

MINUTES
DeKalb County Board of Ethics
May 11, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aubrey Villines, Chair
 Pat Killingsworth
 Stanley Baum
 Veronica Higgs
 Bryan Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: George Anderson
 Ron Marshall
 Dwight Thomas, Esq. (Attorney for Vernon Jones, CEO
 DeKalb County)
 *Representatives of Common Cause
 Tom Jones (WSB-TV)

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Aubrey Villines, Chair of the Board of Ethics, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 p.m. The Chair asked for any corrections or modifications to the minutes of the prior meeting and he was informed that the Board would not be able to modify or approve said minutes as a result of the secretary's absence. Due to exigent circumstances, the secretary was unable to forward a copy of the minutes prior to the 7 p.m. meeting time.

OLD BUSINESS

The Vernon Jones Complaint was assigned Board of Ethics (BOE) File Number 04-0010. The Complaint was issued a Final Determination and was officially dismissed. The Board assigned BOE file number 04-0011 to the final determination in the Robert L. Brown matter that was decided on January 24, 2005.

The Board addressed the Complaint alleging that CEO Vernon Jones solicited and used county employees for his election campaign during employment hours. Mr. Ron Marshall and Mr. George Anderson indicated that they have the names of individuals who are alleged to have been the county workers campaigning for CEO Jones. The Board requested that Mr. Marshall also provide more concrete information as to when & where the individuals were campaigning and what days & time the individuals were campaigning. Mr. Marshall also requested that the Board issue subpoenas to individuals

whom, he claims, could lend helpful information on possible ethics violations on the part of CEO Vernon Jones. Mr. Marshall promised to fax the names of the individuals he desires to be subpoenaed to Mr. Villines.

The Wiley Jackson issue was briefly discussed and a June 22, 2005, Special Meeting was initially planned. The June 22nd date was later changed and it was decided that an informal hearing on the Wiley Jackson /Vernon Jones matter would be heard on August 10, 2005.

NEW BUSINESS

DeKalb County Commissioner Larry Johnson requested an Advisory Opinion regarding the potential hiring of his wife at the DeKalb County Housing Authority and any possible conflict of interest on the part of Commissioner L. Johnson. Discussion of this matter yielded the following questions: (1) What exactly does the Housing Authority do? (2) What would be Mrs. Johnson's potential duties? (3) How is the Housing Authority related to the County Commissioners? The matter was tabled and will be addressed at the Board's August 10, 2005 meeting.

Legislation regarding the ethics board was briefly discussed but the Board decided to address this issue in more detail at the August 10, 2005th meeting.

Common Cause, a community activist group, filed a complaint against the DeKalb County Ethics Board, stating that complaints filed with the Board are not being adequately investigated. In addition to stating that the Board does not adequately investigate complaints, Common Cause accused the Board of violating Sunshine Laws. The alleged, Sunshine Law violations stem from Common Cause's belief that the Board does not keep minutes, of the Board's meetings, as required. Finally, Common Cause accused the Board of not responding to repeated open record requests and of "being on the other side and not on the side of concerned citizens".

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Bryan Smith, Member
DeKalb County Board of Ethics