and employee. In doing so, the Board met several objectives. First, the course was developed and delivered with substantial cost savings, showcasing the efficiency of the program. The ethics office created the course with the assistance of volunteer subject matter experts (City employees) at approximately \$2,800, excluding the person-hours expended by the ethics office staff. The retail value for a similar course is approximately \$60,000. The City's Human Resource and Workforce Development Department delivered the training through the City's learning management system at no additional cost. Secondly, by applying industry standards in the instructional technology field, the staff created a course that was engaging and informative. Thirdly, the staff met its objective of invoking critical thinking in ethical decision-making. Most ethics courses explain the rules and describe proper compliance. In contrast, this course attempted to equip the learners with tools they can use to apply critical thinking to any ethical dilemma. The responses from City employees were generally that the course was engaging, effective, and efficient.

The ethics office hosted a training session for elected City officials and their aides. The City attorney and inspector general also attended. The staff invited special guest Steven Zuilkowski, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel of the Florida Ethics Commission, to instruct. Deputy Zuilkowski provided up-to-date information on statutory requirements and changes in 2024 affecting the City Commissioners and Mayor and gave them the opportunity to ask questions.

Throughout the year, the staff conducted nineteen ethics training sessions for new employees. The method of instruction was facilitative and used the learner's experiences to engage them and apply the course content. For the first time since 2020, the staff began conducting this training in classroom settings. Special sessions were held for new firefighters and the Tallahassee Future Leaders Academy (TFLA). At the request of the TFLA director, the ethics office conducted a training session for one hundred youth attending the summer program. According to the director, the training session has become a highlight of the program. After completing new employee ethics training, the employees must complete a survey to relate their experience during the training. Based on the responses, this course is well received. According to the City's training staff, this course is used as a model for classroom interaction.



