

SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

Lorain Cty. Bar Assn. v. Vagotis

2021 Ohio 2756 (Ohio 2021) · No. 2020-1193 · Decided August 12, 2021

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Ohio found Christina Nicole Vagotis in contempt for failing to pay \$572.97 in board costs previously ordered by the court. The court suspended her from practicing law until she pays the costs and interest, applies for reinstatement, and is reinstated, subject to additional compliance and continuing-legal-education requirements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Ohio
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Maureen O'Connor, C.J.; Maureen O'Connor, J.; Maureen Kennedy, J.; William M. Fischer, J.; Patrick F. DeWine, J.; Michael P. Donnelly, J.; Melody J. Stewart, J.; Jennifer Brunner, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio
DECIDED	August 12, 2021
DOCKET	2020-1193
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Attorney-discipline contempt proceeding initiated by the Supreme Court of Ohio's order to show cause.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Supreme Court of Ohio opinion

TOPICS

[contempt](#)[costs](#)[remedies](#)[civil procedure](#)

PRACTICE AREAS

[legal ethics](#)[attorney discipline](#)[contempt](#)

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Vagotis should be found in contempt for failing to comply with the court's prior order to pay board costs.

2. Whether Vagotis should be suspended from the practice of law until she paid the board costs and interest and satisfied the applicable reinstatement requirements.

HOLDINGS

1. Vagotis was in contempt for failing to comply with the Supreme Court of Ohio's March 18, 2021 order requiring payment of \$572.97 in board costs.
2. Vagotis was suspended from the practice of law until she paid the board costs and all accrued interest, applied for reinstatement, and was granted reinstatement by the court.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On March 18, 2021, the Supreme Court of Ohio publicly reprimanded Christina Nicole Vagotis and ordered her to pay \$572.97 in board costs. Vagotis did not pay the costs. After receiving an order to show cause concerning contempt and suspension, she did not file a response.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court had previously publicly reprimanded Christina Nicole Vagotis and ordered her to pay \$572.97 in board costs. After Vagotis failed to pay, the court issued an order to show cause why she should not be held in contempt and suspended. Vagotis did not respond, and the court found her in contempt and suspended her from the practice of law until she paid the costs and interest and satisfied the reinstatement requirements.

DISPOSITION

other

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

[Cite as Lorain Cty. Bar Assn. v. Vagotis, ___ Ohio St.3d ___, 2021-Ohio-2756.] LORAIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION v. VAGOTIS. [Cite as Lorain Cty. Bar Assn. v. Vagotis, ___ Ohio St.3d ___, 2021-Ohio-2756.] (No. 2020-1193—Submitted July 6, 2021—Decided August 12, 2021.) ON ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE. _____ {¶ 1} On March 18, 2021, this court publicly reprimanded respondent, Christina Nicole Vagotis, and ordered respondent to pay board costs in the amount of \$572.97.

Respondent has not paid board costs in the amount of \$572.97 as ordered by the court. On July 6, 2021, this court issued an order to show cause why respondent should not be found in contempt and suspended for failure to pay board costs. Respondent did not file a response to the show cause order. {¶ 2} Upon consideration thereof, it is ordered and adjudged by this court that respondent, Christina Nicole Vagotis, Attorney Registration No. 0096246, last known address in Elyria, Ohio, is found in contempt for failure to comply with the court's March 18, 2021 order. {¶ 3} It is further

ordered that respondent is suspended from the practice of law until respondent pays board costs in the amount of \$572.97 and all interest due, has applied for reinstatement, and has been granted reinstatement by this court. {¶ 4} It is further ordered that before entering into an employment, contractual, or consulting relationship with any attorney or law firm, respondent shall verify that the attorney or law firm has complied with the registration requirements of Gov.Bar R. V(23)(C).

If employed pursuant to Gov.Bar R. V(23), respondent shall refrain from direct client contact except as provided in SUPREME COURT OF OHIO Gov.Bar R. V(23)(A)(1) and from receiving, disbursing, or otherwise handling any client trust funds or property. {¶ 5} It is further ordered that pursuant to Gov.Bar R. X(13), respondent shall complete one credit hour of continuing legal education for each month, or portion of a month, of the suspension.

As part of the total credit hours of continuing legal education required by Gov.Bar R. X(13), respondent shall complete one credit hour of instruction related to professional conduct required by Gov.Bar R. X(3)(B) for each six months, or portion of six months, of the suspension. {¶ 6} It is further ordered that respondent shall not be reinstated to the practice of law in Ohio until (1) respondent pays the board costs, including any and all accrued interest, (2) respondent complies with the requirements for reinstatement set forth in the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, (3) respondent complies with the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, (4) respondent complies with this and all other orders of the court, and (5) this court orders respondent reinstated. {¶ 7} It is further ordered that respondent shall immediately do the following: {¶ 8} 1.

Notify all clients being represented in pending matters and any cocounsel of respondent's suspension and consequent disqualification to act as an attorney after the effective date of this order and, in the absence of cocounsel, also notify the clients to seek legal services elsewhere, calling attention to any urgency in seeking the substitution of another attorney in respondent's place; {¶ 9} 2.

Regardless of any fees or expenses due, deliver to all clients being represented in pending matters any papers or other property pertaining to the client or notify the clients or cocounsel, if any, of a suitable time and place where the papers or other property may be obtained, calling attention to any urgency for obtaining such papers or other property; 2 January Term, 2021 {¶ 10} 3.

Refund any part of any fees or expenses paid in advance that are unearned or not paid and account for any trust money or property in respondent's possession or control; {¶ 11} 4. Notify opposing counsel or, in the absence of counsel, the adverse parties in pending litigation of respondent's disqualification to act as an attorney after the effective date of this order and file a notice of disqualification of respondent with the court or agency before which the litigation is pending for inclusion in the respective file or files; {¶ 12} 5.

Send all notices required by this order by certified mail with a return address where communications may thereafter be directed to respondent; {¶ 13} 6. File with the clerk of this court and disciplinary counsel of the Supreme Court an affidavit showing compliance with this order, showing proof of service of the notices required herein, and setting forth the address where the respondent may receive communications; and {¶ 14} 7.

Retain and maintain a record of the various steps taken by respondent pursuant to this order. {¶ 15} It is further ordered that respondent shall keep the clerk, the Lorain County Bar Association, and disciplinary counsel advised of any change of address where respondent may receive communications. {¶ 16} It is further ordered that all documents filed with this court in this case shall meet the filing requirements set forth in the Rules of Practice of the Supreme Court of Ohio, including requirements as to form, number, and timeliness of filings.

All case documents are subject to Sup.R. 44 through 47, which govern access to court records. {¶ 17} It is further ordered that service shall be deemed made on respondent by sending this order, and all other orders in this case, by certified mail to respondent's last known address. 3 SUPREME COURT OF OHIO {¶ 18} It is further ordered that the clerk of this court issue certified copies of this order as provided for in Gov.Bar R.V(17)(E)(1) and that publication be made as provided for in Gov.Bar R.V(17)(E)(2).

O'CONNOR, C.J., and KENNEDY, FISCHER, DEWINE, DONNELLY, STEWART, and BRUNNER, JJ., concur. _____ 4