

Legislative Ethics Board

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LEGISLATIVE ETHICS BOARD MINUTES May 21, 2024

Present were: Tom Hoemann, Chair; Pam Tajima Praeger, Vice-Chair (virtual); Sen. Jamie Pedersen; Sen. Chris Gildon; Larry Hoff (virtual); Shontrana Gates-Wertman (virtual); Rep. Mike Steele (virtual); Jennifer Strus, Board Counsel; Jeannie Gorrell, Senate Counsel; Suchi Sharma, Senate Counsel; Ohad Lowy, House Counsel (virtual); Debbie Brookman, Director, Office of Legislative Labor Relations

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

The minutes for the April 22, 2024 Board meeting were approved.

Debbie Brookman provided a presentation on the collective bargaining bill passed during the 2024 session along with some implementation updates.

The Board reviewed the draft Ethics Alert addressing the issue of legislators providing gifts to staff. It was agreed the Alert would apply prospectively only. Sen. Pedersen suggested some non-substantive changes. The Alert was approved subject to the changes and would be recirculated with those changes for Board approval.

The Board reviewed three Employment Disclosure forms submitted by Sen. Frame. The first form involved a contract that Sen. Frame's employer (BDS) has with the Office of Equity. It is a no bid contract that involves the summarization of feedback on the community compensation plans received by state agencies. The Board found no conflict with this contract.

The second contract form concerned a contract that BDS entered into with the Department of Health to evaluate statutory changes and develop legislative recommendations on the Washington State Death with Dignity Act. This contract was awarded after an open and competitive bidding process in which more than one bid was received. Because the process for awarding the contract was open and competitive, the Board was not required to determine if there was a conflict.

The third contract form was a continuation of previous contract that BDS had with the Department of Commerce. The Board found no conflict.

The Board discussed the draft of Advisory Opinion 2024 – No. 1 regarding the criteria the Board reviews when determining whether an employment or contract disclosure presents a conflict. It was suggested that the first subsection in RCW 42.52.120 be added because unless that portion is met, the second subsection is not considered. Another suggestion was to add to the criteria list the following question: What is the work product of the contract being reviewed? Who is the recipient of the work done under the contract? It was also suggested that it be clarified that none of these criteria alone would be determinative of the Board’s decision on conflict. Board counsel was instructed to revise the draft in accordance with the discussion for the next Board meeting.


There was no public testimony.

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

The next meeting of the Board is July 9, 2024.

The Board then moved into executive session to discuss pending complaints.

The executive session was adjourned at 11:58 am.



Tom Hoemann, Chair

Date: July 9, 2024

**The entirety of the public portion of this meeting can be viewed on TVW at the attached link.
<https://tvw.org/video/legislative-ethics-board-2024051048/?eventID=2024051048>**