**Vermont State Ethics Commission**

**Minutes of Meeting January 9, 2019**

**Meeting held at Commission Office**

**6 Baldwin St. Room 315**

**Montpelier, Vermont**

**Present:** Commission members Julie Hulburd and Madeline Motta in person, Commission members Sarah Biolsi Vangel and Christopher Davis, and Suzanne Lowensohn participated by telephone. Suzanne Lowensohn, whose named successor declined appointment to the Commission, will continue to serve on the Commission until a successor accepts appointment. Also present: Executive Director Larry Novins.

**Call to Order:** Madeline Motta, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:23 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting were approved.

**Ethics Commission Website:**  Chair Motta met with VT Web Marketing to develop and improve the website. Ms. Motta will provide them information about COGEL meetings, and the training DVD. Possible future inclusions: an education and training tab, power point, a calendar of events, and ethics quizzes. The Commission office telephone number is to be posted on the website.

**Disclosure Forms:**  Formatting of the 2019 Candidate Disclosure Statement is completed. Both the Candidate Disclosure Statement and the Disclosure Statement for Executive Officers & Commission Members are to be added to the Commission website as soon as possible accessible from the “Disclosures” link. The Secretary of State’s Office has the newly revised Candidate Disclosure Form.

**Review Draft: Operating Procedures:** Formatting of information and opinions posted on the website to be further reviewed.

**SEC Marketing Update:** New brochures were printed, but already need revision. Information about Commissions will be provided on the website, not in the brochures. More brochures will be printed. Ms. Motta will ensure that the brochure is ready for public distribution. DHR will be consulted about brochure and poster distribution to other state agencies. Julie Hulburd will draft a letter to accompany brochures when they are distributed.

**Annual Report:** The Commissioners reviewed on-going drafts of the various parts of the Annual Report. The Commission reviewed formatting and agreed on format changes. Members will provide additional comments to the Chair before the report is finalized.

**Update on Government Ethics Training Efforts:** Novins will to contact Senator Tim Ashe and Representative Mitzi Johnson to arrange legislative ethics training sessions. Novins will contact the Sgt. Of Arms to schedule a day where the Ethics Commission can have a display booth for legislators and the public to raise awareness of the Commission’s duties and its ethics resources for legislators.

**Website Content – Display:** Novins will work with Harry Bell to learn how to access, use, and modify the website. The Commission discussed how items on the website can be more usefully displayed.

**Format for Future Agendas:**  The Commission reviewed the agenda format and saw no current need to make format changes.

**Disclosure Reports Update:** The disclosure forms should be on the web in the next few days.

**Complaints and Guidance Update:** Complaints and guidance requests are confidential. 3 V.S.A. §§ 1221(d), 1223(c), 1225(a)(3). Julie Hulburd moved to go to Executive Session. Sarah Biolsi Vangel seconded the motion which passed.

After the Executive Session, the Commission discussed using the topics of some ethics advice as a subject for future ethics trainings.

**Other business:** Executive Director Novins spoke about additional office needs (desk). He will investigate but not proceed without consulting the chair. The Commission members discussed the recently attended COGEL conference and agreed to renew the Commission’s COGEL membership ($445.00). The Commission will retain T.J. Jones from Connecticut on an as-need hourly basis over six months to provide advice and guidance as the Commission develops its ethics resources.

**Adjourn:** Sarah Biolsi Vangel moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Julie Hulburd and passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting:** The Commission will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission office. The Commission will then consider a resolution which Mr. Novins will draft to make 10:00 a.m. its regular meeting time.