



Vermont State Ethics Commission

Minutes of August 4, 2021 (Unapproved)

1. Call to Order: The meeting, held in person and remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Acting Commission Chair Paul Erlbaum at 10:06 a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Christopher Davis, Michele Eid, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Commission member Sarah Biolsi Vangel did not attend.

2. Approval of Minutes: On the motion of Michele Eid, second by Chris Davis, the minutes of the July 7, 2021 meeting were approved.

3. Public Comment: None

4. Future Meetings, format: Because of the resurgence of the threat from the COVID-19 Delta variant, the Commission affirmed that it will continue to have meetings in person at the Commission office, 6 Baldwin St. in Montpelier, but retain the Zoom option for anyone who cannot comfortably attend in person.

5. Executive Director's Report: Larry Novins told the Commission that, for personal reasons, he will be submitting his formal resignation in the next few days. He plans to continue working until roughly the end of September.

In July, Novins participated in a CAPS sponsored government ethics training. He agreed to conduct an ethics training for the Cannabis Control Board and Advisory Committee later this month. The makeup of the Board and Advisory Committee raise some unusual ethical questions.

Novins has put the updated Executive Officer Financial Disclosure Form on the Commission website. He made other website changes to add the newly enacted amendments to the ethics statutes.

Novins provided an update on the process for appointing a person to fill Julie Hulburd's now vacant position on the Ethics Commission. The appointing body will be interviewing one candidate this week and another next week. Selection of this new Commissioner has taken four months already. It is unknown how much interest there was in this open position. Focus on the appointment process led Novins to review with the Commissioners their terms of office. Novins asked them to be mindful of the end dates for their terms so that their appointing bodies will have ample time to re-appoint them or choose their successors. The hope is to avoid another long period where the Commission is not at full strength. How Commissioners are appointed is dictated by statute. Novins asked Commissioners to consider whether for logistical and legal several reasons the appointment scheme should be modified.

6. Job description for administrative position: The Commission reviewed the job description for the anticipated administrative assistant. They suggested that the description make clear that the position

will come with full benefits. The Commission agreed that hiring the administrative assistant should be up to the next Executive Director.

7. Commission member appointment update: See Executive Director report, above.

8. Other Business: None

9. Executive Session to discuss complaints, guidance Requests, and Personnel matters: On the motion of Michele Eid, second by Chris Davis, at 10:37 a.m. the Commission went into executive session to discuss complaints and guidance requests and personnel matters. Complaints and guidance matters are confidential per 3 V.S.A. §§ 1221(d), 1223(c), and 1225(a)(3). On the motion of Michele Eid, seconded by Chris Davis, the Commission voted to conclude the Executive Session and return to open session at 10:59 a.m.

10. Adjournment: Chris Davis moved to adjourn, second by Michele Eid. The meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next regular monthly meeting will be Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. It will be held both in person and remotely via Zoom.*

*On the morning of the meeting, the Zoom meeting ID number and password will be posted on the Ethics Commission web site under "Meetings." Directions for attending the meeting via internet video or by telephone will be included.