

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST



IN RE:

C 22-01-01

PAULE VILLARD,

RESPONDENT.

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PUBLIC REPORT AND FINAL ORDER

Complainant, Stephanie Kienzle, filed this Complaint against City of North Miami Beach Commissioner Paule Villard (hereinafter “Respondent”). The Complaint alleged that Respondent violated Section 2-11.1(g) of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance entitled “*Exploitation of official position prohibited,*” by: (1) using City resources for self-promotional purposes; and (2) continuing to use her former title of Vice Mayor, after her temporary appointment term ended on August 17, 2021.

Based on this agency’s prior opinions, the Complainant’s allegation that the Respondent exploited her official position by using City resources for self-promotional purposes was determined to be *not legally sufficient* as there were no facts in the Complaint that suggested that the items were used by the Respondent for personal gain or benefit. Additionally, the Complainant’s allegation that the Respondent exploited her “former position” as Vice Mayor by continuing to use the title of Vice Mayor after her term ended was also determined to be *not legally sufficient* as there were no facts in the Complaint that supported the allegation that the Respondent received any type of special privilege or personal benefit for the alleged continued use of the title.

However, the Complaint noted that the Respondent used her former title of Vice Mayor during a city-sponsored event. Pursuant to Section 4.10, COE Rules of Procedure, an investigation was thereby commenced to determine whether the Respondent violated Section (A)(2) of the Citizens’ Bill of Rights entitled “*Truth in Government*” when she referred to herself as “Vice Mayor Paule Villard” as she read a proclamation publicly.

Investigation showed that when taken in the proper context that the incident occurred, the evidence was insufficient to establish probable cause that the Respondent *knowingly* furnished false information on a public matter. The Respondent admitted that when she read the proclamation out loud, she “slipped and mistakenly referred to [herself] as vice-mayor instead of commissioner.” She noted that she “had absolutely no intention whatsoever to mislead or misrepresent” herself. She indicated that it was an “unintentional gaff.”

On April 13, 2022, this matter was presented to the Commission for a probable cause determination. The Ethics Commission noted that the Respondent was a commissioner who had in fact held the title of Vice-Mayor during her service on the commission. The Ethics Commission then voted unanimously and dismissed the Complaint for lack of legal sufficiency.

Wherefore it is:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that Complaint C22-01-01 against Commissioner Paule Villard, is hereby dismissed.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust in public session on this 13th day of April, 2022.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS
& PUBLIC TRUST

By:

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Dr. Judith Bernier
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Judith Bernier

Chair 4/19/2022

Signed on : _____