

ROSEVILLE *Ethics Tip*

June 2010

Non-disclosure looks bad, even when it is legal.

Portland, Oregon has had a little color thrown into this year's campaign for city commissioner with the revelation that a sitting commissioner pursuing re-election did not recuse himself from a decision to make a grant to a non-profit organization where his girlfriend works. When the girlfriend came before the grant panel, the commissioner left the room after turning the chair over to someone else. Later, the city commissioner received an opinion from the deputy city attorney that argued he had not violated any ethics laws when he opted to vote on the grant. Apparently, the attorney said, the state law on conflicts of interest only speaks of "spouses and relatives", not girlfriends. Nevertheless, the city's ethics code advises city officials to avoid the appearance of impropriety, and even if his girlfriend would not personally benefit from the grant, the commissioner's opponent in this year's election appears set to make the case that the commissioner behaved unethically and unprofessionally.

Sent on behalf of the Roseville Ethics Commission

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