



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

January 24, 2018

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Police can now investigate teachers for being late. That may change.

BYLINE: Scott Travis

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/education/fl-broward-school-discipline-workshop-20180123-story.html>

STORY: School police officers could no longer investigate teachers for being late to class or rude to their bosses, under a proposed overhaul of the Broward County school district's discipline policies.

Employees had complained they were being subjected to long police investigations for minor matters and weren't kept informed of what was happening in their cases. Under the proposed policy revisions discussed at Tuesday's meeting:

- The district's police would handle only serious misconduct cases, not work performance issues.
- Employees will be told why they're being investigated and how long the investigation is expected to take.
- The district's police chief can turn down requests for investigations.

District officials say many of these changes have already taken effect, even though the policy hasn't officially changed. Last year, school investigators looked at 39 percent of the cases referred to it, down from 61 percent during the 2013-14 school year.

In recent years, employees have complained that sworn police officers are being used to investigate matters such as a teacher being late to work, failing to turn in paperwork or using a disrespectful tone.

"Sometimes when a manager doesn't want to deal with an issue, they they refer it" to the district police, said Jim Silvernale, who represents the Federation of Public Employees union.

District officials say investigators have been wrapping up cases in a more timely manner. Just 22 percent of investigations lasted beyond 60 days last school year, down from 46 percent during 2013-14, according to district data.

Under the new policy, work performance issues will be handled mostly through evaluations. Teachers can still be subject to discipline, but it will be handled through school administration and the district's Employee Relations department, not school police.

District officials hope to receive final School Board approval for the new policy by this summer so it can officially take effect when the new school year starts in August.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward Republicans pick lawmaker George Moraitis as new party chairman

BYLINE: Anthony Man

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/fl-sb-broward-republican-george-moraitis-20180122-story.html>

STORY: Broward Republicans, hoping a new leader can turn around the county political party that's been plagued with controversy for years, picked state Rep. George Moraitis as their new chairman Monday.

He won the job by acclamation after no one stepped forward to challenge him. That's a big departure for Broward Republicans, who have had a string of hotly contested leadership elections, often decided by a handful of votes.

"I'm humbled by your decision to elect me as your chair. I'm humbled by the opportunity to serve this area in this capacity," he said, adding that he was "challenging everyone, including myself" to get their neighbors registered as Republicans and get them to the polls.

Moraitis called for party members to stay united behind President Donald Trump. "We cannot let the never Trumpers and the people who want to tear down this party and the conservative values of this country succeed."

Also Monday, the committee members who make up the Broward Republican Party elected Michele Merrell of Fort Lauderdale as the new state committeewoman.

She said Republicans need to avoid doing anything that tears down or diminishes the Republican brand. "We have a difficult enough situation going on right now on the national level and the attacks I hear daily on our President Trump and other Republicans are nothing short of breathtaking."

Merrell received 144 votes to 41 votes for Diana Taub of Pembroke Pines. The state committeewoman post has been vacant since August when Sharon Day resigned to become U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica. The position comes with a seat on the county Republican Party's board of directors and on the governing board of the state Republican Party.

Moraitis is the ninth Broward Republican chairman in 11 years. The last three have resigned before their terms finished. The party has been rife with factions, often pitting social conservatives against those who care most about business and economics, or pitting early supporters of Donald Trump against people who aren't enthusiastic about the president.

Moraitis fills the vacancy left by the Jan. 6 resignation of Bob Sutton, who held the job for 26 months. His tenure was marked by infighting and an insurrection among several members of the county party's board of directors.

Moraitis was an early and enthusiastic supporter of Donald Trump's candidacy last year. He's beginning his final year in the Legislature, unable to run for re-election to his east Broward state House seat because of term limits. He can't raise money on behalf of the party until the legislative session ends in March.

“He is the best candidate that could run for the position,” said committeeman Daniel Diaz of Pompano Beach. “I don’t know anybody that dislikes him. He’s definitely going to unite the Republican Party in Broward County.”

