

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

**The City of Milwaukee Board of Ethics
2012 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 2012 for its regular meetings. In 2010, the office of the City Clerk began posting the SEI form on the Ethics Board's web site. In addition, for the first time, those required to file SEI forms were notified of this obligation by e-mail.

In 2012, the Board responded to one complaint, one request for a "Y" footnote to be remove and four request for 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 2012 were:

Annie Wacker – Chair
Robert Shelledy – Vice-Chair
Patricia Hintz
Joanne Barndt
Marvin Bynum II (member 1/20/12 – 4/24/12)
Jessie Spraggins
Carrie Davis (member since 6/14/12)

Summary of Opinions Issued In 2012

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

Potential Conflicts of Interest

12-1.

A City Department requested an advisory opinion to see whether approving a Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC) Block Stabilization Program (BSP) grant presented a conflict of interest. The Board found that the requesting of the grant by, and the awarding of the grant to, the employee does not create a conflict between the employee's personal interest and his or her public responsibilities and therefore would not violate the requirements of Chapter 303, MCO.

12-2

A City Department requested an advisory opinion as to whether approving a Rental Rehabilitation Program grant for a city employee presented a conflict of interest. The Board found the employee participation in the program would not constitute a use of his or her public position to gain something of substantial value for his or her benefit, and therefore would not be a violation of the City's Ethics Code.

12-3

A City Employee requested a confidential opinion for the purchase of a city owned house through the Home Buyer Assistant program NSP. The Board concluded that the participation of the city employee in the Home Buyer Program, if qualified, did not constitute the use of his or her public position to gain something of substantial value for his/her private benefit, and therefore would not be in violation of the City's Ethics Code.

12-4

A City Department requested the removal of the "Y" footnote from the Accountant I pay range 2CN. The Ethics board was in agreement that the position is not of a type that should require the imposition of a duty to file a Statement of Economic Interest. A request to lift the requirement was directed to the Common Council.

12-5

A request for confidential opinion from a corporation in regards to providing each board member with an item of clothing bearing the corporation's logo. Recipients will be urged to wear the item from time to time at events where it will be seen by other businesses. The question was whether the receipt of the items of apparel by Committee members who are public official would constitute receipt of anything of substantial value and is there anything in the situation as described in the request that would be cause for concern under sec. 303-5 (3). The Board concluded that the garment described above is not an item of substantial value, and cannot reasonably be expected to influence the actions of those individuals contrary to the provisions set forth in the code. The Ethics Board did not see a violation of the City's Ethics Code.