

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Veronica W. Robinson

MILWAUKEE COUNTY ETHICS BOARD

DID YOU KNOW...



On a daily basis we are faced with ethical dilemmas and we are given opportunities to exercise our ethical decision making skills. Although at times ethical dilemmas are obvious, often they can be difficult to identify. In like manner, the best response is not always clear. (See the [“Pocket Reference”](#) section on [Page 5](#) of this newsletter.) Although copies of the Milwaukee County Ethics Code are readily available, formalized ethics training and education are critical aids in helping employees and officials make ethically sound decisions.

The Ethics Board has taken active steps to get the conversation started about business ethics at Milwaukee County. In May, we surveyed participants in our in-person training session and found that the majority

supported mandatory training, especially if it could be presented online. Therefore, this past June, we proposed **mandatory*** ethics training at Milwaukee County, which we are now implementing through an online subscription service. Participants take the training, complete a short quiz, and are rewarded with a certificate of completion.

This service allows us to offer standardized, foundational ethics education to all officials and employees; establish a baseline of training from which further discussion can occur; and deepen our understanding of the value of Milwaukee County’s Code of Ethics. In addition, administration of the training is low-cost and flexibly woven into daily operations.

If you are interested in this invaluable ethics training, please talk to your supervisor, or contact [Barb Kierzek](#) at 414-278-4218 in the Ethics Department for more details.

“Integrity & ethical behavior are number one on my list of priorities.” Kimberly R. Walker, Corporation Counsel

August Recess

This past summer, the Ethics Department emailed the first batch of mandatory ethics training invitations. Statistical research has demonstrated that ethical business climates are created from the top down. (See [“Employee Engagement”](#) on [Page 4](#).) Therefore, our initial mailing was sent to our elected and appointed

officials, as well as to high level department or division managers. We knew one deterrent to early completion of the training by this group might be the August recess. Still, we are pleased to report a **100% training participation rate by our County leadership!** We thank them for their active support. (See our

[“Shout Outs”](#) on [Page 4](#).) In our next newsletter, we would like to acknowledge areas that have had 100% employee participation in the ethics training. Or, if your area has not achieved such a high participation rate but is finding ways to roll out the training despite challenges, we would

man·date

[man-deyt]

1. To authorize or decree (a particular action), as by the enactment of law
2. To order or require; make mandatory
3. An official or authoritative instruction or command

Origin: 1540–50; < Latin *mandātum*, noun use of neuter of *mandātus*, past participle of *mandāre* to commission, literally, to give into (someone’s) hand.

*man·da·to·ry

[man-duh-tawr-ee, -tohr-ee]

1. Authoritatively ordered; obligatory; compulsory
2. *Law.* Permitting no option; not to be disregarded or modified

Origin: 1570s, “of the nature of a mandate,” from L.L. *mandatorius* “pertaining to a mandator,” from *mandatus*, pp. of *mandare*. Sense of “obligatory because commanded” is from 1818.



like to hear and share your stories.

We have received an impressive amount of positive feedback and look forward to your suggestions as to how we can continue to serve you better. Our goal is to provide this invaluable training to each and every County employee.

Who Are We?



Veronica W. Robinson is the **Executive Director** of the Ethics Board and the **Executive Secretary** of the Personnel Review Board. Ms. Robinson started her employment at Milwaukee County in the Office of the PRB and Ethics Board in October 2005, becoming the department administrator in March 2010. Prior to accepting the Director's position, she worked in both the County Human Resources and Purchasing Divisions. Ms. Robinson holds a Master's

degree both in Fine Arts and Business Administration and is a member of the Ethics & Compliance Officers Association (ECO), the Society for Corporate Compliance & Ethics (SCCE), and the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). She uses her arts background to approach business problems collaboratively, creatively, and in a visionary manner. In addition to administrative oversight of the Boards' offices, Ms. Robinson plans, designs, and directs the activities of the County Ethics training with approval by the County Ethics Board.

Marvic Rizio currently holds the position of **Administrative Assistant—Intern**. Mrs. Rizio joined the Ethics Board team in June, 2010. While her main and expert focus is on matters of the Personnel Review Board, she also plays a vital role in assisting the department with Ethics Board

duties as needed. Ms. Rizio's experience and input are invaluable to both the staff and fellow County employees. Prior to moving to the United States, Ms. Rizio lived in the Philippines where she owned and operated her own talent agency.