Moraitis, 47, lives in Fort Lauderdale. In March, his wife, Heather, will begin a three-year term on the Fort Lauderdale city commission.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Former courts clerk Howard Forman accuses estranged wife of frivolous incompetency claim

BYLINE: Rafael Olmeda

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-brenda-forman-contempt-hearing-20180123-story.html>

STORY: Broward Clerk of Courts Brenda Forman was only trying to stall an inevitable divorce when she challenged the mental competency of her estranged husband and political predecessor last year, a Broward judge was told Tuesday.

Former clerk Howard Forman's lawyers want his wife to pay legal fees they rang up defending him against the claims that he was showing signs of dementia and unable to tend to his own affairs.

Brenda Forman filed the competency challenge late last March, a day after Howard Forman filed for divorce to end their four-year marriage.

Her claim was thrown out last Dec. 5 at a hearing before Broward Circuit Judge Mark Speiser after mental health experts determined that Howard Forman, 72, is not incapacitated. The divorce is still pending.

But the question of whether Brenda Forman acted in bad faith was the focus of a hearing before Speiser on Tuesday.

Howard Forman's lawyers argued that she knew he was still mentally sharp. Brenda Forman's attorney tried to show that she had good reason to question his mental capacity when she did.

Howard Forman called a string of witnesses to vouch for his acuity, including his divorce lawyer James Stark, former County Commissioner Lois Wexler, and Pembroke Pines Commissioner Iris Siple, who was his chief assistant when he ran the Clerk of Courts Office from 2001 to 2016.

The witnesses each said Howard Forman is lucid with a strong memory for people, names and politics. Wexler said she saw him in late December 2016 and had a conversation about politics and their memories as public officials. She said she never questioned his memory.

Brenda Forman's competency challenge raised issues about her husband sometimes failing to take his medications and sometimes skipping medical appointments. Her lawyer said Howard Freeman seemed lucid and sharp to his friends because he was taking his medication when they saw him.

"That's the purpose of medication," said Roderick Vereen, Brenda Forman's lawyer.

Brenda Forman also sought to be appointed her husband's guardian, with control over his finances. Howard Forman responded to the claims in June with a motion calling for the appointment of an independent guardian.

Vereen argued that Howard Forman admitted being unable to handle his own finances when he sought the appointment of a guardian.

Howard Forman's lawyer in the competency case, Jody Leslie, said his motion was filed so that a neutral party could be appointed, partly to help determine whether "he had already been financially exploited by his wife."

Brenda Forman ran for office with no political experience, no college degree and no background in management. But she had her husband's name, and without it, she may not have had electoral success.

"That Forman name helped carry me to where I need to be today," she said after she was sworn into office.

Tuesday's hearing, which is set to resume Wednesday, continues the bitter end of a marriage that began to unravel publicly after Brenda Forman was elected to succeed her husband as clerk of courts.

Earlier on Tuesday, she faced the possibility of a contempt ruling for failing to show up for the Dec. 5 hearing that dismissed her incompetency petition. Through her lawyer, she told Speiser that she had withdrawn her petition that morning and that she was in Orlando at a mandatory training event for clerks. The judge accepted her explanation and did not hold her in contempt.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward Health wraps up interviews with CEO finalists

BYLINE: David Fleshler

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-reg-broward-health-more-interviews-20180123-story.html>

STORY: The last two finalists for the job of chief executive officer at Broward Health appeared for interviews Tuesday with the public hospital system's board.

Taking questions in separate sessions were Joseph Gilene, former market president for the downtown Louisville campus of Catholic Health Initiative/Kentucky Health, and Robert Minkin, former CEO of O'Connor & St. Louise Regional Hospitals in San Jose, Calif.

After their interviews, each candidate was taken to meet the medical staff and executives of some of the system's hospitals.

The board, which interviewed two other finalists Monday, will meet Wednesday to discuss the candidates.

Board member Christopher Ure said he would like a second interview session to talk more extensively with the candidates, if the board further narrows the field.

But Broward Health chairman Rocky Rodriguez said he didn't think a second interview session was necessary and that he wanted to choose a chief executive as soon as possible, since the system has been without a permanent CEO since the suicide of Dr. Nabil El Sanadi two years ago.

"To my thinking, we have four well-qualified candidates and by next Wednesday we should be able to come to a consensus and appoint one of these four in order to fulfill the commitment that we made to this community," Rodriguez said.