



NEW CASTLE COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2022
PUBLIC MEETING

In attendance:

Commission Members:

Robert Ralston Kellie Tetrick; Johanna Bishop; Brandon Brice; Robert Hicks and Sally Jensen

Absent: Charles Toliver

Ethics Commission Staff¹:

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

Chair Ralston opened the Public Session of this meeting at 4:36 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 September 14, 2022, of the Ethics Commission public meeting. Commissioner Brice made a motion to approve the draft minutes, and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-1, motion carried.

Executive Session Minutes: The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes of the September 14, 2022, of the Ethics Commission executive meeting. Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the draft minutes as amended per discussion, and Commissioner Brice seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-2, motion carried.

Finance Reports: Commissioners reviewed the monthly Commission expense reports for the months of September and October 2022.

Committee Reports

Administrative Committee:

The Administrative Committee and Counsel met to discuss moving forward with presenting the proposed amended Ethics Code to the County Executive and members of County Council. Thereafter Counsel created a power point for the Committee's use during their initial presentation(s) of the proposed amended Code. That power point was distributed to the full Commission in advance of this meeting for discussion. The Commission thanked everyone involved in the ECRC and the Administrative Committee, as well as Counsel, for all of their hard work, time, and dedication to this project.

Forms Committee: Counsel advised the Commission that little progress has been made toward obtaining Code compliance from the remaining 4 delinquent 2021 annual filers. The 4 delinquent filers consist of a County employee who is currently on leave, a former County employee, and two board members. Commissioner Bishop made a motion to authorize Counsel to: (1) pursue legal avenues to gain Code compliance from the delinquent filers including appropriate litigation; and (2) inform the delinquent filers that the Commission will file suit unless the overdue forms are filed. Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VOTE: 4-2

Training Committee: Ethics Code training for County officials and employees was held on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, via Zoom. Counsel and Ray Carr conducted the training. Commissioner Hicks attended this training. The training was well attended by County employees and Counsel received positive feedback following the training as well as many inquiries involving Ethics Code issues. The next general Ethics Code training session for County officials and employees will be held on November 29, 2022, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., via Zoom, as well as an evening session on November 16, 2022 (6-8 p.m.)

Ethics Commission Office updates:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2022, as a hybrid meeting, in compliance with State law.

Counsel advised the Commission that she will be attending a DSBA presentation about Decisis, a company which members of the Delaware Bar may use for free legal research, to see whether it could replace Lexis when that current contract has expired.

Carrie Casey, General Manager of the Community Services Department, has repeated an invitation to the Commission to tour the Hope Center. Earlier this year, the County won an Emmy award for a documentary about the Hope Center.

FY24 Budget: Finance has proposed reducing the printing cost on the FY24 budget proposal to \$100 after it had reviewed Commission expenditures in the last three years. The Commission discussed it and decided that printing costs may be incurred when an amended Ethics Code is adopted. Thus, it would be preferable to keep the printing budget the same for FY24 to cover any printing costs that may arise.

Chair Ralston asked about the status of the Commission email addresses. Counsel confirmed with the Commissioners the format to be used for the new email addresses and advised that new email addresses should be ready by the December meeting date.

At 4:50 p.m., Commissioner Bishop made a motion to move to Executive session and Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

At 5:33 p.m., Commissioner Jensen made a motion to return to Public session and Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

At 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Tetrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

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