



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

CITIZEN'S ETHICS ADVISORY BOARD OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS 18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 23, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2020, by teleconference.

Chair of the Board, Dena Castricone, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

Dena Castricone, Chair
Mary Bigelow
Charles F. Chiusano
Karen Christiana
N. Beth Cook

Jason Farrell, Vice-Chair
Kevin Johnston
Cheryl Lipson
Nichelle Mullins

The following staff members of the OSE were present:

Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director
Brian O'Dowd, General Counsel
Mark Wasielewski, Ethics Enforcement Officer
Nancy Nicolescu, Director of Education & Communications
Marianne Sadowski, Deputy General Counsel
Marc Crayton, Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer

Diane Buxo, Assistant General Counsel
Jennifer Montgomery, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer
Ann Morgan, Information Technology Analyst III
Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal and Clerk of the Board

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the February 20, 2020 Regular Meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted nine (9) to zero (0) to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2020 Regular Meeting.

2. The minutes of the March 12, 2020 Special Meeting on Audit Process Review were presented to the Board's subcommittee members for approval.

On the motion of Ms. Cook, seconded by Ms. Castricone, the Board's subcommittee members voted two (2) to zero (0) to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2020 Special Meeting.

3. Chair Castricone explained that due to the extension of filing deadlines under the Codes of Ethics in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7M, no hearing officers are required for the next few months.

Chair Castricone inquired as to ability of videoconferencing for future Board meetings. Other Board members expressed interest in videoconference, as well.

4. Executive Director Lewandowski discussed the necessity of extensions of certain filing deadlines under the Codes of Ethics. He reminded the Board that the scheduled Uniform Administrative Procedures Act ("UAPA") matter was previously extended, as well as First Quarter Lobbyists' filings (to May 10) and Statement of Financial Interests ("SFI") filings (to July 1). Executive Director Lewandowski explained that the Lobbyists' filing deadlines (First Quarter Report, monthly reports for April and May, and the Second Quarter Report) need to be extended to July 10 due to: (1) the temporary closure of businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic ("pandemic" or "emergency") and the resulting challenge of accessing required filing information located at businesses; and (2) limited lobbying activity. He also proposed, in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7M, to extend "Necessary Expenses" and "Gifts to the State" filings by 60 days and "10-day Notification Letters" by 30 days, effective until July 15.

On the motion of Mr. Johnston, seconded by Mr. Farrell, the Board voted nine (9) to zero (0) to extend filing deadlines under the Codes of Ethics in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7M.

5. General Counsel O'Dowd presented the Legal Division Report, a copy of which was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. The Report noted that while informal opinion requests were significantly down, the Division is receiving a steady flow of requests and keeping busy by working on various long-term projects. He highlighted some of the requests that the Division has received during the teleworking period.
6. Director of Education and Communications Nicolescu presented the Training and Media Report and noted that no trainings were conducted since the last report; and that the Division was on target to complete 22 trainings at the close of the first quarter, prior to the agency's closure of offices and move to telework. Ms. Nicolescu reported that OSE's website updates continue during this time. She is also currently working on an Agency Ethics Liaison Guide and supporting Ethics Liaisons and SFI filers with SFI filings. To date, there are 2,545 SFI filers and the Division has received 560 electronic filings and 7 filings on paper. She informed the Board that notices of newly approved filing deadlines would be sent to SFI filers. Finally, Ms. Nicolescu mentioned a future meeting with the COGEL Steering Committee to discuss the December conference and other Steering Committee matters.
7. Ethics Enforcement Officer Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division Report, highlighting that the Division is busy working: performing investigations, issuing complaints, and conducting

audits despite limited tips and interaction with the public. He informed the Board that there is currently one matter scheduled for a UAPA hearing on June 11, 2020.

Mr. Wasielewski thanked Executive Director Lewandowski and Information Technology Analyst III Morgan for affording the resources to successfully telework and assist SFI filers.

