



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 20, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board (Board) of the Office of State Ethics (OSE) held a Meeting on Thursday, February 20, 2025.

Chair of the Board, N. Beth Cook, called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

N. Beth Cook, *Chair*

Charles Chiusano, *Vice-chair*

Mary Bigelow

Dena Castricone (virtual)

Cheryl Lipson

Laura Schuyler

The following staff members of the OSE were present:

Peter Lewandowski, *Executive Director*

Brian O'Dowd, *General Counsel* (virtual)

Mark Wasielewski, *Ethics Enforcement Officer*

Sarah Clark, *Director of Education & Communications*

Marianne Sadowski, *Deputy General Counsel* (virtual)

Marc Crayton, *Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer*

Jennifer Montgomery, *Associate General Counsel* (virtual)

Diane Buxo, *Assistant General Counsel* (virtual)

Sam Rosengren, *Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer*

Carol Langevin, *Associate Accounts Examiner*

Melissa Hamilton, *Paralegal Specialist* (Legal Division) &
Clerk of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. The minutes of the January 16, 2025 regular meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Vice-chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2025 regular meeting.

2. Chair Cook presented the chairperson's report, noting that an executive session is required at today's meeting to discuss personnel matters, specifically, the executive director's annual performance evaluation.
3. Chair Cook provided an update on the Board's vacancies and shared an idea she and Executive Director Peter Lewandowski explored: i.e., for the Board to write to appointing authorities who currently have vacancies on the Board to express concerns regarding a potential for a lack of quorum and urging them to prioritize filling the vacant seats. As a result of a discussion, the Board agreed to forward such a letter with copies to all appointing authorities.

On the motion of Vice-chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to forward a letter to appointing authorities who currently have vacancies on the Board.

4. Associate Accounts Examiner Carol Langevin presented two (2) client lobbyist audit reports to the Board for approval:

(i) CT Conference of Independent Colleges

On the motion of Ms. Bigelow, seconded by Ms. Schuyler, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for CT Conference of Independent Colleges.

(ii) The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Vice-chair Chiusano, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum.

5. Deputy Ethics Enforcement Officer Marc Crayton presented NTE Energy client lobbyist audit report for approval. He noted findings of late reporting and lack of payments to its outside communicator lobbyists.

On the motion of Vice-chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Schuyler, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for NTE Energy.

6. General Counsel Brian O'Dowd presented the Petition for Advisory Opinion submitted by Michael Anderson. Mr. O'Dowd recommended that the Board approve the Petition.

On the motion of Vice-Chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Bigelow, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the Petition for Advisory Opinion submitted by Michael Anderson.

7. General Counsel Brian O'Dowd presented the Legal Division report.

8. Ethics Enforcement Officer Mark Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division report, and requested a hearing officer to preside over the April 10, 2025 enforcement hearings pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA). Ms. Schuyler volunteered.

Mr. Wasielewski also noted that the enforcement initiatives related to the January lobbyist filings have resulted in the Enforcement Division opening thirty-seven matters for late filings. Of those matters, thirteen (13) have settled, and thirteen (13) have been dismissed for good cause. The Enforcement Division has collected \$1,340 in penalties. Eleven (11) matters are pending and scheduled to be heard on March 13, 2025.

9. Education & Communications Director Sarah Clark presented the Education & Communications report. She reminded the Board and OSE's required Statement of Financial Interests (SFI) filers that 70 days remain until the 2024 SFI is due. Ms. Clark answered questions regarding the two graphics included in her written report.

10. Executive Director Lewandowski presented his report highlighting the following items:

- On February 11, 2025, OSE submitted its statutory annual report to the Governor covering the 2024 calendar year.
- Lobbyist registration for the 2025-2026 biennium period is ongoing. To date, OSE has collected \$820,000 in lobbyist registration fees, which will be deposited in the State's general fund. So far this year, 945 client lobbyists, 522 in-house communicator lobbyists, and 156 outside communicator lobbyists have registered. These numbers are consistent with the previous biennium.
- Concerning the State's budget, on February 5, 2025, the Governor released the biennium budget for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, and recommended OSE's proposed budget of \$2,870,000 for fiscal year 2026 and \$2,770,000 for fiscal year 2027. Although the Appropriations Committee did not request budget presentations from the watch-dog agencies, including OSE, on February 14, 2025, Mr. Lewandowski submitted written testimony before the Committee. Lastly, as done last year, the Governor introduced a deficiency bill for the current fiscal year, reducing OSE's current budget by \$25,000 (last year's reduction was \$100,000). Deficiency bills are typically tied to ongoing vacancies at agencies.
- The SFI filing season is here. As of today, there are over 2600 required SFI filers. Email reminders to filers will begin in March.

11. Mr. Lewandowski presented a legislative update, noting that OSE's legislative proposals were raised by the new Government Oversight Committee (GOS), and that he testified, on Tuesday, February 18, at a public hearing, in support of two bills containing OSE's proposals: (1) [HB 6931](#), *An Act Concerning Conflicts of Interest Due to An Employer Other than the State Under the State Code of Ethics*, and (2) [SB 1296](#), *An Act Concerning Statements of Financial Interests Under the State Code of Ethics for Public Officials*.

In addition, in answer to questions from the Board, Mr. Lewandowski informed the Board that both the GOS and the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committees have cognizance over OSE. In fact, while the GOS Committee raised OSE's current legislative proposals, the GAE Committee held a hearing on February 7, 2025, to address two bills: (1) [SB 1227](#), *An Act Increasing Various Monetary Thresholds Under the State Codes of Ethics*, which Mr. Lewandowski testified in support of the bill as currently drafted; and (2) [HB 6848](#), *An Act Concerning the Adoption Of Municipal Conflict Of Interest Provisions*, a bill pursued by OSE during the 2024 legislative session.

Finally, Mr. Lewandowski also testified before the General Law Committee regarding section 4 of [HB 6858](#), *An Act Concerning the Attorney General's Recommendations Regarding Tickets, Veteran Or Military Benefit Services, The State Code Of Ethics, Umbilical Cord Blood And The Solicitation Of Charitable Funds Act*, which would allow state employees to serve as expert witnesses without an open and public selection process, as required by General Statutes § 1-84 (i). Mr. Lewandowski proposed alternative language, which he shared with the Office of the Attorney General and the General Law Committee leadership.

12. Executive Session

On the motion of Vice-chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Castricone, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to enter an Executive session to discuss the evaluation of the Executive Director pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 1-200 (6) (A).

At 1:56 p.m., the Board entered an Executive session.

The following Board members were present for the Executive session:

N. Beth Cook, *Chair*

Charles Chiusano, *Vice-chair*

Mary Bigelow

Dena Castricone (virtual)

Cheryl Lipson

Laura Schuyler

No staff members of OSE were present for the Executive session.

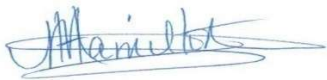
The Board exited the Executive session at 2:16 p.m.

13. Adjournment

On the motion of Ms. Lipson, seconded by Vice-chair Chiusano, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Melissa Hamilton

Clerk of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board

Office of State Ethics

3/20/25

Date approved.

(By the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board)