



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 MARCH 20, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

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

Chair of the Board, N. Beth Cook, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

N. Beth Cook, *Chair*
Charles Chiusano, *Vice-chair*
Mary Bigelow
Meaghan Cooper

Dena Castricone
Cheryl Lipson
Laura Schuyler
Karess Cannon

The following staff members of the OSE were present:

Peter Lewandowski, *Executive Director*
Brian O'Dowd, *General Counsel*
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*
Sam Rosengren, *Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer*
Carol Langevin, *Associate Accounts Examiner*
Alaaeldin Ali, *IT Assistant*

The following topics were addressed during the meeting:

1. Meaghan Mary Cooper, an appointee of Speaker Matthew Ritter, was sworn in by the Board's Chair, N. Beth Cook.
2. Karess Cannon, an appointee of House Majority Leader Jason Rojas, was sworn in by the Board's Chair, N. Beth Cook.
3. The minutes of the February 20, 2025 regular meeting were presented to the Board for approval.

On the motion of Ms. Castricone, seconded by Ms. Lipson, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the Minutes of the February 20, 2025 regular meeting. Both new members (Cooper and Cannon) abstained from the vote.

4. Chair Cook presented the chairperson's report, welcoming the two newly sworn-in members Meaghan Cooper and Karess Cannon. Chair Cook noted that the Board's letter to appointing authorities concerning vacancies on the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board was effective and expressed appreciation

to Director of Education & Communications Clark for assistance in drafting and coordinating this communication.

Chair Cook thanked all Board members for their cooperation with this effort, and Executive Director Lewandowski for his ongoing patience and steady attention in this and other areas.

5. Vice-Chair Chiusano presented a report on the UCONN Faculty Consulting Oversight Committee, and gave a brief overview of how that relates to OSE's mission. General Statutes § 1-84 (r) provides for UCONN faculty and staff to "enter into a consulting agreement or engage in a research project with a public or private entity" under policies established by the board of trustees. He noted that there is excellent oversight provided for "disclosure, review and management of conflicts of interest" and this enables concerns specific to academia to be addressed.
6. At the Chairperson's request, Associate Account Examiner Carol Langevin explained the client lobbyist audit program to the new Board members. She then presented one (1) client lobbyist audit report to the Board for approval:

- (i) MTM, Inc.

On the motion of Ms. Castricone, seconded by Ms. Bigelow, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the audit report for MTM, Inc. Both new members (Cooper and Cannon) abstained from the vote.

7. Deputy General Counsel Marianne Sadowski presented draft Advisory Opinion No. 2025-1 in response to the previously approved Petition submitted by Michael Anderson. Mr. Anderson is a recently appointed Workers Compensation Administrative Law Judge, and his question is whether he must resign from an unpaid elected position at the Town of North Stonington as a member of the Finance Board. Ms. Sadowski recommended that the Board approve the Opinion, which concludes that nothing in the Code requires Mr. Anderson to resign that position.

On the motion of Vice-Chair Chiusano, seconded by Ms. Castricone, the Board voted six (6) to zero (0) to approve the draft Advisory Opinion. Both new Board members (Cooper and Cannon) abstained from the vote.

8. General Counsel Brian O'Dowd presented the Legal Division report. He discussed an informal opinion, recently issued, with respect to lobbying and fiscal sponsors.
9. Ethics Enforcement Officer Mark Wasielewski presented the Enforcement Division report, and requested a hearing officer to preside over the May 8, 2025 enforcement hearings pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA). Ms. Castricone volunteered. Ms. Lipson agreed to serve as an alternate hearing officer for this date.

Mr. Wasielewski also noted that there is a confidential matter which has been scheduled for a probable cause hearing on June 5, 2025. If probable cause is found by the Judge Trial Referee, a Board hearing must be commenced within thirty (30) days, where Board members will serve as the jury. He also stated that there are many confidential matters being investigated, significantly more than in recent years. For the benefit of the new Board members, Mr. Wasielewski explained that not all matters

initiated proceed to a probable cause hearing, and that the majority of matters settle. Nevertheless, the Enforcement Division is unusually busy so far this year.

At the Chairperson's request, Mr. Wasielewski also discussed OSE's involvement in the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) and the benefits that this organization brings, especially because OSE actively participates in its initiatives. The new Board members may participate and familiarize themselves with all it offers. Ms. Castricone noted that OSE's involvement is highly praised at COGEL events, particularly at its annual conference.

10. 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 42 days remain until the 2024 SFI is due. The two new Board members' names will be placed into the SFI system for them to file a 2024 SFI as required. Sarah explained that a training on the SFI database and filers' list maintenance will be given on Monday, March 24 and ethics liaisons for both agencies and quasi-public agencies will be trained by Ann Morgan of IT, Sarah, and Peter. She brought members' attention to the newly redesigned ethics liaison newsletter, along with an upcoming quarterly lobbyist newsletter. Chair Cook noted that the liaison newsletter in particular is densely packed with helpful information. Finally, Sarah stated that trainings (and requests for trainings) remain busy but are starting to even out a bit as the lobbyist registration season becomes less hectic.

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

- Because Connecticut has a biennial lobbyist registration scheme, all client lobbyists must re-register on odd years and so far in 2025, OSE has collected \$862,000 in registration fees. There are 998 client lobbyists currently registered, 535 in-house communicator lobbyists, and 164 outside communicators. Chair Cook noted for new Board members that registration fees collected do not benefit OSE but go directly to the General Fund.
- As the lobbyist registration for the 2025-2026 biennial period is gradually being completed, the annual filing season for SFIs is gearing up. Last year about 2600 individuals were required to file, ranging from elected officials to constitutional officers along with those state employees meeting the Governor's Standard based on their agency's determination.
- Concerning the State's budget, the Appropriations Committee has not requested testimony from OSE concerning the budget for fiscal years 2026 and 2027. Nevertheless written testimony was submitted by Mr. Lewandowski.

12. Mr. Lewandowski then presented the legislative update, noting that OSE's legislative proposals raised by the new Government Oversight Committee (GOS) in two bills, [HB 6931](#) and [SB 1296](#), were favorably voted out of committee and placed on the calendar for action in the House and Senate.

A new bill was raised in the GOS committee, [HB 7185](#), which would require OSE to conduct a study reviewing the Code and recommending changes and updates. Mr. Lewandowski noted that this is something that OSE does routinely; however, if the committee wants to make a specific recommendation, OSE will work with GOS to update the Code.

The Government Administration and Elections Committee, which also has cognizance over OSE, voted two ethics-related bills, [SB 1227](#) and [HB 6848](#), favorably out of committee.

Finally, Mr. Lewandowski noted that [HB 6858](#), a bill proposed by the Office of the Attorney General 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), was voted out of the Committee favorably with proposed substitute language.

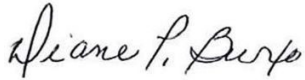
13. Chair Cook noted that no closed or executive session was required, and that no members of the public were present (either in person or virtually) to provide public comment.

14. Adjournment

On the motion of Ms. Bigelow, seconded by Vice-chair Chiusano, the Board voted eight (8) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Diane P. Buxo
Assistant General Counsel and Acting
Clerk of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board
Office of State Ethics

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