

# THE PUBLIC SERVICE PUZZLER

JANUARY 2026

Editor: Rob Casimir

## THE CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

You know, everyone thinks they're *so smart*. Every few months, I sit in my office, and I painstakingly assemble the absolute best municipal-ethics themed crossword I can. I wake up and I think to myself, "How can I give hardworking New York public servants [the puzzle-and-ethics experience they deserve?](#)" And after a month of blood, sweat, and tears (I work at a very dangerous standing desk), I publish my gridded little opus and what do I get back?

Hundreds of submissions with correct answers. But not just correct answers: *gloating*, correct answers. "Easy," they say. "Only took me five minutes!" And other things of this nature. And the fact of the matter is: they're right. Of course they're right! It's a crossword about municipal ethics. One of the answers is always going to be "fifty" because of the [\\$50 Valuable Gift Rule](#). Another answer must be "waiver," because we at COIB want you to know that [a waiver is likely required if you work a second, non-City job](#). We want you to remind you to take seriously the protection of government records, so what do we do? We make one of the answers "[confidentiality.](#)" Every. Single. Time. And so City employees have been pretty good at predicting our limited number of ethics-related buzzwords and providing correct answers — even before seeing the clues.



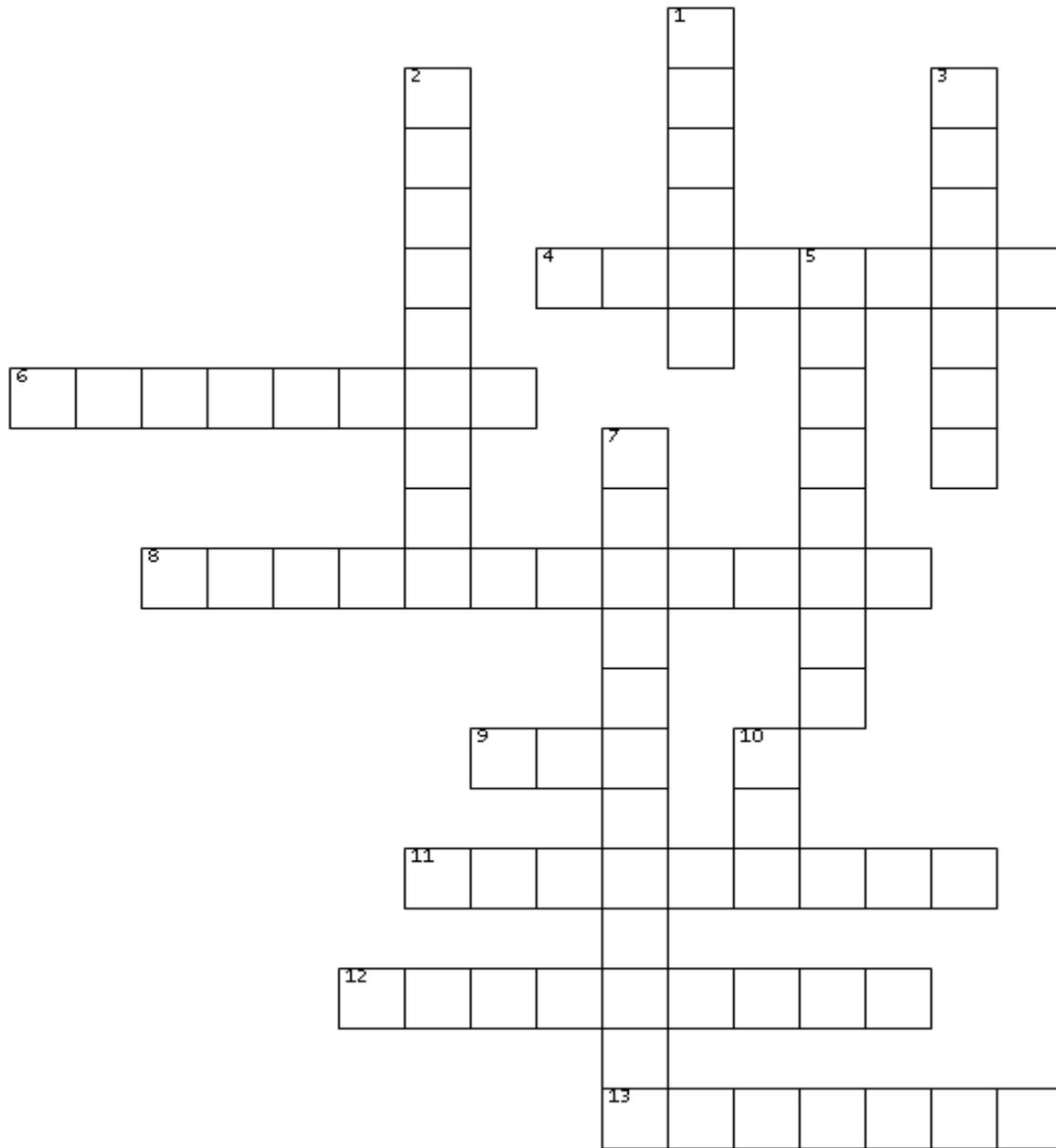
Well, that ends today. For this month's crossword, answers can be any word found in the [Official COIB PLG](#) (attached). Maybe the word is hidden in the letterhead! Maybe it's an email address! Maybe the correct answer is simply "the." Would I do that? I might. But you won't know for sure unless you've closely perused the document. And thus my trap is sprung! You'll have absorbed Chapter 68 content! Good luck with this one, City employees! To submit your correct answers or to praise my ingenuity, [email us by February 20th](#) for a chance to win the grand prize: the opportunity to join legends like HEATHER "PERFECT SCORE" DAILEY in the **THE JONATHAN HOFFMAN + PETER KONTOGIANNIS HALL OF ETHICS AND EXCELLENCE!** Answers will appear in the next edition of the Public Service Puzzler.

### LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

by Heather Dailey

1. **Classico:** You turn two bulbs on and leave one off. Let one of the bulbs stay on for a short time and one for a long time. Then when you get to the room you can touch the bulbs and the coldest one is the switch that was left off, the hottest one is the switch left on the longest and the warm bulb (not the hottest) is the switch turned off earliest.
2. **One Place:** The bear would be white (as it would most likely be a polar bear).
3. **Nobody's Perfect:** The years are BCE.
4. **Hated Riddle:** An hourglass.
5. **Less Happy:** Only have numbers 0-9 one time and they are listed alphabetically if you spell them out.
6. **Should Be in Prison:** "Short."
7. **Succession:** He told them to swap horses.
8. **Much More Handsome:** He is bald.
9. **Bound by Duty:** Meat.
10. **Ruined Commute:** Door 3 because a dead lion is a safe lion.

# NYC CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD



## **ACROSS**

4. When coaxing, wheedling, and needling just aren't working.
6. In the Big Easy, they call it "lagniappe."
8. We gotta come up with a better legal term for "people with bosses."
9. Abbreviation for the Board's famous telephone advice line.
11. Terrible for illumination, but a great film.
12. Chosen.
13. Like doctors but much less respected.

## **DOWN**

1. The so-called "dark" version cannot interact with electromagnetic radiation.
2. Do you love work but hate getting paid? Try this.
3. Can I get one? Well, no, if they're a paid expert in a lawsuit against the City.
5. There are 67 of these in the City Charter, before it gets really good.
7. I can't disclose this hint, because it's...well, you know.
10. The COIB's 153-year old partner in ethics enforcement.