Barb Kierzek is the **Interim Administrative Assistant** to Ms. Robinson. Ms. Kierzek's main objective is to assist with Ethics Board matters. In addition, Ms. Kierzek's duties include office support, administrative functions, and employee relations. Ms. Kierzek assists with the Personnel Review Board duties, when needed, but Ms. Kierzek's administrative responsibilities related to the ethics training and promotion are especially invaluable. Barb joined the PRB/EB team in April 2011 and is a graduate of Alverno College. Ms. Kierzek holds a BA in Education.

"Ethics and integrity, as you all know, are an essential baseline for any organization, crucial in County leadership, and will always be a number one priority for me." Chris Abele, County Executive

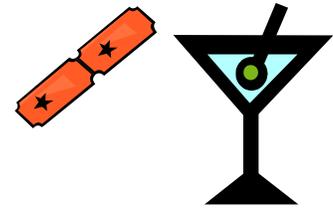
Ethics Bulletin Board

As part of our ongoing plan to provide awareness of ethics in the workplace, we have created an informative and interactive bulletin board located outside our offices on the second floor of the Courthouse, Suite 212. Stop by to gain knowledge of what's happening in the world of ethics at Milwaukee County. We also encourage you to participate in our series called, "**What Would You Do?**" Here, we provide a scenario that asks you to make a decision with the most favorable — but ethical — outcome. This type of activity encourages you to use

critical thinking skills and gives you an opportunity to voice your opinion about some of the gray areas of ethical decision making. Take a few minutes to review the full text of both the old and the current "**What Would You Do?**" [scenarios on Page 3](#). We invite you stop by in person, but if you are unable to make it to the Courthouse, feel free to send us a response by fax or email instead!

Located outside of Suite 212 of the Milwaukee County Courthouse





August “What Would You Do?”

Scenario~

You have worked for several years in Area A of a Milwaukee County Government agency. The nature of the agency’s primary business requires contact with various private individuals. A woman comes in to your office and tells you that she wants to personally thank you for the assistance you gave her. You appreciate her taking the time to come in and tell her that you were just completing the duties required of your job and that you are happy to have helped her.

The woman tells you that she owns a bar that has a ticket-based happy hour on Friday evenings. She offers you enough tickets to purchase four drinks at her expense. Your spouse’s birthday is coming up and you would like to be able to treat for drinks at the woman’s bar. You tell her that you don’t think it is okay for you to take the tickets, but you’re not sure. She says she won’t tell anyone she gave them to you, so it would just be between you and her.

Dilemma~

Your ethical dilemma is whether or not it is okay for you to take the tickets from the woman. A secondary level of the dilemma is whether or not it is okay for you to take the tickets and not tell anyone.

WOULD YOU TAKE THE DRINK TICKETS?

WHY OR WHY NOT?

A FEW OF THE RESPONSES ARE QUOTED BELOW!

Here’s What You Told Us

“**NO!** Although in these tough times, I’d ponder. I was raised to be honest, no matter what. My father sometimes worked three jobs, so my mother could stay home with five kids. It’s learned behavior! As for not telling anyone, you have to wake up and look at yourself in the mirror with a clean conscience everyday. Thanks Mom & Dad!”

“**No,** I wouldn’t simply because I was not sure I could even accept them. However, if I received them in a manner where I could not return them, such as the mail, I would have kept them.”

“If I were an employee in the private sector, I would **definitely** take the drink tickets.”

“If I were to become a County employee, I would **not** take the tickets because the Ethics Code in the government sector is much more strict than the private sector.”



September “What Would You Do?”

Scenario~

You work in Area B of a Milwaukee County government agency. The nature of the agency’s business requires contact with various vendors. Over the years, you have developed a professional, yet friendly relationship with many of the vendors. One day you receive a check for payment for services rendered by one of the vendors. The check has arrived via the U.S. mail. Upon review of the records, you realize this check is a duplicate payment. You notify your supervisor of the double payment. The supervisor advises you not to tell the vendor of their error and to deposit the check anyways; stating further, that if they realize their error that you can deal with it at that time.

Dilemma~

Should you deposit the check as instructed by your supervisor? Do your loyalties lie with your supervisor?

Should you tell the vendor and return the check? Do your loyalties lie with the vendor?

Should you do as the supervisor instructs, knowing it is wrong, but you need to keep your job? Do your loyalties lie with your financial responsibility to your family?

Should you do none of the above and arrive at a different conclusion?

Stop by the bulletin board outside our office to participate in this activity. You can also find this scenario and other ethics games on our website. Feel free to respond by email to either barbara.kierzek@milwcnty.com or mceethics@milwcnty.com. Responses can also be faxed to (414) 223-1897. Additional hard copies are available upon request. We look forward to and welcome your opinions and feedback! As always, all responses are confidential!



