Metropolitan Board of Ethical Conduct
Minutes of Meeting

Monday, June 29, 2026

The Board of Ethical Conduct held a meeting on this date in Council Committee Room 1 on the Second Floor of the Historic Courthouse in Nashville, Tennessee.

Persons in Attendance:

Kinika Young, Board Chair
Diane DiIanni, Board Member
Allen King, Board Member
Chris Sabis, Board Member
David Wicker, Jr., Board Member
Councilmember Delishia Porterfield, Ex-Officio Board Member

Nicki Eke, Legal Counsel
Abby Greer, Legal Counsel
Austin Kyle, Metropolitan Clerk

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Public Comment Period

No members of the public signed up to speak.

Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2026

Councilmember Porterfield moved to approve the minutes of May 18, 2026, which motion was seconded and approved by the following vote: "Ayes" (5): Young, DiIanni, King, Sabis, and Wicker; "Noes" (0); "Abstain" (0).

Announcement of Appeal Rights

The Clerk announced that parties who disagree with a final decision of the Board may appeal by filing a writ of certiorari with the Davidson County Chancery Court within sixty (60) days of entry of the Order, and parties are encouraged to seek independent legal advice to ensure that applicable procedures and deadlines are properly followed.

Hearing for complaint: Melanie Cochran and Elizabeth MK Sullivan v. Councilmember Courtney Johnston

Chair Young called the hearing to order. Complainant Elizabeth MK Sullivan was in attendance, and Bryan E. Pieper identified themselves as legal counsel for the complainant. The respondent Councilmember Courtney Johnston was in attendance, and Jon Cooper identified themselves as legal counsel for the respondent. Chair Young reviewed the hearing procedures.

Chair Young offered the opportunity to provide opening statements to both parties. Counsel Pieper offered an opening statement on behalf of the complainants. Counsel Cooper offered an opening statement on behalf of the respondent.

Chair Young called on the counsel for the complainant to begin their case-in-chief. Counsel Pieper called for complainant Elizabeth Sullivan to come forward as the first witness. Ms. Sullivan was sworn in. Counsel Pieper began direct examination of the witness. The Board asked clarifying questions during the testimony. After direct examination concluded, Counsel Cooper cross-examined the witness. Chair Young excused the witness. Counsel Pieper stated that they had no further witnesses for the complainant.

Chair Young called on the counsel for the respondent to begin their case-in-chief. Counsel Cooper called for respondent Councilmember Courtney Johnston to come forward as the first witness. Councilmember Johnston was sworn in. Counsel Cooper began direct examination of the witness. The Board asked clarifying questions during the testimony. After direct examination concluded, Counsel Pieper cross-examined the witness. After further questioning from the Board, the witness was excused. Counsel Cooper stated that they had no further witnesses for the respondent.

The Counsel for the complainant declined to offer a rebuttal case.

Chair Young called for a recess prior to hearing closing arguments. Chair Young reconvened the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

Chair Young offered both parties the opportunity to provide closing arguments. Counsel Pieper provided closing arguments on behalf of the complainant. Counsel Cooper provided closing arguments on behalf of the respondent.

Chair Young called for the Board to move to deliberate on the matter. Counsel Nicki Eke clarified that the Order issued by the Board reflects that the hearing is only concerning Metro Code of Laws 2.222.020 (k), (q), and (r) and that the Board dismissed allegations concerning all other provisions in the Code.

After discussion, Mr. Sabis moved that the Board find violations of Metro Code of Laws 2.222.020 (k) and (r) and, but not subsection (q), which motion was seconded and approved by the following vote: "Ayes" (5): Young, DiIanni, King, Sabis, and Wicker; "Noes" (0); "Abstain" (0).

Chair Young gave a summary of the sanctions that are available to the Board to consider when a Standard of Conduct violation is found.

After discussion, Mr. Wicker moved that the Board provide a written warning to Councilmember Johnston regarding violations of Metro Code of Laws 2.222.020 (k) and (r), and that the Board would not be requesting any additional action to be taken by the Councilmember at this time but for the Councilmember to be aware that this was a finding of a violation and to take that into account for future disclosures and that if any future votes arise with regard to the project in question, the Councilmember will pay particular attention to whether recusal is warranted at that time under those circumstances, which motion was seconded and approved by the following vote: "Ayes" (5): Young, DiIanni, King, Sabis, and Wicker; "Noes" (0); "Abstain" (0). Chair Young stated that the Final Order along with the written warning would be issued to the complainant and the respondent.

Next Steps/Scheduling

With no matters pending before the Board, the next scheduled meeting of the Board will be the annual standing meeting on March 1, 2027.

Adjournment

Upon motion properly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.