New Employee Orientation

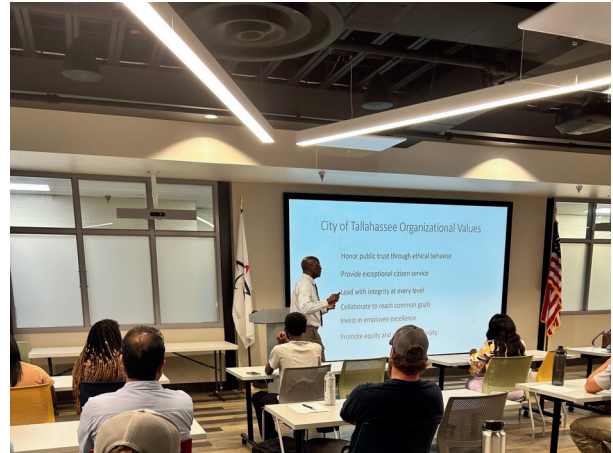


New Employee Ethics Training

Ethics Training Cont'd



New Employee Orientation



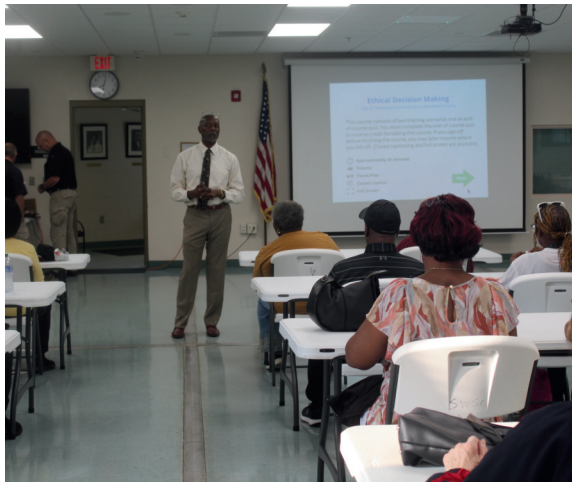
New Employee Ethics Training



Fleet employees 2024 Annual Ethics training



Fleet employees 2024 Annual Ethics training

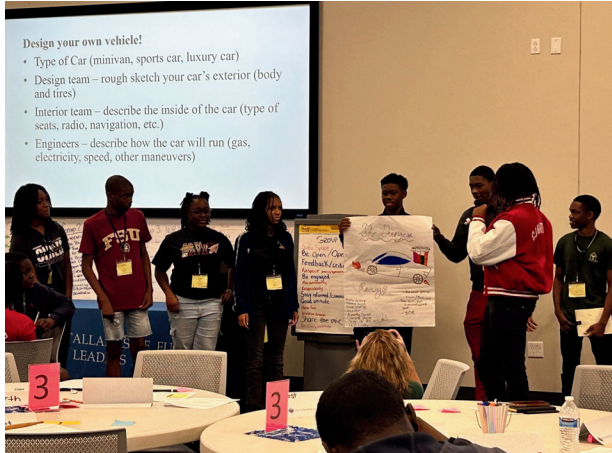


Crossing Guards 2024 Annual Ethics Training



Firefighters New Employee Orientation

Ethics Training Cont'd.



Future Leaders Training Academy



Future Leaders Training Academy



Future Leaders Training Academy



Future Leaders Training Academy

Campaign Contribution Refund Program

Under the City Charter, a registered voter of the City of Tallahassee may claim a refund equal to the voter’s monetary contributions made in the calendar year to candidates for the City Commission. The maximum refund for an individual is \$25.00. No individual may file more than one claim per election cycle. Two City Commission seats were open for the election in November 2024.

In 2023, the Leon County Supervisor of Elections dedicated a page on their website to explain the Campaign Contribution Refund Program. The Ethics Office created a brochure explaining the program and distributed copies to the election candidates, members of the Board, and non-governmental organizations. The election candidates were encouraged to take advantage of the program and given a promotional package to assist them. The Ethics Office also announced the program and distributed copies to local media.

During the summer of 2024, the Board implemented a full-scale promotion to make the public aware of the Campaign Contribution Refund Program. It would also allow the Board to gauge public interest in the program. Four radio stations publicized the Campaign Contribution Refund program for over a month. Cumulus Media also engaged the target audience through digital media.

The election process will culminate in November 2024, and registered voters will have until January 20, 2025, to request a refund. The Board will assess the results and determine its commitment moving forward.

Candidates Receiving Contributions in 2024

Candidate	Contributors	Amt Refunded
Anthony DeMaree (withdrew)	0	0
Louis Dilbert	0	0
Rudolph “Rudy” Ferguson Sr.	0	0
Jacqueline “Jack” Porter	6	\$150
David Wamsley (withdrew)	0	0
Dorothy Inman-Johnson	9	\$225
Donna Nyack	0	0
Curtis Richardson	0	\$0
Bernard Stevens Jr.	0	0
Total	15	\$375

Get active in your local government!

DID YOU KNOW?

Contribute to the City of Tallahassee candidate of your choice. The Campaign Contribution Refund Program will refund your contribution up to \$25.

Learn More

Complaints

A primary role of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board is to respond to ethics complaints. The ethics officer receives complaints through the ethics hotline, telephone, and email. The ethics officer and Board attorney determine when a complaint is legally sufficient and within the Board's jurisdiction. When the complaint is legally sufficient, the ethics officer investigates the allegations, and the staff submits the findings to the Board. The Board may find probable cause or that probable cause does not exist.

The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board does not assume guilt or innocence when an allegation is made. The Board is committed to serving the public in an objective, fair, and thorough manner. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Board responded to fifty documented calls and emails and determined legal sufficiency in five cases. Within the five, nine allegations were made that city officials had violated the City ordinance. The staff investigated each of the allegations, and the findings in each case led to the unanimous decision by the Board that probable cause does not exist to find that violations of the Tallahassee Ethics Code had occurred.

Case Number 2023-CE-0982

The Complainant, Carlos A. Rey, in his capacity as Chair of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, alleged that Respondent John E. Dailey violated the Tallahassee Ethics Code, specifically the failure to comply with expanded abstention requirements as required by the municipal ordinance. See Sec. 2-13, Code of Ordinances, City of Tallahassee. The sworn complaint alleged that the Respondent, John E. Dailey, engaged in discussion on a City Commission agenda item and failed to leave the room during said discussion but later abstained from voting on the matter.