Employee Engagement

According to a 2009 research brief published by the Ethics Resource Center (2010), employee engagement can be impacted by things other than money. These include overall organizational purpose, trust and confidence in leadership, and employee recognition. The ERC brief examines the relationship between ethics and employee engagement in order to answer several key questions:

1. Does ethical culture play a part in employee engagement?
2. Does management's commitment to ethics impact employees' engagement with the company as a whole?
3. Does misconduct undermine employee motivation?
4. Do engaged employees respond differently to observations of misconduct?

The results of the survey found a high correlation between ethical culture and employee engagement. Not surprisingly, employees who see acts of misconduct are less engaged, while engaged employees are not only more able to resist pressure to commit acts of misconduct, but are also more likely to report acts of misconduct.

The brief also identifies the importance of management's commitment to ethics. The research brief is available on-line at <http://www.ethics.org/files/u5/NBESResearchBrief2.pdf>.

The Ethics Resource Center and the Hay Group. (2010.) *Supplemental Research Brief. 2009 National Business Ethics Survey: Ethics and Employee Engagement*. Retrieved from <http://www.ethics.org/files/u5/NBESResearchBrief2.pdf>.

Shout Outs!



Thank you!
For taking the time to complete your online ethics training!

Because of the positive impact that management participation can have on the development of ethical culture, we would like to give a special **SHOUT OUT** to the following individuals who constitute part of Milwaukee County's leadership.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- ◆ Chris Abele, County Executive
- ◆ Lee Holloway, Chairman, District 5
- ◆ Theodore Lipscomb, District 1
- ◆ Nikiya Harris, District 2
- ◆ Gerry Broderick, District 3
- ◆ Marina Dimitrijevic, District 4
- ◆ Joseph Rice, District 6
- ◆ Michael Mayo, District 7
- ◆ Patricia Jursik, District 8
- ◆ Paul Cesarz, District 9
- ◆ Eyon Biddle, District 10
- ◆ Mark Borkowski, District 11
- ◆ Peggy Romo West, District 12
- ◆ Willie Johnson, Jr., District 13
- ◆ Jason Haas, District 14
- ◆ Lynne DeBruin, District 15
- ◆ John Weishan, Jr., District 16
- ◆ Joe Sanfelippo, District 17
- ◆ John Thomas, District 18

- ◆ Jim "Luigi" Schmitt, District 19
- ◆ Dan Diliberti, County Treasurer
- ◆ Joe Czarnezki, County Clerk
- ◆ John Barrett, Clerk of Courts
- ◆ John LaFave, Register of Deeds
- ◆ APPOINTED OFFICIALS and DEPARTMENT or DIVISION HEADS
- ◆ Inspector Ed Bailey, Sheriff's Office
- ◆ Brian Peterson, M.D., Medical Examiner
- ◆ Sue Black, Director, Parks
- ◆ Jack Takerian, Director, DTPW
- ◆ Barry Bateman, Director, Airport
- ◆ Stephanie Sue Stein, Director, Aging
- ◆ Maria Ledger, Director, Family Care
- ◆ Geri Lyday, Interim Director, DHHS
- ◆ Kimberly Walker, Corporation Counsel
- ◆ Fred Bau, Acting Director, Labor Relations
- ◆ Charles Wikenhauser, Director, Zoo
- ◆ Patrick Farley, Director, DAS

- ◆ Scott Manske, Controller
- ◆ Amos Owens, Director, Purchasing
- ◆ Paul Listinsky, Director, HR
- ◆ Laurie Panella, Interim Director, IMSD
- ◆ Jim Sullivan, Director, Child Support Enforcement
- ◆ Frieda Webb, Director, CBDP
- ◆ Jerome Heer, Director, Audit
- ◆ Donald Natzke, Director, Office for Persons with Disabilities
- ◆ Dennis Dietscher, Interim Director, Risk Management
- ◆ James Duff, Acting Director, Veteran's Service Office
- ◆ Veronica W. Robinson, PRB/Ethics
- ◆ Lisa Weiner, Administrator, Election Commission
- ◆ Terrence Cooley, Chief of Staff, County Board
- ◆ George Aldrich, Chief of Staff, County Executive

We Goofed!

The Ethics Board staff recently realized that we had overlooked some emails in the department's email box. Among the correspondence, we found submissions for the games that were held during Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week which was commemorated May 1 -7, 2011. First, we would like to **apologize** for not including the entrants in the daily drawings that we held to recognize and reward employees

who took the time to participate. Secondly, we want you to know that you are not forgotten! We held a special drawing on Thursday, September 15, 2011 and have notified the winners and given or sent them their prizes. Thank you, again, to everyone who participated.

Please join us in congratulating the following individuals:

Apologizing—It is the ethical thing to do!



