



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 MAY 21, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2020, by teleconference.

Chair of the Board, Dena Castricone, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

Dena Castricone, Chair
Mary Bigelow* (Present for part of the meeting)
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
Michael Morrissey, Legal Investigator
Malissa Hurry, Paralegal
Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal and Clerk of the Board

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the April 23, 2020 Regular Meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Mr. Johnston, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0) to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2020 Regular Meeting (Ms. Bigelow was not present for the vote).

2. Chair Castricone acknowledged the continued work of the OSE staff under the current circumstances. Chair Castricone informed the Board that a remote Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (“UAPA”) hearing is scheduled to occur on June 11, 2020, and she would serve as the hearing officer. Mr. Chiusano volunteered to serve as an alternate hearing officer. Chair Castricone inquired as to the time of the hearing and Executive Director Lewandowski responded that the hearing usually takes place at 10 a.m., but can be adjusted according to the hearing officer’s schedule.
3. General Counsel O’Dowd presented the Legal Division Report, noting recent informal advisory opinions involving the exemption of board members and employees of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority (“PFMLIA”) from the Code. According to Mr. O’Dowd, the reason for the exemption is the oversight of the Legislature to include the PFMLIA within the Code’s definition of a “Quasi-public agency.” He noted that the OSE plans to move swiftly to amend the Code to correct the oversight. At the time of the meeting, Mr. O’Dowd was unaware if PFMLIA plans to comply with the law voluntarily and would keep the Board abreast of any developments in the matter.

Director of Education and Communications Nancy Nicolescu updated the Board as to a conversation she had with the Executive Director of PFMLIA, whose agency plans to voluntarily comply with the Code’s requirements.

Executive Director Peter Lewandowski added that he and Ms. Nicolescu had preliminary conversations with Legislative leadership prior to the pandemic regarding the PFMLIA and the amendment of the Code’s definition of “Quasi-public agency” to include the entity.

4. Ms. Nicolescu presented the Training and Media Report as well as the Statement of Financial Interests (“SFI”) update. Ms. Nicolescu stated that the number of required SFI filers has increased since the last meeting to 2,566. To date, the Division has received 1,051 filings, 15 of which are paper filings. She informed the Board that she would continue to send periodic notices of SFI filing deadlines to the filing community. Finally, Ms. Nicolescu notified the Board that the COGEL Steering Committee met recently and made the decision to cancel the 2020 conference; however, the Committee plans to hold virtual sessions free of charge for its members, which she believes extends to the Board members.

Chair Castricone reminded the Board members to file their SFIs.

5. Ethics Enforcement Officer Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division Report, highlighting that the Division is continuing to telework very well, completing all its core functions and that the Division does not anticipate any delays upon returning to the office. He confirmed that there is a UAPA matter set for June 11, 2020.

Board member Kevin Johnston inquired as to whether the Governor recently extended the SFI filing deadline for 180 days. No one was aware of this deadline extension, and the issue was deferred for research.

6. Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Marc Crayton presented the Lobbyist Audit Report for Seanco, LLC, requesting approval of the audit and its findings. He noted that the audit included one finding, that Seanco, LLC, understated a payment to its communicator lobbyist during the audit period. Seanco, LLC, has since amended its filing to properly reflect to expenditure.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Cook, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0), with Ms. Mullins abstaining, to approve the audit report for Seanco, LLC.

7. Executive Director Lewandowski presented his report to the Board, noting that the staff would continue to telework for the foreseeable future; however, certain staff member would have to return to the office by the close of June or early July for the lobbyist and SFI filing deadlines. He thanked the staff for their great work under the circumstances. Mr. Lewandowski updated the Board on the status of the office's relocation, his recent tour of vacant spaces at the newly renovated State office building and the request to view alternate office spaces. He responded to the Board's questions relating to the expected time of the relocation and whether all watchdog agencies have to relocate together.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 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)