



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 JULY 23, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, July 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
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

Jennifer Montgomery, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer
Alex Mercier, Legal Intern
Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal and Clerk of the Board
Alaaeldin Ali, Information Technology Analyst II

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the June 18, 2020 regular meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted seven (7) to zero (0), with Mr. Farrell abstaining, to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2020 Regular Meeting.

2. Chair Castricone requested a hearing officer for the September 24, 2020 Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (“UAPA”) hearing. Board member Farrell volunteered to be the hearing officer.
3. Board member Chiusano, who served as the February 27, 2020 hearing officer in the matter of Timothy D. Poeti, Docket No. 2019-01UP, presented an overview of the matter and the February 27, 2020 proceeding and requested approval of the Proposed Final Decision in the matter.

Board member Cook inquired as to the reason for the recommendation to reduce the respondent’s fine and was advised of “the respondent’s recent permanent injury, employment status and the termination of Statement Financial Interest (“SFI”) filings by state marshals.”

On the motion of Ms. Bigelow, seconded by Mr. Farrell, the Board voted seven (7) to one (1), with Ms. Cook opposing, to approve the Proposed Final Decision in the matter of Timothy D. Poeti, Docket No. 2019-01UP.

4. General Counsel O’Dowd presented the Legal Division Report. He provided an update to the Board on pending UAPA matters, particularly the matter of Blue Ribbon Strategies, LLC, Docket No. 2020-17UL, informing the Board that after the submission of the Legal Division Report, the State’s request for leave to withdraw the matter was granted. Thus, the matter will no longer go forward.
5. Director of Education & Communications Nancy Nicolescu presented the Training and Media Report, stating that no training was conducted during this period. She informed the Board that the registration for the COGEL conference is open. COGEL will have a virtual conference that is scheduled to commence on December 1, 2020 and conclude on December 31, 2020. During this period, most sessions will be on-demand, with three live events: The President’s Welcome and Plenary Speaker on December 1, 2020; the December 8, 2020 Business Meeting; and a networking event including a Denver promotion on December 15, 2020. In addition, Director Nicolescu provided an SFI update, noting that the filing period recently ended with 81% of state agencies, commissions and quasi-public agencies achieving 100% timely compliance. Forty-eight agencies were 75% timely and all those filers filed electronically. Overall, 98% of required SFI filers filed on time and electronically. Ms. Nicolescu shared that the Ethics Commission in Honolulu broadcasts the identity of non-compliant SFI filers and charges \$250 each day the Statement is delinquent.

Chair Castricone credited the Education Division for making certain the SFI filing community stays informed of filing requirements and deadlines and the OSE staff for assisting with those efforts. Further, Chair Castricone inquired as to the possibility of the Board selecting certain on-demand COGEL sessions to attend/view as a group.

6. Ethics Enforcement Officer Mark Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division Report, highlighting that the Division’s initiatives, as they relate to first and second quarter lobbyist filings (ETH-2C and ETH-2D) and SFI filings, are ongoing. The grace period for missed lobbyist filings is set for July 29, 2020. Mr. Wasielewski updated the Board on the successful implementation of the Subcommittee on Audit Process Review’s Initiatives, thus far.

7. Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Crayton presented the lobbyist audit report for Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center, requesting approval of the audit and its findings. Mr. Crayton noted that there were no findings.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Christiana, the Board voted seven (7) to zero (0), with Ms. Mullins abstaining, to approve the audit report for Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center.

8. Executive Director Peter Lewandowski presented his report to the Board, informing the Board that while the OSE staff continues to primarily telework, onsite operations were resumed to address the filing of lobbyist financial reports and SFIs. Executive Director Lewandowski thanked the staff for their work and commitment to facilitate the move for reopening and providing responsive services to OSE's regulated community and the public.

Concerning personnel matters, Mr. Lewandowski informed the Board that he is in the process of hiring a Fiscal Administrative Assistant and that the three "watch dog" agencies concluded a series of on-line and in-person interviews for the Human Resources manager position. The agencies are currently checking references in anticipation to have a chosen candidate onboard in early August.

Finally, Executive Director Lewandowski updated the Board on the relocation plans of OSE and thanked the members for their helpful feedback and continued support upon reviewing the plans of the proposed space for OSE's relocation. Due to the concerns of limited enclosed offices for attorneys and legal investigators and the overall square footage of the proposed space to conduct OSE's operations, Executive Director Lewandowski and Chair Castricone met with OPM and DAS construction planners. Although additional enclosed offices were not granted as a result of the meeting, the proposed space to be occupied by OSE will be reconfigured from the original plans to a layout that best suits OSE's operational needs, and the spaces adjacent to OSE's conference room will be reconfigured into meeting/huddle rooms that will be available for OSE's use. Furthermore, an additional break room is available to OSE on the second floor as well as access to the second floor facilities, in addition to OSE's shared break room. All other originally proposed plans would continue as planned, such as OSE's occupancy in the basement to house its inactive files and information technology equipment; and the retention of assured space located in close proximity to the main entrance to conduct Board meetings and hearings. There will be assigned parking for Board members on meeting day and on days when other proceedings occur in the newly built garage situated across from 165 Capitol Avenue. OSE staff will also have access to parking in the newly built garage.

In response to Board member Cook's inquiry as to the date of relocation, Mr. Lewandowski conveyed two options, the end of the 2020 calendar year or after March of 2021.

Chair Castricone thanked Executive Director Lewandowski for all his work on OSE's relocation initiative, the staff for their flexibility to adapt to the significant proposed changes, and Board member Lipson for reviewing the plans and providing her expertise in the subject matter.

On the motion of Ms. Cook, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 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)