

**Vermont State Ethics Commission**

**Minutes of October 2, 2019 Meeting**

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting, held at the Ethics Commission office 6 Baldwin St. Montpelier, was called to order by Commission Chair Julie Hulburd at 10:03a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Sarah Biolsi Vangel (by phone), Paul Erlbaum, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Michele Eid was unable to attend.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** On the motion of Paul Erlbaum, second by Chris Davis, the minutes of the September 4, 2019 meeting were approved.

**3. Public Comment**: None.

**4. Executive Director’s Report**: Larry Novins updated the Commission on the administrative aspects of running the Commission office, budget meetings and IT challenges. He, along with Commission Chair Julie Hulburd will attend the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Annual Town Fair and provide information about the Commission at an Ethics Commission display booth. Novins also updated the Commission on changes to the website, one of which was to re-emphasize the unchanged practice and policy that *complaints may come from any source*. Also added to the website was a link to Vermont’s whistleblower statute. The financial disclosure form for candidates was updated and appears on the Secretary of State’s website. Last month Novins wrote to all of Vermont’s town clerks asking them to send copies of their conflict of interest policies to the Commission. As soon as enough are received, a new page will be created with contain links to the policies.

Work on the revisions to the Commission’s Ethics Code continues. Novins provided the Commission with an explanation of changes. The Commission suggested a couple of minor changes which will be added to the draft. Novins will present a final draft for the Commission’s approval at its November meeting. Novins consulted with the Department of Human Resources and reviewed the draft with its General Counsel. The Department’s official position on the draft is neither “supporting or opposing” the document.

Novins also shared with the Commission a rough draft of suggested amendments to the statutes creating the Ethics Commission. Among the changes suggested are changing Commissioners’ terms of office to five years (to promote institutional memory and allow orderly member succession), making financial disclosures an annual requirement (in line with all other states), and adding to the Commission’s responsibilities that it submit to the legislature a draft code of ethics to be considered for adoption as statute.

Novins will be providing an ethics training for the Human Rights Commission later this month.

**5. Review of General Principles:** Discussed above.

**6. Legislative Recommendations:** Status. Discussed above.

**7. Financial and Spending Policies:**  to be discussed next month when Commission Eid will be present.

**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).

**9. Other Business:** No action discussed.

**Adjournment:** Paul Erlbaum moved to adjourn, second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel. The meeting adjourned at 11:45a.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 6, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at Room 315, 6 Baldwin St., Montpelier.