



701 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Court,  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Miami, FL  
33136  
(305) 579-2594  
Hotline: (786) 314-9560  
ethics@miamidade.gov

#### COMMISSIONERS

Dr. Judith Bernier,  
CHAIR  
Wifredo "Willy" Gort  
VICE-CHAIR  
Nelson C. Bellido Esq.  
Judge Lawrence A.  
Schwartz  
Leonard D. Pertnoy, Esq.

#### Executive Director

Jose J. Arrojo, Esq.

#### Advocate

Radia Turay, Esq.

#### General Counsel

Loressa Felix, Esq.

#### For Press Inquiries:

Leonardo Mendoza  
Public Information Officer  
(305) 579-2594  
Leonardo.Mendoza@  
miamidade.gov

## Summary of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust Meeting Held on April 12, 2023

MIAMI, FL (April 12, 2023) The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust held a public meeting on April 12, 2023. The following actions took place:

### Commissioner Resigns from Ethics Commission Board

Retired Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit and current COE Commissioner, Lawrence Schwartz, submitted his letter of resignation from the board. Judge Schwartz was originally appointed to the board by then Chief Circuit Judge, Joel Brown, in January 2013, shortly after his retirement from the bench. COE staff and fellow commissioners recognized the judge for his many years of public service.

Nushin Sayfie, Chief Judge for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, will be appointing Judge Schwartz's successor to the Ethics Commission in the coming weeks.

### Ethics Commission Announces Planned Hire of Staff Attorney

In his Executive Director's report, Jose Arrojo, advised the Commission of the planned hire of Susannah Nesmith as an Ethics Commission Staff Attorney. Ms. Nesmith, employed by the Ethics Commission as an Investigator since 2017, received her law degree from Florida International University in December 2022 and passed the February 2023 Bar exam. A former award-winning journalist, she received her bachelor's degree in history and Latin American Studies from Vassar College, and master's degree in creative non-fiction from Goucher College.

### Complaint Filed Against North Bay Village Mayor Found Not Legally Sufficient

**C 23-03-01:** A complaint filed against North Bay Village (NBV) Mayor, Brent Latham, was found Not Legally Sufficient and dismissed. The complaint alleged that Mr. Latham violated the Exploitation of Official Position Prohibited section of the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance when he allegedly drafted a false document and furnished it to members of the NBV Commission and the public.

Mayor Latham also allegedly violated the Ethics Code when he informed the public that a lawsuit was filed solely for harassment purposes.

### Complaint Filed Against South Miami Vice Mayor Found Not Legally Sufficient

**C 23-04-01:** A complaint filed against South Miami Vice Mayor, Lisa Bonich, was found Not Legally Sufficient and dismissed. The complaint alleged that Ms. Bonich violated the City of South Miami Charter when she allegedly dismissed the complainant from his service on a committee and appointed someone else.

### Complaint Filed Against Medley Town Attorney Found Not Legally Sufficient

**C 23-12-02:** A complaint filed against Medley Town Attorney, Michael Pizzi, was found Not Legally Sufficient and dismissed. The complaint alleged that Mr. Pizzi violated the Convenient Access provision of the County Charter's Citizens' Bill of Rights when he allegedly advised Town of Medley staff to deny service to a former Town employee at a city hall service counter.

*The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of training, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.*