Vermont State Ethics Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2022 (Unapproved)

Remote Attendance*

1. Call to Order: The emergency meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Paul Erlbaum, Chair, at 1:04 P.M. Present for the meeting were Commission members Sarah Biolsi Vangel, Michele Eid, Executive Director Christina Sivret, and Administrative Assistant Carolyn Desch. Chris Davis was absent.

2. Approval of Minutes: Approval of the 2/5/2022 meeting minutes was waived until the next regular meeting.

3. Discussion of Bill S.171: Executive Director Christina Sivret provided a status report on S. 171, which is currently with the Senate Committee on Government Operations. The Committee held hearings on the bill on 2/4 and 2/9. During those hearings, testimony was heard from the Judiciary. A question was raised by the Committee and representatives of the Judiciary as to whether the statutory Code of Ethics should apply to the judicial branch of government. A question was raised by the representatives of the Judiciary and the Vermont Bar Association as to whether the Code of Ethics should apply to attorneys, as a professional class, working in any of the three branches of government. The Committee also suggested that a leaner version of a State Code of Ethics be considered, one that would allow each branch of government to have more control over developing their own set of ethics policies.

Michele Eid made a motion for the Ethics Commission to support the draft version of the state Code of Ethics dated 2/4/2011 without substantial deviations, and for the Commission to reaffirm its strong support for a comprehensive statutory Code of Ethics that applies to all three branches of government. Second by Sarah Vangel. Motion passed.

Michele Eid made a motion to approve a draft letter from the Commission to the Committee on Senate Government Operations elaborating on its position. Second by Sarah Vangel. Motion passed.

4. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:50 P.M.