



**LAKE WORTH**  
**COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Board

**FROM:** Joan Oliva, Executive Director

**DATE:** September 8, 2015

**SUBJECT** Memorandum of Understanding for Services of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics - Renewal

### EXPLANATION

On October 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed between the CRA and Palm Beach County for services of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics. A revised MOU was executed in 2012. The MOU gave authority to the County Commission on Ethics to exercise authority, functions and powers granted by the ethics ordinance over the operations of the CRA. The previous MOU expires in October so a new MOU has been created and is included as Exhibit "A." The agreement allows the Commission to review, interpret and render advisory opinions, investigate legally sufficient complaints and develop and deliver training programs. If an investigation is conducted, the Commission has unrestricted access to the records of the Board of Directors and CRA Staff. Other responsibilities are described in Section III.b of the Agreement. The MOU stays in effect for three (3) years.

Because the CRA is a dependant district, the CRA is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Ethics. If the CRA wishes to engage the Commission, a MOU is necessary. The CRA is, however, currently under the jurisdiction of the Florida Commission on Ethics and abides by all rules and requirements.

Although there are no costs associated the provision of training, there are costs associated with the investigation of complaints and possible hearings. These fees are listed in Section IV of the agreement.

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the CRA Board carefully review the revised MOU and approve the agreement.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE LAKE WORTH COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND THE PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015, between the Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Agency, a special district established by the City of Lake Worth as authorized by §163.370(a), Florida Statutes, and Palm Beach County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, by and through the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for the services of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics.

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics ("Commission on Ethics") and the Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Agency ("Lake Worth CRA") as they relate to the implementation of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics (Code of Ethics) and the Palm Beach County Lobbyist Registration Ordinance (Lobbyist Registration Ordinance). The Code of Ethics and the Lobbyist Registration Ordinance are intended to promote honesty, integrity and accountability in local government. To support this goal the Lake Worth CRA submits to the jurisdiction of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics and seeks to hire the Commission on Ethics to conduct investigations, hear complaints and process advisory opinions. In particular, this MOU is intended to have the Commission on Ethics exercise the authority, functions and powers granted by the Commission on Ethics ordinance as to the CRA's operations.

### **II. Background**

As a dependant district, the Lake Worth CRA is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Ethics by statute or referendum. However, §2-258 of the Commission on Ethics Ordinance states as follows:

The Commission on Ethics may be empowered to review, interpret, render advisory opinions, and enforce the county's code of ethics or similar ordinances, rules or regulations duly adopted by the county or other local or municipal government, or any commission, bureau, district or other governmental entity located in the county, pursuant to agreements or memoranda of understanding between the commission of ethics and said governmental agency.

The Lake Worth CRA and the Commission on Ethics have determined that it will serve the public interest to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding in order to accomplish the foregoing goals.

### **III. Agreement**

The Commission on Ethics, subject to approval by the BCC, is authorized to negotiate agreements or memoranda of understanding with special districts and other public officers and entities, allowing the

Commission on Ethics to exercise any and all authority, functions and powers set forth in the Commission on Ethics Ordinance for the benefit of the public entity, in this case the Lake Worth CRA.

The Lake Worth CRA seeks to submit to the jurisdiction of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics and to hire the Commission on Ethics to conduct investigations, hear complaints and process advisory opinions in order to promote honesty, integrity and accountability in government.

The Commission on Ethics and the Lake Worth CRA recognize that given the knowledge, experience, and ability of the staff of the Commission on Ethics in conducting investigations and interpreting the Code of Ethics and the Lobbyist Registration Ordinance, the Commission on Ethics is in the best position to expeditiously and economically fulfill these services for the CRA.

This Memorandum of Understanding authorizes the Commission on Ethics to exercise the authority, functions and powers granted by the Commission on Ethics ordinance over the operations of the Lake Worth CRA.

**a. Effective Date and Term**

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be in effect on October 4, 2015 and will remain in effect for three (3) years following the date of execution by the BCC. Either party may terminate this agreement with ninety days (90) written notice to the other party. Upon notice of termination by the CRA, any ongoing CRA investigations being conducted by the Commission on Ethics pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding shall continue until completed. The CRA agrees to pay all fees pursuant to section IV of this MOU for such ongoing investigations through the conclusion of all administrative and/or judicial proceedings. This provision shall survive termination of this MOU.

