

**Vermont State Ethics Commission**

**Minutes of January 6, 2021 Meeting (approved)**

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Commission Chair Julie Hulburd at 10:17a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Sarah Biolsi Vangel and Paul Erlbaum and Executive Director Larry Novins. Commission members Chris Davis and Michele Eid were not present.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** On the motion of Paul Erlbaum second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel, the minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting were approved.

**3. Public Comment**: None

**4. Executive Director’s Report**: Larry Novins informed the Commission of his work getting the Executive Officer Disclosure Form formatted in a fillable PDF format. The form has been sent to the Executive Branch to be distributed to those who must fill it out. It is also now available from the Ethics Commission’s website. Novins briefed the Commission website on other changes to the website to highlight the Ethics Commission’s submissions to the Legislature and the history of the Commission’s work toward a statutory code of ethics.

Novins updated the Commission on campaign finance reports received from the Attorney General’s Office. They are discussed in the Annual Report.

Budget: Last month’s budget meeting went as predicted. The Ethics Commission should be able to function at its current level. Should the Commission ever receive authority to hire administrative help, a new budget request will be necessary.

Office functions: Novins continues to work from home, going to the officer very infrequently to see if there has been any USPS mail dropped there. On-going IT glitches require time and effort to overcome. Among the recent problems: lost “sent” email, and the discovery that the main email account for the Ethics Commission had been disabled. They have since been restored.

Annual Report: Novins completed updated drafts of the Annual Report. See below.

**5. Annual Report discussion:**  One the motion of Sarah Biolsi Vangel, second by Paul Erlbaum, the approved the draft Annual Report and approved addition of the Commission Chair’s message to be included. Commission Chair Julie Hulburd and Executive Director Larry Novins will meet soon to properly format the report so it can be sent electronically to the Legislature as required by statute. A printed version of the Annual Report will not be prepared this year.

**6. Other Business:** Commissioner Paul Erlbaum discussed his interest in going through a training for possible participation in a mediation program under the auspices of the Judicial branch and how that activity would affect his continued service as an Ethics Commission member. The training is not scheduled to occur until summer 2021. Whether it will lead to his participation in that program at some indefinite time after that will not be known for some time and will depend on whether budgets permit the program to continue. The Commission agreed to resume discussion of this matter at its February meeting when it is hoped all five members can be present.

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

**7. Adjournment:** Paul Erlbaum moved to adjourn, second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel. The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

**Next Meetings:**  Next regular monthly meeting: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Again, the meeting will be held remotely.