**Vermont State Ethics Commission**

**6 Baldwin St. Rm. 315, Montpelier, VT**

**July 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

**1.** **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Julie Hulburd at 10:07 a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Paul Erlbaum, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Commissioner Sarah Biolsi Vangel joined the meeting a few minutes later by telephone.

**2. Minutes:** On the motion of Chris Davis, second by Paul Erlbaum, the minutes of the June 5, 2019 meeting were approved.

**3.** **Public Comment**: None

**4.** **Website:** Novins will contact VT Web Marketing in Stowe to get previously discussed changes to “go live.” He will explore adding links to show the ORCA/Vermont Votes Interview and for his presentation about the Commission (see below). Novins will explore how other revisions or additions to the website can be efficiently achieved.

**5. Budget report:** Commissioners Hulburd and Eid will speak with Bradley Kukenberger, AOA, about clarifying how operating funds can be most expeditiously accessed by the Executive Director for Commission use. Novins has contacted Kukenberger regarding how to roll over any excess FY 2019 funds into the 2020 budget.

**6.** **General Principles:**  Executive Director Novins provided the Commission with an up-dated draft of the General Principles with some proposed substantive changes of definitions and elimination of redundant language in the current version. He will provide another updated version for the Commission’s August meeting.

**7.** **Executive Director Report:**

a. Larry Novins reported on his continuing efforts and plans to stay in touch with legislators and government officials as he updates Commission public documents as he works on drafts of legislative recommendations for next year’s session.

b. Research and review of ethics laws and rules of other states continues.

c. The office conference table and chairs have been delivered.

d. Letterhead and business cards have been delivered.

e. On June 11 Novins spoke as part of a panel for an “Ethics for Government Lawyers” continuing education program sponsored by the Attorney General’s office. His presentation is on video and may be put on the Commission web site. Individuals who attended the presentation commented that they were surprised at how much of state government is not covered by current ethics legislation. Later the same week Novins repeated the presentation for the Attorneys of the Defender General system and Vermont Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

**8. Outreach:** The Commission discussed how it can or should reach out to the public to maintain awareness of the Commission’s activities and ethics in government generally.

**9. Advisory Opinions:** The Commission discussed whether advisory opinions can or should ever be withdrawn. More specifically, the Commission reviewed the history leading up to the adoption of the new policy on issuing advisory opinions and whether Opinion 18-01 should be withdrawn. That discussion will continue at the August meeting.

**10. 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 Chris Davis, second by Paul Erlbaum, the Commission concluded its executive session.

**11.** **Other business:**  None

**12: Adjournment:** Paul Erlbaum moved to adjourn, second by Chris Davis. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. The Commission’s next meeting is scheduled for August 7, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.