



The Board of Ethics

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

**The City of Milwaukee Board of Ethics
2013 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 nine times during 2013 for its regular meetings.

In 2013, the Board waived the requirement of an individual to file the statement of economic interest form for 2012 and responded to eight 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 2013 were:

Annie Wacker – Chair
Robert Shelledy – Vice-Chair
Patricia Hintz
Joanne Barndt
Jessie Spraggins
Carrie Davis
Bradley Kalscheur (member since May 2013)

Summary of Opinions Issued In 2013

Potential Conflicts of Interest

13-1.

A City Department requested an advisory opinion to see whether or not a member of the Election Commission Advisory Task Force “must suspend or give up his membership” <as a member of the task force> while the individual is a candidate for the Milwaukee School Board. The Board found no case or controversy and was unable to issue what would be a mere hypothetical response.

13-2

A City Employee requested an advisory opinion as to whether accepting an honoraria and travel expenses from the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science for a presentation made by the employee. The Board found that the City Employee may retain the travel expenses check, but the remaining honoraria should be returned to the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science.

13-3

A City Employee requested a confidential opinion regarding subcontracting for a home builder who apparently does some work for the City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services. The Board found that the participation of this employee as a subcontractor to contractors who are awarded contracts by the Department of Neighborhood Services for the type of construction stated in the request would not present a conflict of interest of the type MCO Chapter 303 has been created to protect against.

13-4

A City Department requested a confidential opinion concerning the possibility of “conflict of interest” for his attendance at a conference sponsored by a company who will also pay the cost of trip, transportation, lodging and all meals for the duration of the trip. The Board found that the employee’s attendance to this exposition as a representative of the City of Milwaukee, and his acceptance of the value of the transportation, lodging, and meals is not a violation of the Ethics Code of the City of Milwaukee.

13-5

A City Employee requested a confidential opinion concerning the propriety of the Employee receiving and retaining a garment from a company named City Screen Print & Embroidery. The Board has concluded that the proposed garment is not an item of substantial value, and would not be for your private benefit, but rather a benefit to the City, because it would enhance the safety of whatever job site at which it may be used.

Therefore, it is the opinion of the Ethics Board of the City of Milwaukee that the acceptance of the garment would not be a violation of the Code of Ethics of the City of Milwaukee.

13-6

A Common Council member requested a confidential opinion regarding the hiring of a family member of a Legislative Assistant. The Board decided that if the person making the hiring decision is not related to the perspective individual, there will be no conflict of interest under section 30-7-b of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinance.

13-7

A City Employee requested a confidential opinion concerning an incident that occur in a City Department. The Board, after applying the situation to the Code of Ordinance Section 303, concluded that the situation fell outside of the Milwaukee Ethics Board jurisdiction.

13-8

A Common Council member requested a confidential opinion regarding hiring a family member. At the time of this request, the Board could not render an opinion on this issue without additional information regarding the financial relationship between the Common Council member and the family member.