



**HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS
STATE OF GEORGIA**

IN RE:)
)
 BERNITA CAMPBELL,) Case No.: 2025EB14
)
 Respondent.)

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

THE BOARD OF ETHICS HEREBY ISSUES THIS PUBLIC
REPRIMAND PURSUANT TO THE FINAL DECISION ON
MARCH 13, 2026.

HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE:)
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BERNITA CAMPBELL,) Case No.: 2025EB14
)
Respondent.)

FINAL DECISION

The above-styled matter was brought before the Henry County Board of Ethics (the “Board”) for a final hearing on February 10, 2026.

BACKGROUND

1.

On August 21, 2025, the Board received a *Complaint* against Bernita Campbell (“Ms. Campbell”).

2.

On August 28, 2025, the Respondent filed a response with the Board with supporting documentation.

3.

On September 9, 2025, at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Board voted by majority action that probable cause existed on the complaint, warranting a formal hearing on the following violations: Misuse of Position (SB 22 Section 7.1(c)(4)) and Engaging in Activity Prohibited by Law (SB 22 Section 7.1(c)(7)) of the Henry County Ethics Code.

4.

On December 15, 2025, Timothy J. Buckley III, Esq. filed an *Entry of Appearance* on behalf of Ms. Campbell.

5.

On December 31, 2025, Respondent filed *Respondent’s Answer, Opposition, and Request for Dismissal of Complainant’s Ethics Claim*.

6.

The *Notice of Hearing* was provided to the Respondent on January 27, 2025.

7.

This matter came before the Board on February 10, 2026, with all parties present.

FINDINGS OF FACTS

The Complainant, Ms. Quishana Parks’ (“Ms. Parks”), alleged that Ms. Campbell, in her position as the Director of Budget, misused her position by knowingly inserting a false evaluation into Ms. Parks’s personnel file.

The Board finds that Ms. Parks began her employment with Henry County on December 16, 2024, as a Budget Analyst II. Her employment lasted approximately ninety-four (94) days before ending on March 20, 2025. Ms. Campbell has served as the Director of Budget for the past five (5) years and was Ms. Parks's direct supervisor. During Ms. Parks's tenure, Ms. Campbell was frequently out of the office due to personal matters and bereavement, which limited in-person interactions between Ms. Campbell and Ms. Parks.

On March 14, 2025, Ms. Campbell scheduled a meeting with Ms. Parks to discuss an assignment she had delegated. The meeting became contentious. During the meeting, Ms. Parks expressed frustration that she needed additional training or guidance to perform her duties effectively. Ms. Campbell explained that there were no standard operating procedures in place for the position, that she did not have time to develop them, and that she was unavailable to provide the requested training. Ms. Campbell advised Ms. Parks to place time on Ms. Campbell's calendar if Ms. Parks needed assistance. Conversely, Ms. Campbell indicated that during the same meeting, Ms. Parks was unwilling to take instruction or direction. Ms. Campbell testified that in discussing the assignment with Ms. Parks, Ms. Parks advised that she did not know how to work the financial system, Tyler, and the segments therein. Ms. Parks testified that she was familiar with the type of systems used in various counties; however, such systems are typically customized to meet the specific needs and procedures of the individual county in which they are implemented. In this instance, Ms. Parks stated that she did not receive training on the systems used by Henry County.

Ms. Parks testified that she was advised to limit contact with her coworkers, which she believed affected her ability to obtain the training and assistance she needed to perform her duties. To complete assigned tasks, Ms. Parks stated she would occasionally seek assistance from colleagues, discreetly against Ms. Campbell's wishes. Ms. Campbell disputes Ms. Parks's testimony and testified that she was only giving Ms. Parks workplace advice about personal impressions.

Based on the evidence presented, Ms. Parks did not receive formal or informal feedback regarding her job overall performance, nor was she provided with clear expectations regarding how her work would be evaluated. Efforts by Ms. Parks were made to obtain feedback, including through email, but those requests went unanswered. Ms. Campbell prepared a probationary performance evaluation for Ms. Parks dated March 17, 2025, on Ms. Parks' ninetieth (90th) day of employment, three days before Ms. Parks's termination. Ms. Parks became aware of the performance evaluation after requesting an internal investigation following her dismissal. On March 20, 2025, Ms. Parks attended a meeting believing it would serve as her probationary performance evaluation. Instead, Ms. Parks was informed during the meeting that her employment was being terminated.

The County's policies governing probationary employees allowed for probationary periods of up to six months, during which department leadership is expected to closely monitor employee performance and maintain documentation reflecting that oversight. Policy 1.02, which became effective in March 2022, requires that employees receive at least three performance evaluations within a twelve-month period, with the first occurring at approximately the ninety-day mark. Under this policy, newly hired employees are expected to receive an initial

performance evaluation at or around the ninety-day mark of their employment. These evaluations are designed to assess an employee's performance, identify areas of concern, and formally notify the employee of any necessary improvements. The applicable policy requires a supervisor to complete a designated performance evaluation form as part of the employee review process. The structure and purpose of the form contemplate that the supervisor will review the evaluation with the employee, obtain the signatures of both the supervisor and the employee, and then place the completed document in the employee's personnel file.

Such evaluations serve in determining whether a probationary employee will continue in County employment. When a department head seeks to separate an employee from employment, the Human Resources Department reviews the supporting documentation before approving the termination. This review generally includes counseling forms and other records related to the employee's performance to ensure adequate documentation supporting the decision to dismiss the employee.