During the preliminary investigation, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Officer and Board Attorney opined that the Respondent, John E. Dailey, was not subject to the cited ordinance because his failure to vote was not a legitimate abstention. The preliminary investigation further stated that the City of Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board lacked jurisdiction to investigate matters pertaining to the statutory requirement of members of local governmental boards to vote on all matters in which he or she does not have a conflict of interest. See § 286.012, FLA. STAT. (2023). The sworn complaint was dismissed with prejudice, and the case was closed.

Case number 2023-CE-0983

The Complainant, Carlos A. Rey, in his capacity as Chair of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, alleged that Respondent Curtis Richardson violated the Tallahassee Ethics Code, specifically the failure to comply with expanded abstention requirements as required by the municipal ordinance. See Sec. 2-13, Code of Ordinances, City of Tallahassee. The sworn complaint alleged that the Respondent, Curtis Richardson, engaged in discussion on a City Commission agenda item and failed to leave the room during said discussion but later abstained from voting on the matter.

During the preliminary investigation, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Officer and Board Attorney opined that the Respondent, Curtis Richardson, was not subject to the cited ordinance because his failure to vote was not a legitimate abstention. The preliminary investigation further stated that the City of Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board lacked jurisdiction to investigate matters pertaining to the statutory requirement of members of local governmental boards to vote on all matters in which he or she does not have a conflict of interest. See § 286.012, FLA. STAT. (2023). The sworn complaint was dismissed with prejudice, and the case was closed.

Complaints

Case number 2023-CE-0984

The Complainant, Carlos A. Rey, in his capacity as Chair of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, alleged that Respondent Dianne Williams-Cox violated the Tallahassee Ethics Code, specifically the failure to comply with expanded abstention requirements as required by the municipal ordinance. See Sec. 2-13, Code of Ordinances, City of Tallahassee. The sworn complaint alleged that the Respondent, Dianne Williams-Cox, engaged in discussion on a City Commission agenda item and failed to leave the room during said discussion but later abstained from voting on the matter.

During the preliminary investigation, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Officer and Board Attorney opined that the Respondent, Dianne Williams-Cox, was not subject to the cited ordinance because his failure to vote was not a legitimate abstention. The preliminary investigation further stated that the City of Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board lacked jurisdiction to investigate matters pertaining to the statutory requirement of members of local governmental boards to vote on all matters in which he or she does not have a conflict of interest. See § 286.012, FLA. STAT. (2023). The sworn complaint was dismissed with prejudice, and the case was closed.

Case number 2023-CE-0985

The Complainant, Carlos A. Rey, in his capacity as Chair of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, alleged that the Respondent Jacqueline Porter violated the Tallahassee Ethics Code, specifically misuse of position, Sec. 2-8, Code of Ordinances, City of Tallahassee. The sworn complaint alleged that the Respondent, Jacqueline Porter, allowed public property to be misappropriated when her former staff members removed laptops and other computer equipment from City property.

During the preliminary investigation, the Independent Ethics Officer found that no laptops or computers had been removed from City property and that all laptops and computers in question had been properly accounted for. The sworn complaint was dismissed with prejudice, and the case was closed.

Case number 2023-CE-0970

The Complainant, Gavin Larremore, submitted a sworn complaint that included five (5) counts of separate allegations, claiming that the Respondent, Lawrence Revell, accepted gifts from a city vendor and misused his public position. See Secs. 2-8 and 2-15, Code of Ordinances, City of Tallahassee. The Independent Ethics Officer dismissed two (2) counts related to misuse of public position, finding them not legally sufficient, pursuant to Rule 1.03(c), Administrative Procedures, the City of Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board. The three (3) remaining counts alleged that the Respondent, Lawrence Revell, accepted a complimentary hat from a company doing business with the Tallahassee Police Department, accepted free food, drinks, and event fees for a golf tournament from the same private business, and accepted complimentary use of VIP services provided by an airline that does business with the City.

