, 2016

**Re: Case No. 16040.C; Letter of Admonition**

Dear ,

On [date] 7, 2016, you called and emailed me, explaining that, over the weekend, you had made a mistake regarding an email blast. You said that, in the last few days, a political mailer was sent to Ward residents (and perhaps others) on behalf of [a candidate for State office] . That mailer, you said, used the name and likeness of [a City elected official] (for whom you work ), and that these uses were unauthorized and false. You said you then sent an email from the [official] to Ward residents and businesses to set the record straight regarding the mailer, but that, in sending it, you forgot to switch sender information and mistakenly sent it from the cityofchicago.org address, which your office uses for constituent service requests and City of Chicago business, not from the appropriate campaign/political email address. You called to notify our office of this mistake. By phone and email, I advised you that: (i) I would report this matter to our Board at its [next] meeting, with the recommendation that they determine it to be a minor violation of the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance, and if the Board so determined, you would be sent a letter of admonition advising you not to repeat the mistake; and (ii) you re-send the email from the proper address.

At [the Board’s] meeting, the Board of Ethics considered my recommendation, and discussed whether this constituted a minor violation. After deliberating, determined that, by sending this blast email, you did commit a minor Ordinance violation. The Board then directed me, pursuant to §2-156-070(b) of the Ordinance, to send you this confidential letter of admonition. Thus, you are hereby admonished that §2-156-135(b) the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance prohibits any City official or employee from “intentionally misappropriat[ing] any property or resources of the city in connection with any prohibited political activity.” Intentionally using a City email address to send political content, or even to respond to political content, is prohibited. This determination of a minor violation is consistent with Case No. 15014.C, where we advised a City elected official that he committed a minor violation by including, on what was clearly a political website, the City seal and other indicia of an official City or ward website, that included information about constituent services, ward events, community and/or real estate development or permit information or news.

Please also be advised that, if this minor violation is repeated, the Board would be required by law to consider it a non-minor violation, and would then be required to advise that you may self-report it to the Office of the Inspector General, and, if you did not, the Board would be required to do so and make this minor violation part of the record of that report.[[1]](#footnote-1)

On behalf of the Board, I want to express my appreciation for your honesty and desire to comply with the standards embodied in the Ethics Ordinance. Please contact me with any questions.

Yours very truly,

Steven I. Berlin

Executive Director

1. In Case No. 14006.A, the Board set out the factors to consider when considering whether a violation is minor: (i) would determining that the violation was minor still uphold the spirit of the Ordinance; (ii) would a third party view the violation as technical and; (iii) finally, whether there was a pattern evincing a negligent disregard of the Ordinance. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)