Mr. Wasielewski fielded a question from Board member Cook as to whether the Enforcement Division is receiving tips from the public during this time. He stated that the Division is working on tips received from the public leading up to the agency's closure of offices and transition to telework.

8. Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Crayton presented the Lobbyist Audit Report for AFCO AvPorts Management, LLC, requesting approval of the audit and its findings. He noted that the audit included one finding, that AFCO AvPorts Management, LLC, had been 18 days late in one of its filings during the audit period.

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted nine (9) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for AFCO AvPorts Management, LLC.

9. Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Crayton presented the Lobbyist Audit Report for 1st Alliance Lending, LLC, requesting approval of the audit. Mr. Crayton noted that there were no findings.

On the motion of Mr. Johnston, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted nine (9) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for 1st Alliance Lending, LLC.

10. Board member Chiusano provided an overview of the University of Connecticut Faculty Consulting Oversight Committee, citing Public Act 07-166, section 12. Mr. Chiusano noted that one of the functions of the Committee is to make certain that funding received from foreign governments is declared. He informed the Board that the Committee annually reviews funding for individuals conducting research and reports on its findings.
11. Executive Director Lewandowski presented the Auditors of Public Accounts - Audit Report on the Office of Governmental Accountability for fiscal years ending June 30, 2015 and 2016, a period during which the OSE was under the Office of Governmental Accountability. During this period OSE had two adverse findings: failure to file two annual reports to the Governor as required by Sections 1-81 (a) (6) and 1-92 (f) of the General Statutes, summarizing the activities of the OSE. Mr. Lewandowski informed the Board that OSE has commenced reporting to the Governor pursuant to the corrective measures, as recommended by the Audit Report.

Board member Lipson inquired as to the reason for OSE's lack of reporting for fiscal years ending June 30, 2015 and 2016. Mr. Lewandowski responded that he believed the failure was due to considerable reduction in budget/funding and staffing.

12. Executive Director Lewandowski provided a legislative update on previously submitted Legislative Proposals, noting that the Legislature suspended its activities in mid-March and recently announced that it will not reconvene before the May 6 adjournment. Based upon this announcement, any bills for consideration, including OSE's bills, are no longer viable and, although the Legislature

announced it would hold a special session, this special session will only address budget adjustments and pandemic related matters. Mr. Lewandowski reported that the legislative session looked promising prior to the emergency and he received great feedback regarding OSE's Municipal Proposal as well as other Proposals.

13. Executive Director Lewandowski presented his report to the Board, noting that, in accordance with Governor Lamont's directive, the OSE staff has been teleworking since mid-March and the office is presently closed to the public. He gave special acknowledgement to Information Technology staff, Ann Morgan and Alaaeldin Ali, for their diligent work ensuring that the staff is equipped with the resources required to effectively work outside of the office, and to Director of Education and Communications Nicolescu for keeping OSE's website up-to-date and the public informed of OSE's activities during this time.

On personnel matters, Mr. Lewandowski informed the Board that the recruitment of a Human Resources individual is on hold in light of the emergency and the role will continue to be supported by the Department of Administrative Services Smart Unit for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Lewandowski advised the Board that, prior to the current emergency, he testified before the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in support of funding for two additional OSE positions and that obtaining funding looked promising; however, he is not currently optimistic of a positive result, as the State has been absorbing significant costs relative to the pandemic. Mr. Lewandowski reported that OSE's budget for the current fiscal year is sound, but adjustments will be required for the next fiscal year.

Board member Cook applauded OSE's staff for their adjustment to teleworking and the projects they are currently undertaking. Ms. Cook made a recommendation to post on OSE's website the framework under which "gifts to State" are permissible. She stated that this method would hopefully not only reduce the number of "gifts to the State" informal opinion requests received, but also provide even quicker responses to such requests, especially related to the current emergency that requires immediate attention.

On the motion of Mr. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted nine (9) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Melissa Hamilton
Clerk of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board
Office of State Ethics

Date approved
(By the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board)