



Vermont State Ethics Commission

Minutes of March 3, 2021 (approved)

1. Call to Order: The meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Commission Chair Julie Hulburd at 10:08 a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Paul Erlbaum, Sarah Biolsi Vangel, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Michele Eid tried to join the meeting via zoom but was unsuccessful.

2. Approval of Minutes: On the motion of Sarah Biolsi Vangel second by Paul Erlbaum, the minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting were approved.

3. Public Comment: None

4. Executive Director's Report: Larry Novins reviewed problems with received Financial Disclosure forms. Seven state executive officers left large portions of the forms blank. It turned out that the directions section of the form lacked language specifying that the information to be provided in the form was supposed to reflect income from the "previous calendar year" as required by statute. Novins revised the form, then sent it to seven individuals for them to provide information required by statute. All complied.

Novins outlined the process by which the printer which the Commission had approved in February went from idea to reality. It involved more than 30 emails and multiple telephone calls before the printer was received, set up, and operating properly.

Novins discussed an unusual email seeking his approval and signature on forms for a state employee not working for the Ethics Commission. The matter was resolved without Novins signing any of the forms.

Novins reviewed the progress of H.135, the bill to amend the current statute governing the Ethics Commission. It has been approved by the House and is now at the Senate for further action. If needed, Novins, is prepared to ask for a modification of the "previous calendar year" language so that financial disclosure forms will be up-to-date for any executive officer whose appointment comes mid or late year.

Novins reviewed the status of the draft statutory code of ethics. It awaits introduction, but was given special permission to be introduced after the normal cut-off date.

5. Annual Report Discussion: none. This should not have been on the agenda.

6. Statutory Proposals for 2021: See, Executive Director's report above.

7. Other business: In response to an email soliciting additional budget item requests which, thanks to anticipated federal COVID funds may now be possible, the Commission agreed that seeking funding for

its administrative assistant, and a computer, printer, and phone for that person should be submitted. Novins will do that immediately.

8. Executive Session to Discuss Complaints and Guidance Requests: On the motion of Paul Erlbaum, second by Chris 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 Sarah Biolsi Vangel and Chris Davis the Commission voted to conclude the Executive Session and return to open session.

10. Adjournment: Paul Erlbaum moved to adjourn, second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Next Meeting: Next regular monthly meeting April 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.