

**MINUTES OF THE  
MACOMB COUNTY ETHICS BOARD**

**Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

A meeting of the Macomb County Ethics Board was held Wednesday, April 19, 2017, at 8:45 a.m., in the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Committee Room of the Macomb County Administration Building, One South Main Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Amboyer called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The following Members were present:

Dr. Donald Amboyer, Brian Gabriel, Paddy Laske and Dorie Vazquez-Nolan  
James McGrail – Absent and Excused

Michelle LaBelle, Macomb County Finance – Risk & Insurance, prepared/reported the Minutes.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Brian Gabriel, supported by Paddy Laske, to adopt the Agenda as presented. **The Motion Carried.**

**APPROVE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2017**

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Paddy Laske, supported by Brian Gabriel, to approve the Minutes of March 15, 2017. **The Motion Carried.**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Frank Cusumano, Esq., addressed the Ethics Board on behalf of his client, Macomb County Clerk/Register of Deeds Karen S. Spranger, seeking dismissal of two Ethics Complaints.

## CORRESPONDENCE

No Correspondence was discussed.

## ETHICS COMPLAINT HEARING (CO2-2017) SUMMARY

Chair Amboyer stated prime responsibility of the Ethics Board is to investigate complaints, conduct non-judicial administrative hearings to investigate and act upon complaints brought to the Board in accordance with the Ethics Ordinance in effect at time of alleged complaints.

Two Ethics Complaints were scheduled to be heard today, April 19, 2017. The first complaint (CO2-2017) was filed by Paul Kardasz filed on March 10, 2017, alleging Macomb County Clerk/Register of Deeds Karen S. Spranger violated Enrolled Ordinance 2016-13, Section 5.1 & 2.1 E.

The Complainant, Paul Kardasz, stated in summary that the Respondent, Karen S. Spranger, created a hostile work environment and allowed non-employees (Ms. Ryan, Mr. Hunt) computer access in violation of Section 2.1E. Mr. Kardasz also stated Ms. Ryan actively took meeting minutes after Corporation Counsel advised the Clerk not to have any non-employees in attendance. He also verbalized Clerk Spranger did not attend grievance meetings or hearings that were instigated by her. Mr. Kardasz shared examples of employees in the Clerk's Office being fearful of retaliation and getting fired by Clerk Spranger. Chair Amboyer stated that retaliation is expressly prohibited in Home Rule Charter Of Macomb County, Section 2.7.

The Respondent, Clerk Karen S. Spranger, in turn was requested to respond to the allegations verbally presented by the Complainant, Paul Kardasz. Clerk Spanger said some statements presented by Mr. Kardasz were false, but provided little detail as to why. She explained, at length, why her transition into the Office as the County Clerk/Register of Deeds had been difficult.

The Board took a 10 minute recess at 11:00 a.m. Board Member Brian Gabriel was excused from the meeting at that time due to a prior commitment.

When the Ethics Board reconvened the hearing at 11:10 a.m., Frank Cusumano stated that violations arose out of breach of union policy and that the County policy states that Elected Officials are not part of Human Resource Policies. He doesn't think this is an Ethics violation at all. He was informed that the Ethics Board does not engage in union grievance matters.

Jackie Ryan stated she never used a County computer or had spreadsheets. She said the Clerk appoints deputies and she is under Oath from January 10, 2017, and takes it very seriously. She said prior, she served as a volunteer without compensation. Regarding a February 2, 2017 meeting, Ms. Ryan stated she was basically providing administrative assistance while being on the Spranger Transition Team.

Mark Deldin, Chief Deputy Executive, provided clarity to the Ethics Board. Macomb County has no training program for elected County Clerks. The state does have a training program. County Executive, Mark Hackel, met with the Clerk, Treasurer, and Public Works Commissioner after the 2016 election and offered to work with the newly elected officials.

Donna Cangemi, ASFME 411 President, stated to the Ethics Board that she previously filed an ethics complaint regarding personnel issues in the Clerk's Office. She represents many members of the Clerk's Office. Ms. Cangemi stated she has names and notes of employees who are afraid of retaliation.

Chair Amboyer did confirm that Ms. Cangemi filed the first complaint of 2017, which was retracted by Ms. Cangemi due to her concerns of possible retaliation and employee confidentiality not being protected under the current Ethics Ordinance.

Andrew Toth, UAW 412 Representative, also addressed the Ethics Board about an employee in his union who was denied going back to a job he or she originally had. He said County Clerk Spranger wanted Mr. Kardasz and Ms. Stahl to write-up the employee for certain acts, but they refused.

Chair Amboyer concluded testimony of those present by asking Board Members if they had sufficient information to render a decision today.

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, supported by Paddy Laske, to find the Clerk, Karen Spranger, is in violation of Enrolled Ethics Ordinance 2016-3, Section 2.1 B and 2.1 E.

A Roll Call Vote was taken as follows: Dorie Vazquez-Nolan – Yes, Paddy Laske – Yes, Chair Amboyer – No **The Motion Carried.**

Chair Amboyer asked if any fine should be assessed.

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, supported by Paddy Laske, to fine the County Clerk, Karen Spranger, \$100 based on testimony today.

A Roll Call Vote was taken as follows: Chair Amboyer – No, Dorie Vazquez-Nolan – Yes, Paddy Laske – Yes **The Motion Carried.**

Due to time constraints, Chair Amboyer requested the Board to consider postponing Complaint C03-2017 and the balance of the Agenda until next month's meeting.

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Paddy Laske, supported by Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, to postpone Complaint C03-2017 and the balance of the Agenda due to time constraints until May 17, 2017. **The Motion Carried.**

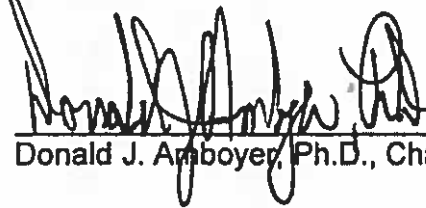
**NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: MAY 17, 2017 - 8:45 A.M.**

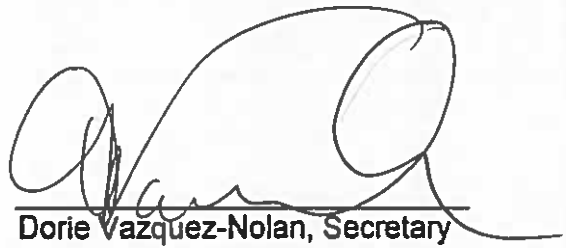
**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, supported by Paddy Laske, to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. **The Motion Carried.**

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donald J. Amboyer, Ph.D., Chairperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, Secretary