

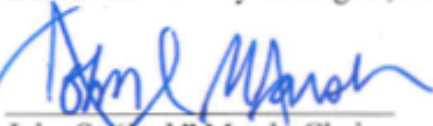
August 11, 2020

- c. The Board finds other incidents of past travel by City officers for which a third party paid expenses. While the Board did not thoroughly investigate or determine the full extent of such practices by City officers or officials, the practice appears to be common. The Board did not determine whether attendance at any prior event(s) was specifically improper.
- d. The facts here do not warrant individual sanctions for the travel subject to this Complaint 20-B. It would be unfair to find against a single individual who was following an apparent common practice among City officers.
- e. The Board finds the City Council rules lack specific guidance on attendance at seminars, conventions or other travel for which payment or reimbursement is provided by third parties. The Board finds that Ordinance 35.053(e) to be overly broad as it does not provide sufficient guidance of what actions or payments could reasonably be inferred or expected to influence an officer in an inappropriate or unethical manner. The Board notes that public accountability, transparency, and confidence in public officials would be enhanced if travel involving third-party payments were publicly announced and specifically approved by City Council before such travel takes place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon its consideration of Complaint 20-B, the board recommends no sanctions be imposed upon the accused. The Board generally would discourage attendance by City officers or officials at any seminar, convention or similar event financed by third parties in the absence of specific procedures requiring public disclosure and prior Council approval. At a minimum, the Board recommends (a) the City Council review and adopt policies that inform officers and officials when and whether attendance is acceptable for seminars, conventions or other travel that is financed by a third party and (b) that any such proposed travel shall be a matter of public record and be approved by vote of the City Council prior to attendance by the officer or official.

Dated this 11th day of August, 2020



John S. "Jack" Marsh, Chair

On behalf of the Sioux Falls Board of Ethics