



## Vermont State Ethics Commission

### Minutes of April 7, 2021 (approved)

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Larry Novins, Executive Director. Present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Sarah Biolsi Vangel, Paul Erlbaum, Michele Eid, and Julie Hulburd.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** On the motion of Paul Erlbaum second by Sarah Biolsi Vangel, the minutes of the March 3, 2021 meeting were approved. Michele Eid, who did not attend that meeting, abstained.
- 3. Public Comment:** None
- 4. Executive Director's Report:** Larry Novins reported on a recent ethics training he conducted, changes to the Ethics Commission website platform that will require new training for Commission staff, and possible changes to the format of the Ethics Commission complaint form.
- 5. Legislative Update:** H.135 was approved by the House, but not before the House Appropriations Committee removed the section permitting an administrative assistant position. The revision was noticed only before the bill's first hearing before the Senate Government Operations Committee. Novins asked that Committee to restore the provision. The Committee indicated preliminary agreement to restore the provision. The change with different clearer language will be voted on this Friday by the SGO.

The Ethics Commission's proposed Code of Ethics was moved from the Senate, where it was expected to originate, to the House. It was finally introduced as H.384 on March 9, 2021 with added language that it would not apply to members of the House and Senate unless its provisions were approved by each body by rule. No House hearing on the bill has been scheduled. The first hearing on that bill was scheduled by the Senate Government Operations Committee for April 2, 2021. The hearing was postponed when apparent technical problems prevented the SGO Chair from participating in discussion of the bill. A hearing on both H.135 and H.384 is now scheduled for Friday, April 9 at 2:30 p.m.

- 6. Terms of Office Discussion: New Chair selection** Julie Hulburd resigned as Commission Chair after her appointment to the new Cannabis Control Board. Her successor to the Ethics Commission has not yet been named. The Commission voted to approve Paul Erlbaum as interim Chair. After the Commission is back to full strength, it will elect a new Chair.
- 7. Other business:** Occurred after the Executive Session. See, below.
- 8. Executive Session to Discuss Complaints and Guidance Requests:** On the motion of Michele Eid, second by Sarah Vangel Biolsi, 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 Eid and Michele Eid the Commission voted to conclude the Executive Session and return to open session.

**9. Other Business:** Paul Erlbaum read a draft statement of thanks to out-going Commission member and Chair Julie Hulburd. The Commission approved its language with instruction that it be made a part of these minutes and posted on the Commission website.

“The Vermont State Ethics Commission gives its profound and heartfelt thanks to Julie Hulburd, its departing Commission Chair, for all her contributions to the Ethics Commission. Since her appointment in the fall of 2017, Julie has generously given her time and talents to making the Ethics Commission a viable and effective part of state government. As Chair, she guided the Commission and helped it overcome obstacles. She was a compelling and effective spokesperson. Julie made sure that she was available when needed by the Executive Director and the Commission. The Ethics Commission will miss Julie’s guidance and leadership. We know she will continue to contribute to the State of Vermont in her new position.

Thank you for everything, Julie.”

The message of thanks was approved unanimously. Each Commissioner and Executive Director Larry Novins expressed his personal thanks and appreciation for Ms. Hulburd’s constant support.

**10. Adjournment:** Sarah Biolsi Vangel moved to adjourn, second by Chris Davis. The meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** Next regular monthly meeting May 5, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. It will be held remotely.