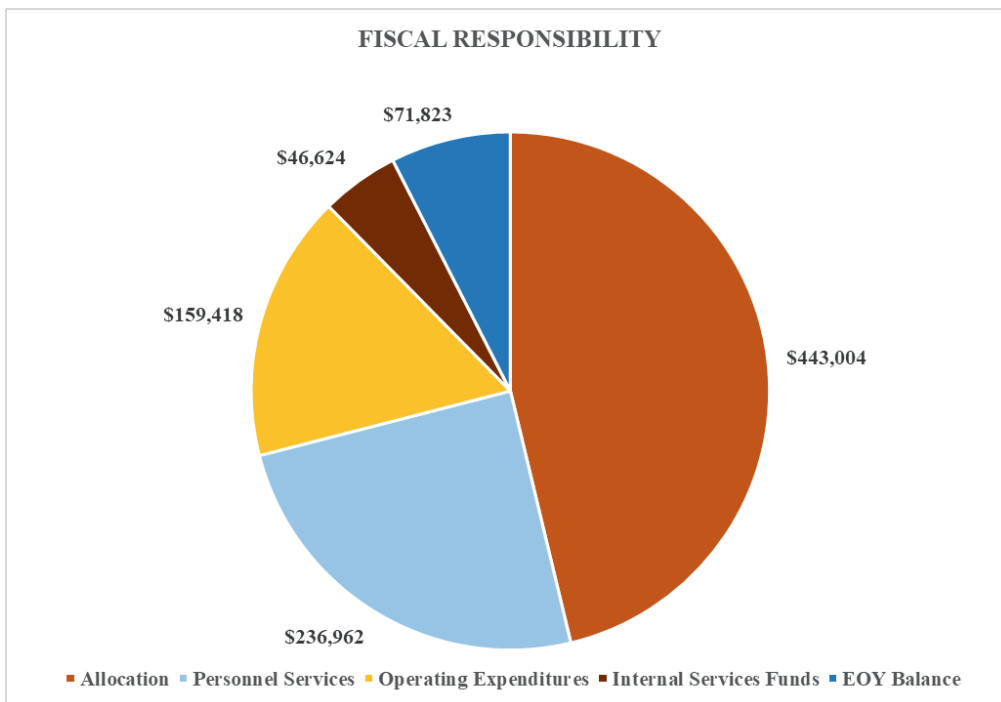
During the preliminary investigation, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Officer found that the items received by the Respondent were either included in a conference he attended as the police chief or were services available to similarly situated members of law enforcement. The sworn complaint was dismissed with prejudice, and the case was closed.

Fiscal Responsibility

Sec. 62. - Ethics Office Established.

The ethics code established pursuant to Section 61 shall provide for the establishment of a citywide Ethics Office under the exclusive jurisdiction of and reporting to the Independent Ethics Board to discharge the duties and responsibilities of the Ethics Board as provided herein. The Ethics Office shall include an Ethics Officer/Director who may be a full time or part time city employee or independent contractor. The Ethics Office shall be funded by the City Commission within its discretionary budgetary authority at a level sufficient to discharge the Office's responsibilities.

At the beginning of each year, the Board updates its strategic plan in line with its mission while assuring that it can achieve its objectives fiscally. The Board has taken on particular projects and contracted for outside help as needed. In 2022, the Board upgraded the Administrative Specialist position from part-time to full-time. This year, there was an added expense for legal services to address adverse legislation. The Board also funded a media promotion for the Campaign Contribution Refund Program and web-based instruction for City employees. Yet, in the last four years, the Board has not asked for an increase and has ended each year with a positive balance.



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Resources

Sworn Complaint Form

<https://www.talgov.com/uploads/public/documents/ethics/eb-complaint-form.pdf>

Campaign Contribution Refund Program/Form

<https://www.talgov.com/Main/ethics>

Ethics Code Municipal Ordinances

https://library.municode.com/fl/tallahassee/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOGEOR_CH2AD_ARTIINGE_DIV3ETCO

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2024 Annual Report



Ethical Decision Making