Following her termination, Ms. Parks requested that the County conduct an internal investigation into the circumstances surrounding her dismissal. During the internal investigation that followed Ms. Parks' termination, two other employees working within the budget division provided information that supported aspects of Ms. Parks' account. Their statements confirmed that Ms. Parks had received little to no training during her time in the position and that there had been an apparent effort to keep her separated from them in the workplace. The investigation also noted concerns suggesting that the decision to terminate Ms. Parks had been predetermined and that actions taken before, during, and after her employment were consistent with that conclusion.

CONCLUSION OF LAW¹

It is essential to the proper administration and operation of the Henry County government that its officials and employees be, and give the appearance of being, independent and impartial, that public office not be used for private gain, and that there be public confidence in the integrity of Henry County officials and employees. Because the attainment of one or more of these ends is impaired whenever there exists in fact, or appears to exist, a conflict between the private interests and public responsibilities of officials and employees, the public interest requires that the General Assembly protect against such conflicts of interest by establishing by law appropriate ethical standards with respect to the conduct of the officials and employees of Henry County in situations where a conflict may exist. SB 22§ 7.1(a)(1).

Misuse of Position

Pursuant to SB 22§ 7.1(c)(4), an official or employee shall not appear on his or her own personal behalf, or represent, advise, or appear on the personal behalf, whether paid or unpaid, of any person before any court or before any legislative, administrative, or quasi-judicial board, agency, commission, or committee of this state or of any county or municipality concerning any contract or transaction which is or may be the subject of an official act or action of Henry County

¹ Any of the "Findings of Fact" herein which should have been properly classified by the Board as "Conclusions of Law" shall be considered as "Conclusions of Law" and any "Conclusions of Law" which should have been properly classified as "Findings of Fact" shall be considered as "Findings of Fact."

or otherwise use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or other persons.

The Board finds that Ms. Campbell misused her position by securing unwarranted exemptions for herself. Specifically, Ms. Campbell utilized the ninety-day probationary period to mask the deficiencies that arose from her failure, as Ms. Parks's direct supervisor, to ensure that Ms. Parks received the training necessary to perform the duties of her position. Ms. Parks expressed a need to receive additional training and guidance; however, Ms. Campbell did not provide the requested training or otherwise ensure that Ms. Parks received the support necessary to perform her role. Whether the training was deliberately withheld or neglected, Ms. Parks did not have the proper instruction to fully perform her job duties or the opportunity to discuss any deficiencies.

Henry County Policy 1.02 requires that probationary employees receive a performance evaluation approximately ninety (90) days into employment. The purpose of a probationary period is to provide an employee with sufficient guidance, supervision, and training to perform assigned responsibilities effectively. The policy specifically requires advising the employee of the improvements needed, as contained in the form. In this instance, the evidence reflects that before completing the performance evaluation form, Ms. Campbell failed to conduct any evaluation with Ms. Parks. Consequently, Ms. Parks was not given an opportunity to review the evaluation, discuss any alleged performance concerns, or respond to its contents before the decision to terminate her employment was made. Ms. Parks became aware of the evaluation only after requesting an internal investigation following her dismissal. The Board finds that Ms. Campbell knew the unsigned, unreviewed performance evaluation would be used as part of the documentation supporting the decision to terminate Ms. Parks's employment, further shielding her from scrutiny of her own negligence in Ms. Parks's lack of success.

While personnel management decisions such as supervision, training, and termination generally fall within the discretion of county leadership, the evidence in this matter demonstrates that Ms. Campbell used the authority of her position to create and rely upon a performance evaluation to justify her recommendation for Ms. Parks termination, shielding herself from accountability for her own actions in failing to provide proper guidance and training.

The Board finds that the creation and use of that evaluation form distorted Ms. Parks's personnel record in a manner that benefited Ms. Campbell. Accordingly, the Board concludes that Ms. Campbell used her official position in a manner that secured unwarranted exemptions for herself and therefore violated the Henry County Code of Ethics.

Engaging in Activities Prohibited by Law

Pursuant to SB 22§ 7.1(c)(7), an official or employee shall not engage in any activity or transaction that is prohibited by law now existing or hereafter enacted which is applicable to him or her by virtue of his or her being an official or employee of Henry County.

The Board finds that no evidence was presented to give rise to a violation pursuant to SB 22§ 7.1(c)(7).

STANDARD OF REVIEW

The decision of the Board shall be governed by a preponderance of the evidence standard. SB 22§7.1(1)(8)(B).

DECISION

It is HEREBY CONCLUDED that Respondent violated the following section of Henry County's Code of Ethics:

SB 22§ 7.1(c)(4)-Misuse of Position

SANCTIONS

Pursuant to SB 22§ 7.1(m)(1)(B), the Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand.

The Board takes note that Ms. Campbell has already undergone discipline through Henry County Human Resources Department and finds that said discipline and training were sufficient. As such, the Board deems it fit to only issue a public reprimand.

Respondent has the right to appeal this Decision by filing a petition for review to the Superior Court of Henry County within 14 days of receiving the decision. SB 22§ 7.1(m)(3).

Failure by the Respondent to comply with this Final Decision may result in additional sanctions or referral of this matter to the County's Solicitor's Office for prosecution.

By: *Felicia Harrell*
Felicia Harrell (Mar 13, 2026 17:18:37 EDT)

Date: 03/13/26

Felicia Harrell, Board Chair
Henry County Board of Ethics
Decision (4-2)

Concurred with by:
Ms. Jazmin Willingham
Mr. Lee Kelley
Dr. Samuel Valme

Dissented by:
Mr. Nicholas Craig
Ms. Diane Easter