# NYC CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD

## **THE JONATHAN HOFFMAN + PETER KONTOGIANNIS**

### **HALL OF ETHICS AND EXCELLENCE**

**LUKE SZABADOS – BUILDINGS**

**AMY HOM – DFTA**

**EUSABETH TOPALTZAS – DORIS**

**CHRISTOPHER LYNGH – LAW DEPT**

**HUNTER IGOE – LAW DEPT**

**HEATHER MURAKAMI – HONOLULU ETHICS COMMISSION**

**MELISSA HESTER – ACS**

**MARY LANE – FINANCE**

**KATIE MILLER – TIC**

**EVA GAMBINO – FINANCE**

**TOBY SINGER – DEP**

**ROBERT ROLANDI – FINANCE**

**JAMES TOBACK – OCME**

**FLORENCE MALLETTE – FINANCE**

**SHAWNORA GULLEY – BUILDINGS**

**MELINDA CALDERON – OCME**

**IVAN SANTIAGO – DSS**

**WILLIAM FLETCHER – NYPD**

**STYLIANI KARPADAKIS – OCME**

**BERNARD BRAUN – LAW DEPT**

**NIGEL C.O. MANUEL – BUILDINGS**

**MICHELE SIMENSKY – LAW DEPT**

**NANCY SULTAN-LORMIL – BUILDINGS**

**SHIVAJEET CHAKRABORTY – TIC**

**CHARLOTTE YIH – COMPTROLLER**

**JONATHAN HOFFMAN – DEP**

**MICHAEL GREENE – DSS**

**JACK SHVARTS – EDUCATION**

**PETER FAHERTY – DOC**

**JOHANNA BJORKEN – EDUCATION**

**HEATHER DAILEY – DFTA**

**GARFIELD S. SCARDER – SCA**

**SARAH ROBERSON – PARKS**

**KIMFA CARRINGTON – DOT**

**VINCENT RIVELLESE – BRONX DA**

**YVONNE CHOW – DSNY**

**SIMONE KING – DOT**

**ALEXANDER YELLEN – NYCHA**

**LISA BRANDQUIST – FDNY**

**KELIAN STANNER – PARKS**

**PUI CHING – SBS**

**SANDRA COLLYMORE – FINANCE**

**JAMES DAVIE JR. – BUILDINGS**

**ROLANDA OSBOURNE – FINANCE**

**EUJEAN PARK – SBS**

**CHRIS K. PAPA – ACS**

**KATHY TUZNIK – DDG**

**MONICA DOYLE – FINANCE**

**DIANA HERRERA – FISA-OPA**

**MARIE SAMPLES – OCME**

**LAURA GODFREY – DCA**

**JOHN RAVALLI – FINANCE**

**TORREY FISHMAN – MOIA**

**MICHAEL LEVARIO – APPOINTMENTS**

**PETER KONTOGIANNIS – DEP**

**EUGENE MASSEY (2X) – DOHMH**

**GINDY CHEN – DOT**

**VALERIE WALD – EDUCATION**

**NOWSHIN FARA – CB17 BROOKLYN**

**KEYIN SHULMAN – DEP**

**ISAAC KIRK-DAVIDOFF – PARKS**

# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST LAW

## PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE

If you have questions, contact the Conflicts of Interest Board's Attorney of the Day  
by phone at (212) 437-0707  
or by email at [aod@coib.nyc.gov](mailto:aod@coib.nyc.gov).  
All communications are confidential. [www.nyc.gov/ethics](http://www.nyc.gov/ethics)

*These restrictions are found in [Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter](#), New York City's conflicts of interest law.*

