

Richland County Rules & Resolutions Committee

Agenda Item Cover

Agenda Item Name: Ethics Review

Department	County Board	Presented By:	Shaun Murphy-Lopez
Date of Meeting:	May 6 th , 2021	Action Needed:	
Disclosure:	Open Session	Authority:	Committee Structure, Letter G
Date submitted:	May 5 th , 2021	Referred by:	n/a

Recommendation and/or action language: Recommend a motion to direct Interim Corporation Counsel to research peer county ethics ordinances and training opportunities and return to the committee with a report.

Background:

The Richland County Committee Structure document gives the Rules & Resolutions Committee and Ethics Board the responsibility to “Administer and enforce the Code of Ethics set forth in Ordinance No. 06-28 as that Ordinance has been or may be amended.” After adoption in 2006, it was amended in 2007 and 2010, as shown in Attachment A.

The ordinance applies only to County employees, although State Statute 19.59 permits a local ordinance to also apply to local public officials such as elective officers, appointed officers, and a county administrator, as shown in Attachment B.

The Wisconsin Counties Association has published guidance on conflicts of interest and ethics in the Wisconsin County Official’s Handbook, as shown in Attachment C.

Given this background, the committee may wish to recommend to the County Board an ordinance update that includes public officials. Researching other ordinances would inform this possibility. Similarly, researching trainings may inform the County Board’s upcoming Strategic Plan, which is likely to include a section on education.

Wisconsin Counties Association Attorney Andrew Phillips also recommended in a recent webinar on parliamentary procedure that County Board rules make clear how to abstain in matters where a conflict of interest may occur. Our current County Board rule #9 does not set an expectation for how abstention votes may be cast.

Attachments and References:

Attachment A: Ethics Ordinance	Attachment B: State Statute 19.59
Attachment C: Wisconsin County Official’s Handbook	

Financial Review:

(please check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	In adopted budget	Fund Number	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apportionment needed	Requested Fund Number	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other funding Source		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No financial impact		

Approval:

Review:

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Department Head

Administrator, or Elected Office (if applicable)
