

Legislative Ethics Board

BOARD MEMBERS:
SHONTRANA GATES-WERTMAN
SEN. CHRIS GILDON
REP. DAVID HACKNEY
TOM HOEMANN
LARRY HOFF
STEVE O'BAN
SEN. JAMIE PEDERSEN
PAM TAJIMA PRAEGER
REP. MIKE STEELE



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LEGISLATIVE ETHICS BOARD MINUTES September 11, 2024

Present were: Tom Hoemann, Chair; Pam Tajima Praeger, Vice-Chair (virtual); Sen. Jamie Pedersen; Sen. Chris Gildon; Larry Hoff (virtual); Rep. Mike Steele (virtual); Rep. David Hackney (virtual); Steve O'Ban (virtual); Jennifer Strus, Board Counsel; Jeannie Gorrell, Senate Counsel; Suchi Sharma, Senate Counsel; Ohad Lowy, House Counsel (virtual); Tom Samuels (virtual)

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

The minutes for the July 9, 2024 Board meeting were approved.

The Board reviewed the Employment Disclosure form submitted by William Burch and found no conflict.

The Board discussed the most recent draft of Advisory Opinion 2024 – No. 1 regarding the criteria the Board reviews when determining whether an employment or contract disclosure presents a conflict. Board Counsel discussed the changes to the draft opinion since the last meeting particularly the rearrangement of the topics reviewed by the Board. After discussion, the Board determined there should be two sections – one that list the activities that would be a per se conflicts and those that are not a per se conflict but the Board will review them anyway.

Board counsel also discussed changing the contract/grant disclosure form to include questions designed to elicit more information to speed up the Board's response. Board counsel was asked to share a new draft at the next Board meeting.

Board counsel summarized the request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by John Handy. The request asks whether the Caucus communication staff is required to remove comments posted on official social media platforms that contain campaign material and, if so, what is the definition of campaign material. Board counsel also summarized the House and Senate media policies which both require that any comments related to election campaigns be removed. After discussion, Board counsel was directed to meet with the four communications directors about what opinion would be most helpful to them. Board counsel to report the results at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board then discussed the issue of legislative staff receiving gift cards for participating in a survey. After discussion, Board counsel was asked to consult with the Executive Director of the Executive Ethics

Board to determine how they have handled this question in the past. Board counsel is to report back on that discussion at the next meeting.

Board counsel summarized the Advisory Opinion request from Jen Waldref requesting some relief from the provisions of the web site freeze that is in effect during election season. The Board determined that the statute was absolute and until it is changed, member websites cannot be altered. The Board also asked Board counsel to include an amendment to this section of the statute in the Ethics Act amendments being worked on. Board counsel was asked to send Ms. Waldref a letter explaining the Board's decision. No opinion is to be written.

Board counsel reviewed the chart of suggested Ethics Act amendments that the ethics advisers worked on. Board counsel was instructed to draft a bill reflecting these changes to be discussed at the next meeting on the Board in October.

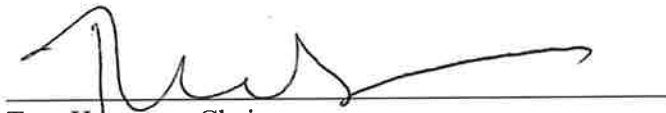
Board counsel to work with Board members to determine a meeting date in October. The next scheduled meeting on September 23rd is cancelled.

Tom Samuels, a citizen, inquired where in the process was the complaint he filed. The chair indicated that any discussion of complaints occurs in executive session which is not open to the public. The chair assured Mr. Sanders that Board counsel would be contacting him very soon.

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

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

The executive session was adjourned at 11:58 am.



Tom Hoemann, Chair

Date: 10/15/24

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-2024091126/?eventID=2024091126>