

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

CITIZEN'S ETHICS ADVISORY BOARD OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS 165 Capitol Avenue, Suite 1200, Hartford, CT 06106

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 19, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2023.

Chair of the Board, Dena Castricone, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

Dena Castricone, Chair
N. Beth Cook, Vice-Chair
Mary Bigelow
Charles Chiusano

Thomas Jones
Cheryl Lipson
Karreem Mebane
Laura Schuyler

The following staff members of the OSE were present:

Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director
Brian O'Dowd, General Counsel
Mark Wasielewski, Ethics Enforcement Officer
Marianne Sadowski, Deputy General Counsel
(virtual)
Marc Crayton, Deputy Ethics Enforcement
Officer

Jennifer Montgomery, Associate General
Counsel (virtual)
Diane Buxo, Assistant General Counsel (virtual)
Carol Langevin, Associate Accounts Examiner
Sarah Clark, Director of Education &
Communications
Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal Specialist and Clerk
of the Board

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. Thomas Jones, an appointee of the Speaker of the House (Matt Ritter), and Karreem Mebane, an appointee of the House Majority Leader (Jason Rojas), were sworn in as members of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board by its Chair, Dena Castricone.
2. The minutes of the September 21, 2023 regular Meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Vice-Chair Cook, with Mr. Jones and Mr. Mebane abstaining, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the Minutes of the September 21, 2023 regular Meeting.

3. The Chairperson's report was presented by Chair Castricone, during which she reminded the Board that Ms. Lipson volunteered to serve as the November 9, 2023 Uniform Administrative Procedure Act ("UAPA") Hearing Officer, with Chair Castricone serving as an alternate should a scheduling conflict arise. Chair Castricone further reminded the Board that no volunteer UAPA Hearing Officer is required at this time because the OSE does not hold UAPA hearings in December. A volunteer UAPA Hearing Officer will be sought at the November Board meeting for January 2024 hearings.

Chair Castricone asked Vice-Chair Cook to chair the subcommittee on Administrative Lobbying (which was formed at last month's regular Board meeting), updated new Board members about the subcommittee and the reasoning to form it, and solicited members to join the subcommittee. It was decided that Vice-Chair Cook and Chair Castricone will commence the subcommittee's discussion and other Board members are free to join at any time.

4. General Counsel Brian O'Dowd presented the Legal Division's report, noting that while the Division observed a decline in the number of requests for informal opinions this reporting period, it addressed more complicated requests, some of which may result in "appeals" to the Board.

In addition, Mr. O'Dowd informed the Board that the Division is expecting a petition for a formal opinion from an individual whom the Division believes is not subject to the Code of Ethics for Public Officials; however, the individual is on a Board that expends State funds and exercises State power, so the Division is hesitant to opine on the matter without the Board's input. If the Division receives the petition soon, it will present the petition and a responsive draft at the November regular meeting for the Board's consideration.

5. Ethics Enforcement Officer Mark Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division's report, confirming Chair Castricone's earlier note of no matters scheduled for UAPA hearings in November, and noting there will likely be no UAPA hearings noticed until next year.
6. Associate Accounts Examiner Carol Langevin presented the client lobbyist audit report for Home Care Association of America, requesting approval of the audit and its findings. Ms. Langevin reported that the audit contained two findings: (1) the late filing of a 2021 quarterly financial report, ETH-2D, by two days; and (2) understated payments to the client's communicators totaling \$2,552.40, in 2022. The client lobbyist's financial reports of Home Care Association of America were subsequently amended to properly report payments to its communicators in 2022.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Bigelow, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for Home Care Association.

Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Marc Crayton presented the client lobbyist audit report for Covenant Health, Inc., and requested the approval of the audit. Mr. Crayton reported that the audit contained no findings.

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Vice-Chair Cook, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for Covenant Health, Inc.

7. Director of Education and Communications Sarah Clark presented the Education and Communications report, focusing on the unit's highlights of the month, some of which are provided below:
 - (a) Work continues with Associate General Counsel Jennifer Montgomery to rewrite and reorganize the agency's website-featured lobbyist information.
 - (b) Training occurs about twice a week for state offices/agencies. Ms. Clark expressed appreciation for Executive Director Peter Lewandowski's guidance, support, and trust, as she begins to lead training presentations.
 - (c) 2024 will feature an increased presence of OSE at the State Capitol in connection with the upcoming legislative session. Two weeks before the session gavels in, OSE will host two full days of group training for lobbyists at the Legislative Office Building. In addition, Ms. Clark is awaiting approval to reserve the display area on the concourse at the Capitol to feature educational materials in March 2024 which is not only during the session, but also happens to be National Ethics Awareness Month. (The Board previewed these visual aids at last month's meeting.)
 - (d) October will feature the first Lobbyist Newsletter.
8. The Executive Director report was presented by Executive Director Lewandowski, and consisted of the following:
 - (a) The formal welcoming of the new Board members on behalf of the staff of OSE.
 - (b) An update on the water leak within OSE's office space and its remediation efforts. The office has suspended in-person services to the public and regulated community and reverted to remote services until the remediation and reconstruction conclude.
 - (c) The status of the hiring of a staff attorney to join the Enforcement Division.
 - (d) A specified amount of funds will be requested in the upcoming Budget for necessary upgrades to the online Statement of Financial Interest system.
 - (e) An announcement that Ethics Enforcement Officer Wasielewski was nominated to join the Council on Government Ethics Laws ("COGEL") Steering Committee. Furthermore,

approaching deadlines concerning this year's COGEL conference, to be held from December 3rd through December 6th in Kansas City, were provided.


- (f) A reminder that the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission's Annual Conference will be held tomorrow, October 20, 2023, at the Riverhouse at Goodspeed Station in Haddam.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



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

November 16, 2023

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