The parties expressly agree that time is of the essence in this Agreement and the failure by a party to complete performance within the time specified, shall, at the option of the other party without liability, in addition to any other rights or remedies, relieve the other party of any obligation to accept such performance.

**b. Responsibilities and Duties**

The Commission on Ethics shall exercise any and all authority, functions and powers provided for in the Commission on Ethics ordinance, Code of Ethics Ordinance and Lobbyist Registration ordinance in regard to the Lake Worth CRA, including:

- A) The Commission on Ethics shall have the authority to (1) review, interpret, render advisory opinions and enforce the Code of Ethics and Lobbyist Registration Ordinance, (2) investigate legally sufficient complaints within the jurisdiction of the Commission on Ethics and conduct public hearings as provided by the Commission on Ethics ordinance; and 3) develop and deliver training programs and ensure that effective and meaningful training experiences are delivered in a timely and efficient manner.
- B) The Commission on Ethics shall have the power to conduct investigations and receive full and unrestricted access to the records of the board of directors and staff of the Lake Worth CRA.

- C) In the case of a refusal to obey a request for documents or for an interview, the Commission on Ethics shall have the power to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and require the production of records in a manner consistent with §162.08 Florida Statutes. The Commission on Ethics shall not interfere with any ongoing criminal investigation or prosecution of the State Attorney or the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.
- D) Where the Commission on Ethics suspects a possible violation of any state, federal or local law, or rule, regulation or policy, the Executive Director or designee shall notify the appropriate civil, criminal, or administrative agencies. In the case of a possible violation of an internal rule, regulation or policy governing a Lake Worth CRA staff member or director, the Executive Director or designee shall also notify the Chairman of the CRA.
- E) The Commission on Ethics shall have the power to require directors and staff to participate in ethics training on a regular basis
- F) The Commission on Ethics "hotline" will receive complaints related to Lake Worth CRA operations. The Lake Worth CRA will support and assist the Commission on Ethics in publicizing the "hotline" and encouraging the reporting of Code of Ethics or Lobbyist Registration violations by local citizens, officials and employees.
- G) The Commission on Ethics may exercise any of the powers contained in the Commission on Ethics Ordinance upon its own Initiative
- H) All records held by the Commission on Ethics and its staff related to an active preliminary investigation are confidential and exempt from disclosure in a manner consistent with the provisions in §112.3188(2) and §112.324, Florida Statutes.
- I) The Commission on Ethics and its staff shall be considered "an appropriate local official" for purpose of whistleblower protection provided by §112.3188(1), Florida Statutes.
- J) The Commission on Ethics may recommend remedial actions and may provide prevention and training services to Lake Worth CRA directors and staff. The Commission on Ethics may follow up to determine whether recommended remedial actions have been taken.
- K) The Commission on Ethics shall monitor the costs of investigations undertaken.
- L) The Commission on Ethics will provide an invoice for services rendered under this Memorandum of Understanding. The CRA agrees to provide payment to Palm Beach County within thirty (30) days of receiving an invoice.
- M) As part of its obligation under this Memorandum of Understanding, CRA staff will in all instances cooperate fully with Commission on Ethics staff regarding issues of staff and vendor training and in timely providing records requested by staff investigators.

- N) In any case in which the Commission on Ethics determines that the complaining party filed a frivolous or groundless complaint as defined in §57.105 Florida Statutes, or a complaint with malicious intent and with the knowledge that the complaint contains one or more material false allegations, or with reckless disregard for whether the complaint contains material false allegations, the commission shall order the complaining party to pay any cost and attorneys fees incurred by the Commission on Ethics, the Lake Worth CRA and or the alleged violator.
- O) The Commission on Ethics will maintain a website and all required databases including gift reports, voting conflict disclosures, outside employment waivers, final orders and advisory opinions.

