

**Vermont State Ethics Commission**

**Minutes of June 3, 2020 Meeting (approved)**

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order by Commission Chair Julie Hulburd at 10:17 a.m. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Sarah Biolsi Vangel, Michele Eid, Paul Erlbaum, and Executive Director Larry Novins. Delayed by technical problems, Christopher Davis joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m. by telephone. No one from the public attended.

**2. Agenda Amendments:**  The Commission agreed to modify the agenda to put discussion of COVID-19 Accommodations before public comment. “Other business” was moved to precede the Executive Session so that the Commission could adjourn at its conclusion. This change was to eliminate the need to temporarily exclude any members of the public and have them re-join the meeting when the executive session ends.

**3. Approval of Minutes:** On the motion of Paul Erlbaum, second by Michele Eid, the minutes of the May 6, 2020 meeting were approved.

**4. COVID-19 Accommodations:** After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed that hosting its meetings via Zoom is working well, and that for technological and other reasons recording the Zoom meetings and posting the recordings online is not needed.

**5. Executive Director’s Report**: Larry Novins updated the Commission on legislative progress toward ensuring that the sunset provisions of the Commission’s funding mechanism are extended past June 30, 2020 until June 30, 2021. Chairpersons of both House and Senate Government Operations Committees have contacted Novins to ensure that the funding mechanism is addressed legislatively before the end of the current session. Novins has also received assurance that the funding mechanism extension is in the Governor’s budget proposal.

Novins described his continuing research for the ethics code and enforcement options. He will check with Vermont Law School to see if it possible to access WestLaw through the law school’s relations with the Department of Libraries. If not, he will explore getting a Westlaw account. He will also obtain a copy of Mason’s Rules.

**6. Other business:** Paul Erlbaum asked about the propriety of his possibly volunteering for a voter assistance project in the fall. The out-of-state project is sponsored by a political party. It does not endorse or seek to support particular candidates. Rather, the project’s aim is to help potential voters with any issue they may have casting their ballots. After a quick review of the controlling statute, 3 V.S.A. § 1221(b)(3) and a brief discussion of possible implications, all agreed Mr. Erlbaum’s volunteer work is permissible. Should that volunteer work present any conflict of interest with Commission work, Mr. Erlbaum would recuse himself accordingly.

**7. Executive Session to Discuss Complaints and Guidance Requests:** On the motion of Michele Eid, second by Paul Erlbaum, 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 Vangel and Christopher Davis the Commission voted at 11:11 a.m. to conclude the Executive Session and return to open session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

**Adjournment:** Sarah Biolsi Vangel moved to adjourn, second by Christopher Davis. The meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

**Next Meeting:**  July 1, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.