

To the Honorable,  
Mayor of Milwaukee and the members of the Common Council

**The City of Milwaukee Board of Ethics  
2014 Annual Report**

The City of Milwaukee Board of Ethics administers the Code of Ethics, Chapter 303, which promotes the essential element of public trust. The Board works to implement the Code by issuing confidential advisory opinions, investigating sworn complaints, requiring and reviewing the Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) forms of city employees and board members.

The Ethics Board met seven times during 2014 for its regular meetings.

In 2014, the Board responded to one complaint and ten requests for confidential opinions. A summary of the opinion requests are included in this report. These summaries should not be viewed as definitive advice, but rather as a guide to the type of situations addressed by the Board.

The seven citizen members of the Board for 2014 were:

Annie Wacker – Chair  
Robert Shelledy – Vice-Chair  
Patricia Hintz  
Joanne Barndt  
Jessie Spraggins  
Carrie Davis  
Bradley Kalscheur

## Summary of Opinions Issued In 2014

**Complaint.** The Board addressed one confidential complaint from a citizen.

### Potential Conflicts of Interest

#### 14-1.

An elected official requested a confidential opinion related to soliciting donations for a nonprofit organization. The Board responded with a reference to Wis. Stat. 19.59 and advised caution if the individual decided to engage in activities as a private citizen to prevent an appearance of conflict.

#### 14-2

A city employee requested a confidential opinion regarding pursuing a business venture outside of the city on private time. The Board found that assuming the employee abides by constraints outlined in MCO 303, there would be no conflict of interest.

#### 14-3

An elected official requested a confidential opinion regarding the purchase of a tavern. The Board advised that while there would be no per se violation, the risk of a conflict of interest arising would be high. The Board stated that if the individual did decide to pursue the venture that he/she may consult with the Board when taking any official actions.

#### 14-4

A city official requested a confidential opinion as to whether a member of a committee would be in violation of the City of Milwaukee Code of Ethics if he/she were to represent as an attorney a private party involved in litigation with the city. The Board found that it could investigate the matter if a sworn complaint was filed.

#### 14-5

A city employee requested a confidential opinion regarding offering a position who currently served on a board related to the department. The employee also asked if the individual would be in violation of the Ethics Code if he/she were to accept the position. The Board concluded that under the circumstances of the offer, the offer and acceptance would not be in violation.

#### 14-6

A city employee requested a confidential opinion regarding the start-up of a new business in the same field of his/her occupation with the city. The department in which the employee works had issued a decision that the business would be a conflict of interest. The Board determined that the department based its decision on its handbook, which was written in compliance with city ordinances and therefore recommended the employee work with the department on a solution.

**14-7**

A city employee requested a confidential opinion regarding part time employment in a related field. The Board determined that the employee would be in compliance with the Code of Ethics if he/she continued being cognizant of any conflict of interest and was recused from any business decisions related to the City.

**14-8**

An elected official requested a confidential opinion regarding food and beverages at an event as part of a city delegation. The Board determined that food and beverage was coincidental with the meeting and equally available to all participants. Therefore a violation of the code did not occur.

**14-9**

A city employee requested a confidential opinion regarding relatives of elected officials participating in an "Earn and Learn" summer program offered by the city. The Board stated that if a relative is hired in a regular course of recruitment with no special preference, a violation may not occur. However, the board recommended that internal handbooks for each department be examined, as some address conflict of interest issues.

**14-10**

A public official requested a confidential opinion as to whether accepting compensation for travel time and meeting participation as an appointee would be a violation of the code. The Board determined that no violation of the code occurred and the compensation is not subject to statement of economic interest reporting as it was paid by a government body which the official represents in an official capacity.