



NEW CASTLE COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2020  
PUBLIC MEETING

In attendance:

Commission Members<sup>1</sup>:

Paula Jenkins-Massie; Robert Ralston; Johanna Bishop; Robert Hicks; and Sally Jensen

Ethics Commission Staff: Julie M. Sebring, Legal Counsel  
Alison Lewis, Confidential Assistant

Absent: Kellie Tetrick

Chair Jenkins-Massie opened the Public Session at 4:37 p.m. via Zoom.

**Public Minutes**: The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Public Session of the August 12, 2020 Ethics Commission meeting. Commissioner Hicks made a motion to approve the August 12, 2020 Public Session minutes and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 - 0 . Motion carried.

**Executive Minutes**: The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Executive Session of the August 12, 2020 Ethics Commission meeting. Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the August 12, 2020 Executive Session minutes, and Commissioner Ralston seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 - 0 . Motion carried.

The Commissioners also reviewed the revised minutes of the Executive Session of the June 10, 2020 Ethics Commission meeting and agreed that the revisions conformed to the discussion and vote taken at the Commission's August 12, 2020 meeting on these minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> As of the date of this meeting, the Ethics Commission had one open seat pending the swearing-in of Commissioner Charles H. Toliver, IV, whose re-nomination for appointment by the County Executive was affirmatively consented to by County Council at its September 8, 2020 meeting.

**Finance Reports:** Commissioners were provided an excel spreadsheet with Commission expenses from June, July, and August 2020, as well as a copy of the year to date budget report generated by Munis.

### **Committee Reports**

**Administrative:** Counsel updated the Commissioners on the September 3, 2020 ECRC meeting. The ECRC is moving forward on Code review and revision issues other than those listed in the interim report which was presented to the Commissioners at the August 12, 2020 meeting. The Commission decided that the members of the Administrative Committee, including Commissioners Ralston, Bishop, and Hicks, will meet with Counsel to discuss the ECRC's interim status report to provide feedback to the Commission and the ECRC on the suggested revisions included in the ECRC report.

**Forms:** The launch of the County-wide gift log website was discussed, including ideas about the best way to handle the login process for County officials and employees who will be making entries on the website. Commissioner Hicks volunteered to assist Counsel on this issue.

2019 Annual SFI filers have all filed their forms with the exception of 3 officials/employees whose forms require minor edits for accuracy. The Commission also discussed making some revisions to the form to clarify the information which the filer is being asked to provide, such as question #12, Interests in Real Property, because that question continues to present challenges for filers. Any proposed revisions to the form will be presented to the Commission for review and approval before asking Delmarva Digital to make online edits.

**Training:** Ethics Code training has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 30, 2020 via Zoom. Counsel advised the Commission that an email would be sent with the Zoom invitation, as well as any meeting information. Commissioner Bishop advised she was available to assist with the training.

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

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, 2020.

### **New Business:**

New Castle County Council has proposed Code amendments which would require all County boards and commissions, including the Ethics Commission, to post all meeting agenda, minutes, and public meeting documents on a centralized website location which is currently being used by County Council and boards which are administered by the Department of Land Use. Information about meeting dates and times which are posted in this centralized "agenda center" gets transferred to the events calendar on the County website, which Counsel has been trying to use for Commission meeting information since the calendar

appeared on the website. Councilwoman Durham is sponsoring these proposed Code amendments to make it easier for everyone to find out when all County government public meetings are being held and the topics which will be addressed at each meeting.

**Old Business:**

Counsel reminded the Commissioners that the COGEL conference this year will be held virtually in the month of December, and will be free for all COGEL members. All of the Commissioners are registered with COGEL to attend the conference.

At 6:24 p.m., Commissioner Bishop made a motion to move into the Executive Session of the meeting; Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

At 6:48 p.m., Commissioner Jensen made a motion to return to the Public Session. Commissioner Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

At 6:49 p.m., Commissioner Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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