

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 FEBRUARY 16, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, February 16, 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	Karen Christiana (virtual)
Nichelle Mullins, Vice-Chair (virtual)	Cheryl Lipson
Mary Bigelow	Laura Schuyler (virtual)
Charles Chiusano	

The following staff members of the OSE were present:

Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director	Diane Buxo, Assistant General Counsel (virtual)
Brian O'Dowd, General Counsel	Jennifer Montgomery, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer (virtual)
Mark Wasielewski, Ethics Enforcement Officer	Carol Langevin, Associate Accounts Examiner (virtual)
Marianne Sadowski, Deputy General Counsel (virtual)	Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal and Clerk of the Board
Marc Crayton, Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer (virtual)	

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the January 19, 2023 Regular meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0), with Ms. Schuyler abstaining, to approve the Minutes of the January 19, 2023 Regular meeting.

2. Chair Castricone commenced the chairperson's report with a reminder that Ms. Lipson will serve as the March 9, 2023 Uniform Administrative Procedure Act ("UAPA") Hearing Officer,

and requested a volunteer Hearing Officer for the April 13, 2023 UAPA hearing. Chair Castricone volunteered. The Chair then noted that the Board is in receipt of Executive Director Peter Lewandowski's self-evaluation, and that the next step in the annual evaluation review process is for the Board's evaluation subcommittee to solicit anonymous feedback from the OSE staff for presentation to the Board at its March Board meeting, in executive session.

3. General Counsel O'Dowd presented the Legal Division report, providing an update that the Regulations are currently with the Office of the Attorney General pending review and approval. Mr. O'Dowd also noted that the volume of opinions requests has been increasing, and many involve complex issues, but there have been no requests for formal Board opinions.
4. Ethics Enforcement Officer Mark Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division report, highlighting that the Division has either resolved or dismissed for good cause 21 of the 49 matters that were noticed for hearing in March in accordance with lobbyists initiatives, and will continue to strive to resolve the remaining matters. Mr. Wasielewski also extended appreciation (on behalf of the Division) to staff member Henry Herschkorn for his work with former state employees to satisfy, in a timely fashion, departing Statement of Financial Interest ("SFI") filing obligations, a task the office previously struggled to achieve due to out-of-date contact information for filers once they leave state service. As a result of Mr. Herschkorn's diligent work, the Division has no enforcement actions against non-compliant departing SFI filers.
5. Executive Director Lewandowski presented the Education and Communications report, noting that the Office has conducted seven mandatory ethics training sessions for members of the General Assembly, which were attended by most members (172, to be exact). OSE plans to hold one more training session when the General Assembly is in session to accommodate the remaining 15 members.

The news of Director of Education and Communications Sarah Clark's leave and newest addition to her family were shared with the Board. Mr. Lewandowski highlighted some of Ms. Clark's contributions to the Office prior to her leave: updating OSE's Ethics Liaison list; conducting outreach to members of the General Assembly; attending ethics trainings to acclimate with the content and the format OSE's employs; assisting with OSE's report to the Governor; and reviewing OSE's website and publications in preparation for updates/reformatting.

Mr. Lewandowski acknowledged and thanked Assistant General Counsel Diane Buxo for preparing this month's media report.

6. Concerning the Legislative Update, Executive Director Lewandowski shared that the Government Administration and Elections ("GAE") Committee, on February 6, 2023, raised OSE's bills as concepts. It is anticipated that the language of the proposals will be published shortly and scheduled for public hearings sometime in early March. Once the language has been published and the proposals receive bill numbers, Mr. Lewandowski plans to meet with co-chairs and ranking members to discuss the substance of the proposals.

Mr. Lewandowski thanked Malissa Hurry in advance for her willingness to assist with the preparation of future legislative reports and the monitoring of bills.

7. Executive Director Lewandowski presented his Executive Director's report, highlighting the following items:

(a) Concerning the budget, on February 8, 2023, the Governor released his biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, with the recommendation of OSE's proposed budget, as requested: \$1,935,000 for 2024; and \$1,964,000 for 2025. Mr. Lewandowski had an opportunity this morning to testify before the Appropriations Committee regarding OSE's budget and he was asked about the increased funding for the 16th position, which needs to be reclassified from the office assistant position to a staff attorney position to satisfy current needs of office. Also, requested in the OSE budget was funding for information technology ("IT") initiatives. The next step is to meet with the Appropriations subcommittee, which has cognizance over the three watch-dog agencies, in early March to discuss the details of each agency's budget.

In reply to a question from Chair Castricone, Mr. Lewandowski explained that each year's proposed budgets include all increases that were previously discussed with the Board.

(b) Lobbyists' Reporting and Registrations:

- For every biennial, OSE generates slightly over \$1,000,000 in lobbyist registration payments, which is deposited into the State's general fund.
- At the January meeting, it was inaccurately reported that the Office received \$855,000 in lobbyist registration fees. As of yesterday, the Office has received \$791,000 in lobbyist registration payments, and has paid over \$14,000 in credit card fees (an expense associated with electronic collection of lobbyist registration payments).
- Although the lobbyist registration season is slowing, it is still ongoing. To date, 873 client lobbyists, 467 in-house communicator lobbyists, and 164 outside communicator lobbyists have registered.


(c) **The Report to the Governor.** On February 9, 2023, OSE filed its annual statutory report with the Office of the Governor. The report covers calendar year 2022 activities. Mr. Lewandowski acknowledged that the preparation of the report was a team effort and thanked Mr. O'Dowd, Mr. Wasielewski, their respective teams, Ms. Clark, and IT Analyst III Ann Morgan.

Chair Castricone and Ms. Lipson congratulated Mr. Lewandowski on a well-prepared report.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Bigelow, the Board voted seven (7) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



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

March 16, 2023

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