



## Vermont State Ethics Commission

### Minutes of June 4, 2021 (Unapproved)

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Acting Commission Chair Paul Erlbaum at 10:06 a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Michele Eid, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Sarah Biolsi Vangel joined the meeting at 10:13 a.m.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** On the motion of Christopher Davis, second by Paul Erlbaum, the minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting were approved with one typo corrected. Michele Eid, who did not attend that meeting, abstained.
- 3. Public Comment:** None
- 4. and 5. Executive Director's Report and Legislative Update (combined):** Larry Novins updated the Commission on the status of the two ethics bills submitted this year to the Legislature. H.135, which amended the original ethics statutes, was passed with a Senate Amendment adding the 0.5 time administrative position removed by the House Appropriations Committee earlier in the legislative session. Governor Scott signed the bill into law on June 1, 2021. The amendments became effective immediately on June 1.

H.384, the Ethics Code which the Commission submitted to the House and Senate Government Operations Committees last November, was not introduced until March 9, 2021. It received no hearings in the House. The Senate Government Operations Committee considered "Ethics Code" at two occasions. It did not specifically address H.384. That Committee did not vote on the proposal. It did indicate that the Code would be one of the first things it would take up in January. Among the concerns expressed by SGO members was whether the code should statutorily apply to legislators and non-judge employees of the judicial branch. In the meantime, the Commission should compose a "plain language" bullet point summary of the proposed Ethics Code.

The passage of H.135 means that former Chair Julie Hulburd's successor must now be selected by the Society of Human Resource Management, Vermont State Council, the new appointing body. Novins will contact the individuals involved to let them know of the change. There is overlap in personnel of the old and new appointing bodies, so it is hoped the change will not result in a delayed appointment.

Novins briefly spoke of continuing computer issues. It is hoped that an administrative assistant will be able to manage most computer issues for the Commission.

- 6. Executive Session to Discuss Complaints and Guidance Requests:** On the motion of Michele Eid, second by Christopher Davis, the Commission went into executive session to discuss complaints and guidance requests. These matters are confidential per 3 V.S.A. §§ 1221(d), 1223(c), and 1225(a)(3). On

the motion of Michele Eid, seconded by Sarah Biolsi Vangel, the Commission voted to conclude the Executive Session and return to open session.

**7. Other Business.** Novins will prepare a job description that can be used when the search for the newly authorized administrative assistant begins.

**8. Adjournment:** Michele Eid moved to adjourn, second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel. The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** Next regular monthly meeting July 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.\* At this time the meeting is anticipated to be held remotely via Zoom.

\*On the morning of the meeting, the needed Zoom meeting ID number and password will be posted on the Ethics Commission web site under "Meetings." Directions for attending the meeting via internet video or by telephone will be included.