MONDAY "You Make a World of Difference" Mousepad	Justine Filapek , Delinquency & Court Services
	John Frederick , Delinquency & Court Services
TUESDAY "You Make a World of Difference" Travel Mug	Donya Saffold , Community Business Development Partners
	Barb Pariseau , Department of Administrative Affairs
WEDNESDAY "Key to Success" Key Chain	Jennifer Collins , County Board
	Cleo Stewart , Contract Administration
THURSDAY "Making the Difference" Journal & Pen Set	Jacqueline Eberle , Behavioral Health Division
	Carolyn Humphrey's , District Attorney's Office
FRIDAY "You're Essential to Our Success" Twist-Top Tumbler	Kelly Johnson , District Attorney's Office
	Sherry Narloch , District Attorney's Office

Pocket Reference Cards

We recently created laminated pocket reference cards for employees and officials that are **available now**. These immensely popular reference cards are intended to help you analyze a situation and determine whether or not there is a potential ethical problem that might affect the way you choose to respond to the situation.

Cards are available in the Ethics Department, Room 212 of the Courthouse, or contact us at (414) 278-4218 to request one. We will promptly inter-office mail one to you.

What are YOU doing?

We would like to know what **YOU** or your **DEPARTMENT** are doing to promote ethical behavior at Milwaukee County. Are you supplementing our training? Does your profession require annual CE training in ethics? Do you have departmental rules, policies, and procedures regarding ethics?

If you have anything you would like to share in our newsletters, or if you would like to **contribute** an article or story, please let us know and we will be happy to include it, as appropriate. We would also like to continue our **recognition** efforts throughout the year. If you know of someone who demonstrated good ethical decision making, let us know so that we can give them the shout out they deserve!



The Ethics Board

It is declared that high moral and ethical standards among County public officials and County employees are essential to the conduct of free government; that the County believes that a Code of Ethics for the guidance of County public officials and County employees will help them avoid conflicts between their personal interests and their public responsibilities, will improve standards of public service and will promote and strengthen the faith and confidence of the people of this County in their County public officials and County employees. It is the intent of the County that in its operations the Board shall protect to the fullest extent possible the rights of individuals affected. ([M.C.G.O. § 9.01\(1\)](#)).

Corrections

The volume and issue information on our [June 2011 newsletter](#) was incorrect. That issue was Volume 2, Issue 2 and not Volume 3, Issue 1. A corrected version of that issue will be available.

What's Next?

Ethics Board meetings regularly held every four months and are open to the public. The next Ethics Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday, October 13, 2011 at 3:00 PM** in Room **201-B** of the Courthouse. Meeting minutes are available on the Board's website.

Facebook

Due to the required upkeep and because many of the items we shared on our Facebook page were also available on our website, we have deactivated our Facebook page. Please check us out on our regular website at <http://county.milwaukee.gov/ETHICSBOARD8460.htm>. You may also sign up for e-Notify to receive important information directly to your email box. Just look for the "Sign up for E-notify" text box located on the left side of our department's webpage.

Ad Men!
Nagging doubts? Trouble sleeping?
Has pining for the Man got you
tossing and turning?

YOU NEED
ETHIC-EZE!

FAST ACTING RELIEF
FOR YOUR TROUBLED CONSCIENCE
Recommended by 4 out of 5 psychiatrists.

Bob Larbel of Portland, Oregon writes
'Feelings of remorse
nearly ruined my career at
Sasquatch & Sasquatch.
But now I'm proud of the
work I do. Ethic-Eze made
shedding pounds of guilt
almost effortless.
Thank you.'

Milwaukee County Ethics Board
Courthouse Room 212
901 North 9th Street
Milwaukee WI 53233

Phone: (414) 278-5332

Fax: (414) 223-1897

E-mail: mcethicsboard@milwcnty.com

Lobbying Posters

Be on the lookout for posters or [flyers](#) in your area that remind lobbyists about the requirement to register in the County Clerk's Office before the commencement of any lobbying activities. These items were sent to most departments in early October. If you would like one for your area, please contact the Office of the Ethics Board.

The Milwaukee County Ethics Board is located on the second floor of the Courthouse in Suite 212. This newsletter is produced as part of an ongoing effort to advance awareness of the Milwaukee County Ethics Board, the Milwaukee County Ethics Code, and to engage employees and officials in learning more about the importance of ethical behavior and sound ethical decision making in the business arena. Please direct any comments or questions to our office by mail, [email](#), fax, or phone at the information identified above. Copies of old newsletters are available on our [website](#) or outside our suite on the second floor of the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

When viewed on-line, copies of the newsletters are interactive.