



Orange County Board of Ethics
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2018 Annual Report

Mission Statement for Board of Ethics: The Board is comprised of seven members, each of whom serves without compensation. The Board is responsible for ensuring full compliance with the Orange County Code of Ethics, including mandated financial disclosures by certain County employees and officials. The citizens of New York State and Orange County are entitled to be assured that persons in positions of governmental responsibility act in the discharge of their duties according to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

By March 1, 2018, the Ethics Board sent out 354 Disclosure Forms, 263 to county employees and 91 to board members. By July, 40 delinquent filers were informed that if their 2017 disclosure forms were not received, their names would be forwarded to the District Attorney for further action. In November the names of 15 Delinquent filers were sent to the District Attorney pursuant to Section 9C of Local Law No. 1 of 2017. By the end of 2018, 5 delinquent filers had still not filed.

The Ethics Board received five proposals for Ethics Counsel and reviewed three: Catania Mahon Milligram & Rider; Sokoloff Stern; and Towne Ryan & Partners. At the March Ethics meeting, Towne Ryan & Partners was retained for a period of three years at a rate of \$205 per hour.

The Ethics Board presented to the Legislative Rules Committee several proposed changes to the Orange County Ethics and Disclosure Law for consideration re: Section 5.B.(2) (Complaints/preliminary investigation); Section 8.G. (eliminating notary signature on Annual Financial Disclosure Statements); Section 5.B.(8)a. (sole waiver authority be limited to Section 10.C.; and Section 8.A. (requirement to file financial disclosure statements for individuals no longer serving). These changes were incorporated into a new Ethics Local Law No. 9 of 2018. A complaint form was also approved by the Board of Ethics to be placed on their website.

The Board of Ethics scheduled nine meetings and finalized the following in 2018:

- 373 Financial Disclosure Statements from county employees and board members
- 5 Requests for Opinions
- 7 Disclosure letters
- 1 Complaint
- 5 Complaints not under Board's jurisdiction
- 5 Delinquent Filers

The Orange County Ethics Budget for 2018 was \$42,222.

As of the end of 2018 a vacancy existed on the Board of Ethics for over nine months. Respectfully, the failure by appointing authorities to appoint members to fill vacancies in a timely manner impairs the efficiency of the work of the Board of Ethics.