

The Ethics Review Board  
City of New Orleans

Tuesday, September 23, 2008  
10:30 a.m.

Xavier University New Orleans, Student Center, Room 201

Present: Rev. Kevin Wildes, S. J., Chair, Rev. Cornelius Tilton, Vice Chair,  
Elizabeth Nalty, Secretary, Dean Winston Brown, Dr. Beverly Favre, and  
Professor Kathryn Lorio

Excused: Mrs. Leah Chase

Guests: Robert Cerasoli, IG, David Marcello, Mike Cowan, Janet Werkman,  
General Counsel, and Jill Duchene, Executive Director to ERB

Rev. Wildes called the meeting to order at 10:41 a.m.

Rev. Cornelius Tilton moved to adopt the minutes from the August 26, 2008 meeting.  
Mrs. Elizabeth Nalty seconded – motion passed.

Inspector General Robert Cerasoli gave an update on the progress of the Office of Inspector General. He commented on the hiring development, the office currently has a staff of twelve with more in the pipeline. Obstacles continue to surface for the office. The job announcements were removed from the city's website and have not been restored. AT&T shut off the long distance service two weeks before the storm and the office remains without service though, a check was sent on time. Mrs. Courtney Bagneris is ready to order the remaining computer equipment as soon as the fiscal ordinance is signed by the Mayor. Mrs. Elizabeth Nalty asked if there was anything the ERB could do to speed up the process. Mr. Cerasoli replied that if the ballot passes, the next challenge would be to pass a law at the state level to allow the OIG full access to funds. Ms. Kathryn Lorio asked Mr. Cerasoli if there was any way the OIG could hire a purchasing officer. Robert Cerasoli stated that Courtney Bagneris was the purchasing officer for the OIG. Ms. Lorio commented that Mrs. Bagneris was only temporarily assisting the OIG.

Mr. Winston Brown asked Mr. Cerasoli if he made a wish list for the office, what would be the top three to five items on it and in what order would those items appear. Robert Cerasoli responded with the number one item on the wish list. He said a fully functional computer system is the top priority. Mr. Brown inquired as to how the ERB may assist the OIG in acquiring the computer system. Mr. Cerasoli stated the system is all set to go, once the fiscal ordinance is signed by the Mayor.

Rev. Kevin Wildes asked Mr. Cerasoli what the next steps were in developing a website. Robert Cerasoli said the website design and creation was built into the contract with Sparkhound, the company installing the computer system.

Rev. Wildes introduced the next item on the agenda, education models. Mr. Cerasoli said the members of the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws each have their own ethics models. Rev. Kevin Wildes stated COGEL's conference in December would be a great opportunity to further the ERB's ethics education and he encouraged everyone to attend. Robert Cerasoli suggested Jill Duchene contact some of the ethics committees attending the conference to arrange meeting times during the conference. Ms. Kathryn Lorio recommended all the members in attendance coordinate to attend different meetings. Each member would then report to the board the information he or she gathered.

Rev. Wildes introduced Mike Cowan from the Common Good Initiative. Mr. Cowan discussed the actions the Common Good Initiative was currently taking to promote the charter amendment. Polling, organizing other supportive committees, arranging television and radio spots, and organizing public speeches were all part of the initiative.

A discussion ensued on the nature and amount of information the Office of Inspector General reports to the Ethics Review Board. Robert Cerasoli expressed the difficulty in sharing information about investigations, inspections, audits, and performance reviews, much of which legally cannot be shared due to confidentiality restrictions. Inspections, audits, and performance reviews may be shared with the Ethics Review Board. However, it is possible for inspections, audits, and performance reviews at any time to lead to criminal activity rendering them confidential. A question was raised about the effects of the ERB's law enforcement status on the amount of information that may be shared by the OIG. Mr. Cerasoli offered the option of the ERB entering into executive session in the future. Executive session would allow the OIG to discuss information with the ERB due to its law enforcement status. Dr. Favre stated an executive session should be held to dialogue about these issues. Rev. Wildes asked, "How, when, and where do we hold an executive session?" Rev. Tilton mention the board should be re-educated on executive sessions due to changes in the law. Rev. Kevin Wildes suggested the board hold an executive session to lay the ground work for a cooperative agreement between the ERB and the OIG.

A request was made to alternate the Ethics Review Board meeting location between Loyola University and Xavier University.

Rev. Cornelius Tilton moved to adjourn. Dr. Beverly Favre seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.