



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 15, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("Board") of the Office of State Ethics ("OSE") held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, February 15, 2024.

Vice-Chair of the Board, N. Beth Cook, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

Dena Castricone, Chair (virtual)
N. Beth Cook, Vice-Chair
Charles Chiusano

Thomas Jones
Cheryl Lipson
Laura Schuyler (virtual)

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

Diane Buxo, Assistant General Counsel (virtual)
Adrian Baron, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer
Carol Langevin, Associate Accounts Examiner
Sarah Clark, Director of Education & Communications
Melissa Hamilton, Paralegal & Clerk of the Citizen's
Ethics Advisory Board

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the January 18, 2024 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) to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 regular meeting.

2. The minutes of the January 18, 2024 special meeting of the Subcommittee on Municipal Ethics were presented to the subcommittee for approval.

On the motion of Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the subcommittee voted four (4) to zero (0) to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 special meeting of the Subcommittee on Municipal Ethics.

3. The minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting of the Subcommittee on Administrative Lobbying were presented to the subcommittee for approval.

On the motion of Chair Castricone, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the subcommittee voted four (4) to zero (0) to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting of the Subcommittee on Administrative Lobbying.

4. Vice-Chair Cook presented the chairperson's report on behalf of Chair Castricone, who attended the meeting virtually. Chair Castricone added that the Executive Director's evaluation and the opportunity to provide feedback must be received by the close of this week.
5. General Counsel Brian O'Dowd presented the Petition for Advisory Opinion submitted by Jon Hagert, a former Department of Transportation ("DOT") employee. He recommended that the Board approve the Petition.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the Petition for Advisory Opinion submitted by Jon Hagert.

6. Associate General Counsel Jennifer Montgomery presented Draft Advisory Opinion 2024-1, issued in response to the Petition submitted by Jon Hagert concerning his post-state employment with a contractor of his former state agency, the DOT.

The petitioner, Mr. Hagert, was present at the meeting and thanked the Board for its time and consideration of his Petition.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Schuyler, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve Draft Advisory Opinion 2024-1.

General Counsel O'Dowd presented the Legal Division report, highlighting that a meeting was held with the Office of the Treasurer regarding the "finders' fee" regulation.

The Vice-Chair noted that she inadvertently omitted Board member Karreem Mebane during roll call, and Executive Director Lewandowski informed the Board that Mr. Mebane stepped down from the Board in January 2024 due to a conflict.

7. Prior to Ethics Enforcement Officer Wasielewski's presentation of the Enforcement Division's report, Vice-Chair Cook reminded the Board that Board member Chiusano will serve as the March 14, 2024 Uniform Administrative Procedure Act ("UAPA") Hearing Officer, and then she asked for a volunteer hearing officer to serve at the UAPA hearings scheduled for April 11, 2024. Board member Lipson volunteered and Chair Castricone volunteered to serve as an alternate hearing officer in the event of a scheduling conflict.

In his presentation of the Enforcement Division report, Mr. Wasielewski shared that as of the date of the Board meeting, there were 18 open UAPA matters, and that he will provide additional status reports to the hearing officers as the UAPA hearing date draws near.

8. Ms. Langevin presented the client lobbyist audit report for the National Payroll Reporting Consortium, Inc., noting that it contained no findings, and requested the Board's approval of the audit report.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for the National Payroll Reporting Consortium, Inc.

Mr. Crayton presented the client lobbyist audit reports for De Tomaso Automobili Limited, and SEIU CT State Council, and requested approval of each audit report and its findings.

Mr. Crayton reported that the audit for De Tomaso Automobili Limited contained no findings.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for De Tomaso Automobili Limited.

Concerning the audit for SEIU CT State Council, Mr. Crayton reported three findings and noted that it amended its reports to correct the error.

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Chair Castricone, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for SEIU CT State Council.

9. Sarah Clark, Director of Education and Communications, presented the Education and Communications report:
 - (a) Trainings/Presentations – The 2-day lobbyist training series in January was a huge success! The entire OSE agency participated in the training series, and over 100 lobbyists and their staff were trained on the Code of Ethics, filing procedures, audit preparation, and enforcement. The lobbyist training will become an annual event and will be held at the beginning of each legislative session.

The City of West Haven's staff were trained in municipal ethics' best practices, and how the state's ethical standards may be applied at the municipal level.
 - (b) The Board and designated staff members were reminded that the deadline to file their Statement of Financial Interest ("SFI") is May 1, 2024, which is 77 days away.
 - (c) OSE's annual report for calendar year 2023 was submitted to the Governor's Office.
12. The Executive Director report was presented by Mr. Lewandowski, and the following updates were provided:

- (a) The exterior work of the ongoing remediation and construction at OSE due to water leaks has been completed, and the interior work has begun. About 10 days of construction have been projected for the interior work. The office will remain closed to in-person patrons. The staff (except for the Information Technology Division due to their dual support role to OSE and the Freedom of Information Commission) will revert to 100% telework during this period of construction.
- (b) On February 9, 2024, OSE filed its annual report to the Governor for calendar year 2023, pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists.
- (c) The State Auditors have commenced an audit of the OSE, on February 1, 2024, for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.
- (d) Budget – The Governor released his budget adjustments on February 7, 2024. OSE requested \$40,000 for necessary improvements to its SFI system.
- (e) The SFI filing season was announced and email communications to filers will begin in March. Currently there are 2,602 filers.
- (f) Because the state's preferred online video-conference platform is Microsoft Teams and the OSE's subscription to its GoToMeeting platform (which was selected during the pandemic) is due to expire at the end of March 2024, the Board members were asked their preferences on online video-conference platforms between the two platforms for the continuation of its hybrid meetings. The consensus among the Board members is Microsoft Teams.

13. Mr. Lewandowski presented the second batch of legislative proposals, consisting of three initiatives, for the Board's consideration. He provided that the next step is to present the three proposals discussed here together with the five proposals the Board approved at the January 18, 2024 meeting to the Government Administration and Elections Committee tomorrow morning.

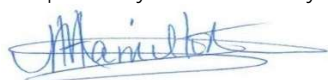
On the motion of Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Chiusano, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the three Legislative Proposals.

15. Adjournment

On the motion of Mr. Chiusano, seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Melissa Hamilton
Clerk of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board

Office of State Ethics

March 21, 2024

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