



NEW CASTLE COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MAY 17, 2023  
PUBLIC MEETING

In attendance:

Commission Members:

Johanna Bishop; Sally Jensen; Robert Hicks; and Robert Ralston

Absent:

Brandon Brice; Kellie Tetrick; and Charles Toliver

Ethics Commission Staff:

Julie M. Sebring, Legal Counsel  
Alison Lewis, Confidential Assistant

Public Attendance:

The Honorable Brandon Toole

Chair Bishop opened the Public Session of this meeting at 4:32 p.m. The meeting was advertised per State law and held both virtually via Zoom and at the anchor location of the Ethics Commission office, 77 Read's Way, New Castle, DE 19720.

**Public Meeting Minutes:** The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes of the April 12, 2023, of the Ethics Commission public meeting. Commissioner Hicks made a motion to approve the draft minutes with date correction, and Commissioner Ralston seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0, motion carried.

**Executive Session Minutes:** The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes of the April 12, 2023, of the Ethics Commission Executive session of the meeting. Commissioner Hicks made a motion to approve the draft minutes with date correction, and Commissioner Ralston seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0, motion carried.

**Finance Reports:** Commissioners reviewed the monthly Commission expense reports for the month of April 2023.

## **Committee Reports**

**Administrative Committee:** Counsel is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Administrative Committee to review the power point recommendations of the Ethics Code Amendments.

**Forms Committee:** Ms. Lewis advised the Commission that there are about 26 annual filers that still need to complete their form. Of the 26, 3 will need to register in the system and file their form.

**Training Committee:** The last Ethics Code training session was held on May 17, 2023 and, as usual, was open to all County officials and employees. There were about 16 in attendance. The feedback about the training sessions continues to be very positive and many attendees contact Counsel after the sessions with Ethics Code questions. Chair Bishop discussed with the Commission the possibility about making the training sessions available electronically. Councilman Toole who was in attendance at the meeting thought this was a great idea.

### **Ethics Commission Office updates:**

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, 2023, as a hybrid meeting, in compliance with applicable laws. Due to the unavailability of Counsel and no matter pending which required a commission vote, the Commission decided not to hold a meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2023. In the event, an emergency issue arises which requires a Commission vote, a meeting will be scheduled prior to the July date.

### **Old Business**

The Commission's FY24 budget hearing was scheduled before the New Castle County Council will be on Monday, April 17, 2023. Counsel advised the Commission that we are being asked to provide performance metrics in next year's budget presentation. Chair Bishop advised the Commission that she listened to the questions that were being asked during the hearing. She also felt as though she was being raked through the coals. Chair Bishop told the Commission that she made a call to Councilman Smiley and Councilwoman Kilpatrick a few days after the hearings. She felt that both calls were valuable. The Administrative Committee is going to meet to discuss performance metrics to be used for current and future budget purposes. Counsel said that there have been questions about the Ethics Commission posting video recordings of the meetings on our website. The Commission is not required to do that and it has never been done before, but it is up to the Commission to decide whether to make and/or post meeting videos.

### **Public Comment:**

Councilman Brandon Toole commented on the discussion about the FY24 Budget hearing. Questions were asked regarding the Contractual Services section of the Commission's budget and how is that section broken down.

**AO23-03:**

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed this Advisory Opinion request. Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the draft of the advisory opinion and Commissioner Ralston seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0, motion carried.

At 5:53 p.m., Commissioner Ralston made a motion to move to Executive session and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

At 6:44 p.m., Commissioner Jensen made a motion to return to Public session and Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

At 6:45 p.m. Commissioner Ralston made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

The draft minutes were prepared by Alison Lewis, Confidential Assistant, and reviewed by Julie M. Sebring, Esquire.