- 1. Misuse of Position.** Public servants may not use their City positions to benefit themselves, their close family members, or any person or firm with whom they have a business or financial relationship.
- 2. Misuse of City Time and City Resources.** Public servants may not pursue personal activities (especially business or political activities) during times when they are required to work for the City, nor may they use any City resources (such as City supplies, letterhead, telephone, e-mail, computer, or equipment), their City title, or City personnel for any non-City purpose.
- 3. Gifts.** Public servants may not accept anything valued at \$50 or more from any person or firm that does or seeks to do business with the City.
- 4. Gratuities.** Public servants may not accept anything from anyone other than the City for performing their official duties.
- 5. Volunteer Activities.** Public servants may have an unpaid position (such as a board member) at a not-for-profit with business dealings with the City if they do this work on their own time, the not-for-profit has no dealings with their City agency, and the public servant is not involved in the not-for-profit's business with the City. If the not-for-profit has dealings with the public servant's City agency, they may only have the position with their agency head's approval.
- 6. Seeking Other Jobs.** Public servants may not seek or obtain a private sector job with any person or firm with whom they are dealing with in their City job.
- 7. Moonlighting.** Public servants may not have a job with any firm that does business with the City. For certain part-time public servants, this prohibition applies only to their City agency.
- 8. Owning Businesses.** Public servants may not own any part of a firm that does business with the City, nor may their spouses, domestic partners, or unemancipated children. For certain part-time public servants, this prohibition applies only to their City agency.
- 9. Permission to Moonlight or Own a Business.** Public servants may, with the written authorization of the head of their City agency, seek permission from the Board (called a "waiver") to have a job with a firm that does business with the City, or to own some or all of a firm that does business with the City.
- 10. Confidential Information.** Public servants may not disclose confidential City information or use it for a private advantage, even after they leave City service.
- 11. Lawyers.** Public servants may not act as a lawyer, whether paid or unpaid, against the City's interests in any lawsuit brought by or against the City.

- 12. Expert Witnesses.** Public servants may not act as a paid expert in any lawsuit brought by or against the City.
- 13. Paid Appearances Before the City.** Public servants may not communicate with any City agency on behalf of a private employer or client, when they are seeking City business, or are otherwise paid. For certain part-time public servants, this prohibition applies only to their City agency.
- 14. Buying an Office or a Promotion.** Don't.
- 15. Business with Subordinates.** Public servants may not enter into any business or financial dealings with another public servant who is their subordinate or supervisor. A public servant is the superior of another public servant if they can affect the terms and conditions of the subordinate's City employment.
- 16. Political Solicitation of Subordinates.** Public servants may not ask a subordinate to make a campaign contribution or to participate in any electoral campaign activity.
- 17. Coercing Political Activity.** Public servants may not force or try to force anyone to participate in any electoral campaign activity, nor may they directly or indirectly threaten anyone or promise anything to anyone to obtain a campaign contribution.
- 18. Political Activities by Certain High-Level Appointed Officials.** Deputy mayors, agency heads, deputy or assistant agency heads, members of boards or commissions, or any other person designated by their City agency as exercising substantial policy discretion may not ask anyone to contribute to the campaign of any candidate for City elected office or to the political campaign of any City elected official running for any elected office. These officials, as well as elected officials, may not hold certain political party positions.
- 19. Post-Employment Communication Ban.** Most former public servants are prohibited from communicating with their former City agency on behalf of their private employer or client, when they are seeking City business, or are otherwise paid for one year after their departure from City service.

The following former public servants have additional restrictions:

- For the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Mayor and the Chief of Staff to a Deputy Mayor, the prohibition is for one year and applies to all City agencies, other than the City Council.
- For a paid member of a board or commission, the executive director or highest-ranking paid public servant employed by a board or commission, and agency heads (except those listed below), the prohibition is for two years and applies to communications with their former City agency.
- For the Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, Borough Presidents, Deputy Mayors, OMB Director, DCAS Commissioner, Corporation Counsel, DOF Commissioner, DOI Commissioner, DOB Commissioner, DDC Commissioner, HPD Commissioner, DOT Commissioner, DOE Chancellor, Chair of the City Planning Commission, and certain high-level staff in the Mayor's Executive Office, the prohibition is for two years and applies to all City agencies, other than the City Council.
- For City Council Members, the prohibition is for two years and applies to the City Council and its staff.

- 20. Post-Employment Particular Matter Ban.** After leaving City service, former public servants are prohibited from communicating with any City agency about a particular matter on which they personally and substantially participated for the City and are prohibited from receiving compensation from such particular matter.