

Proposed Lobbying Ordinance Revisions for 2024 – Brief Summary

The purpose of this revision is to streamline the lobbying ordinance, to ensure that it can be efficiently and effectively administered, and to clearly state requirements for lobbyists to encourage compliance with the ordinance.

A “Lobbyist” is anyone who receives compensation to encourage the passage, defeat, or modification of any item pending before the BCC (exempt municipal officers/employees).

Lobbyists are required to:

- REGISTER or REREGISTER with the County on an **annual** basis as follows:
 - **New registration:** filed any time during the year; registration will be active for the remainder of that calendar year (until December 31).
 - **Renewal registration:** Each year between December 1–December 31; renewal will be effective for the following calendar year.
 - **Curative registration:** If a lobbyist inadvertently engages in lobbying activity prior to being registered, the lobbyist may cure this violation by filing a registration form before **5 p.m. of the second business day** following the improper lobbying activity. This cure provision may only be utilized once per lobbyist.
- REPORT EACH MEETING with any county commissioner by completing a “**Notice of Lobbying Contact**” online prior to the meeting.
 - If lobbyist fails to submit a notice of lobbying contact in advance, this can be cured by submitting the notice before **5 p.m. of the second business day** following the lobbying contact. Failure to cure is a violation of the lobbying ordinance.
- REPORT ANY EXPENDITURES made in support of lobbying activities in the prior year annually by January 15. Failure to file the required expenditure report will result in suspension of the lobbyist’s registration.

PENALTIES:

- Lobbying without registration: a fine of \$500 (absent a cure for the first offence); followed by further fines and suspension.
- States that a suspended lobbyist is prohibited from lobbying until the suspension is cured/lifted.
- Creates a one-time cure/grace period for lobbyists to register after lobbying without registering, and a cure period or submitting notices of lobbying contact
- Establishes that a first violation or any other provision will result in a warning; the second in a fine; and a third or fourth with a fine and a suspension.

PROCESS: Staff is working with BTS and the Clerk to develop a streamlined online reporting and tracking process, as well as a process for notifying the Commissioners of relevant lobbyist information.