

CONFIDENTIAL

August 5, 2008

[REDACTED]

Re: Case No. 08039.Q

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

You are the [REDACTED] for the [REDACTED], and oversee the development and maintenance of the [REDACTED] English and foreign language childrens' book collections (which includes buying books for the collection). On July 31, 2008, you sent us an email, dated July 15, 2008, from the [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] has invited you and [REDACTED] (whose duties also include buying books for the collection), on behalf of the [REDACTED], which will be held in [REDACTED], October 8-10, 2008. According to the materials you sent us, other U.S. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been extended the same invitation. Your expenses, including round-trip [REDACTED] coach airfare, four nights accommodation, show registration and admission tickets to all fair events, will be paid jointly by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. According to the written invitation you sent us, "guests should assume expenses surpassing the established conditions..." You would leave Chicago on Monday, October 6 and return Saturday, October 11. You have asked staff whether the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance prohibits you from accepting this offer.

[REDACTED], which is held annually, is the world's largest Spanish-language book fair, drawing representatives of over 800 publishing houses, as well as librarians, book sellers and distributors, authors and journalists worldwide. At [REDACTED], you will have the opportunity to improve your knowledge of and familiarity with the leading professionals—publishers, booksellers, distributors, authors, journalists, designers and dealers in the Spanish and South American publishing world, as well as sharing ideas and experiences with fellow librarians. You told staff that your and

██████████ attendance at ██████████ would benefit the City and enhance your ability to perform your City duties, and that you both have already received approval for attendance from the ██████████ Commissioner and your immediate ██████████L supervisors. In addition to this, this year ██████████ is introducing its first Librarian Award, which will be bestowed upon an American ██████████ responsible for a Spanish collection in his or her library, and whose work has been noticeable during the year.

You will be able to vote for your candidate by sending the Commission an email with the name of the librarian of your choice and if you so wish, the reason why you are recommending that person. Deadline for votes is August 30th, 2008.

From all recommendations, five finalists will be selected, and the winner will announced during the presentation of the librarians in LIBER, on the morning of October 8th. The award will consist of \$5,000 and a check will be given to the winner at that time. All 5 finalists will be invited to dinner in a trendy Barcelona restaurant on Thursday, October 9th.

Under § 2-156-040(d) of the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance, City employees are not prohibited from accepting hosting expenses, including travel, meals and entertainment, if: (1) the expenses are reasonable; (2) the expenses are furnished in connection with public events, appearances or ceremonies related to official City business; (3) the expenses are furnished by the sponsor of the public event; and (4) the offer is not based upon any mutual understanding that the official decisions or actions of any City employee concerning the business of the City would be influenced.

Based on our review of the written invitation materials you sent us, staff concludes that all the conditions listed in § -040(d) of the Ordinance are met, and thus that the Ordinance does not prohibit you from accepting these travel and hosting expenses. Our conclusion is consistent with advice we have given to you and other similarly situated employees in the past. (See Case Nos. 06041.Q, 05049.Q, 04038.Q, 03039Q.and 02029.Q). As you noted in your email (and as we have advised you in past years), you will, as a matter of policy, seek the approval of the Mayor's Chief of Staff for this trip, seeing that it is for overseas travel, and the offer has been extended to two City employees, not one, as in some past years. Further, based on our review of the written invitation materials you sent us, there would be no prohibition on accepting the award if a Chicago librarian won the Librarian Award described above.

Staff's conclusion does not necessarily dispose of all issues relevant to this situation, and is based solely on the application of the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance to the facts stated in this letter. If the facts stated are incorrect or incomplete, please notify us immediately, as any change may alter our conclusion. Other laws or rules also may apply to this situation. Be advised that City departments have the authority to adopt and enforce rules of conduct that may be more restrictive than the limitations imposed by the Ordinance.

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We appreciate your inquiry and your concern to abide by the standards embodied in the Ordinance. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

Steven I. Berlin
Acting Executive Director