**IV. Provision for fees**

As authorized by §2-258 of the code of ethics, this Memorandum of Understanding shall include a provision for fees to be paid to the Commission on Ethics from the Lake Worth CRA in exchange for such benefits at a rate established by the Commission on Ethics. The fee schedule adopted pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding is as indicated. These rates are fixed for the term of the contract and subject to change thereafter. There will be no cost to the CRA for training. Appeals will be billed on an hourly basis only at a rate of forty-two dollars (\$42) per hour. Regarding option B (Event option) for the avoidance of doubt, the cost a complaint which proceeds through multiple phases will be the sum of the phases completed. For example, a complaint through final hearing or settlement would cost two thousand one hundred fifty-two dollars and fifty cents (\$2152.50).

**Option B: Event [ ]**

Advisory opinion	\$ 210
Complaint (inquiry through legal sufficiency finding)	\$ 315
Complaint (investigation through probable cause hearing)	\$ 1,050
Complaint (probable cause hearing to settlement or final hearing)	\$ 787.50

**V. Delegation of Duty**

Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to delegate the constitutional or statutory duties of state, county, or municipal officers.

**VI. Liability**

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding and their respective officers and employees shall not be deemed to assume any liability for the acts, omissions and negligence of the other party. Further, nothing herein shall be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity by either party, pursuant to §768.28, Florida statutes.

**VII. Controlling Law**

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be interpreted and construed according to, and governed by, the laws of the State of Florida. Any and all legal action necessary to enforce the Memorandum of Understanding will be held in Palm Beach County.

**VIII. Remedies**

No remedy herein conferred upon any party is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy, and each and every such remedy shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given hereunder or hereafter existing at law or in equity or by statute or otherwise. No single or partial exercise of any right, power or remedy hereunder shall preclude any other of further exercise thereof.

**IX. Severability**

In the event any term or provision of this Memorandum of Understanding is determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal or otherwise invalid, such provision shall be construed or deleted and shall not affect the remaining portions of this Memorandum of Understanding and the remainder shall be construed to be in full force and effect.

**X. Amendment**

This Memorandum of Understanding shall not be modified or amended except by written agreement duly executed by the parties hereto.

**XI. Notice**

Each party shall furnish to the other such notice, as may be required from time to time, pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding, in writing, posted in the U.S. mail or by hand delivery, or by overnight delivery service and addressed as follows:

To Commission on Ethics: 300 N. Dixie Highway, Suite 450  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

To Lake Worth CRA: 29 South J Street, Unit 1  
Lake Worth, FL 33460

and

David N. Tolces, Esquire  
GOREN, CHEROF, DOODY & EZROL, P.A.  
3099 East Commercial Boulevard, Suite 200  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308

**XII. Effective Date**

This Memorandum of Understanding and the rights and obligations conferred herein shall become effective upon execution by the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners.

**XIII. Point of Contact**

For purposes of fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of this Memorandum of Understanding, the points of contact will be as follows:

Commission on Ethics:  
COE Staff Counsel  
300 N. Dixie Highway, Suite 450  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
[Ethics@palmbeachcountyethics.com](mailto:Ethics@palmbeachcountyethics.com)  
(561) 355-1915

Lake Worth CRA:  
Joan Oliva, Executive Director  
29 South J Street, Unit 1  
Lake Worth, FL 33460  
[joliva@lakeworth.org](mailto:joliva@lakeworth.org)  
(561) 493-2550

*[remainder of this page left intentionally blank]*

**XIV. Entirety of Agreement**

This Memorandum of Understanding represents the entire understanding between the parties and supersedes all other negotiations, representations, or agreements, written or oral, relating to this Memorandum of Understanding.

ATTEST:  
Sharon R. Bock, Clerk & Comptroller

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, THROUGH  
ITS BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

[SEAL]

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

APPROVED AS TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leonard W. Berger  
Chief Assistant County Attorney

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven P. Cullen, Executive Director  
Commission on Ethics

ATTEST:

LAKE WORTH COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

[SEAL]

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF PALM BEACH

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015, by \_\_\_\_\_, who is \_\_\_\_\_ personally known to me, or \_\_\_\_\_ who has produced \_\_\_\_\_ as identification, and \_\_\_\_\_, who is \_\_\_\_\_ personally known to me, or \_\_\_\_\_ who has produced \_\_\_\_\_ as identification.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of Notary Public, or affix commission stamp above

