



NEW CASTLE COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021  
PUBLIC MEETING

In attendance:

Commission Members:

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

Ethics Commission Staff<sup>1</sup>:

Julie M. Sebring, Legal Counsel  
Alison Lewis, Confidential Assistant  
Ray Carr, Investigator

Absent:

Charles Toliver

Chair Ralston opened the Public Session of this hybrid virtual and anchor location meeting at 4:36 p.m. The meeting was advertised 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 8, 2021, Public Session of the Ethics Commission meeting. Commissioner Bishop made a motion to approve the draft minutes as submitted, and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 - 0 . Motion carried.

**Executive Session Minutes:** The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the September 8, 2021, Ethics Commission meeting, Executive Session. Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the draft minutes as submitted, and Commissioner Bishop seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 - 0 . Motion carried.

**Finance Reports:** Commissioners reviewed a year-to-date expense report generated using Munis, as well as a report listing the Commission's expenses for the months of September 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> At least one member of the Ethics Commission staff attends this session of the meeting at the noticed anchor meeting location.

## **Committee Reports**

**Administrative Committee:** The Ethics Code Review Committee (ECRC) will meet tomorrow, Thursday, October 14, 2021. Its last meeting was held on September 2, 2021. Commissioner Jensen attended that meeting. The ECRC continues to work on Ethics Code revisions and its memorandum to the ethics Commission which will contain every recommendation it has made to date as well as its recommendations not yet reviewed by the Ethics Commission.

**Forms Committee** Annual Statements of Financial Interests (SFIs) for 2020 have been completed except for one from an employee who is not currently capable of filing a form. Persons nominated to County boards and commissions continue to file SFIs, per Code.

Counsel and Ms. Lewis further reported to the Commission on their discussions with the Commission's software developer regarding a request to look into the cost of a new SFI website/system. The developer believes that an entirely new system which would include the system's current features would cost in the range of \$18,000. This estimated cost reflects the deep discount which the developer would provide to the Ethics Commission because of its status as an arm of County government and a long-standing client. The developer, however, believes that because the system was upgraded not long ago, improvements desired could be performed on the system without the need for an entirely new program. The Commissioners discussed this matter and were in agreement that some updates should be made to the program, but the expense of an entirely new system was not necessary at this juncture.

**Training Committee:** The last general Ethics Code training was held via Zoom on September 28, 2021. Counsel stated that the people in attendance were alert and participated. The next general Ethics Code training session for County officials and employees has been rescheduled to Tuesday, October 26, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. – noon.

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

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 10, 2021, as a hybrid meeting per State law. New Castle County reinstated its face mask policy while in County buildings, so anyone entering a County building will be required to wear a mask. Additionally, the safety protocols for in-person attendance at the Ethics Commission meeting are included on the meeting notices and agenda, which are posted and advertised prior to each meeting per State law.

Counsel updated the Commissioners on the leak and mold problem in the Ethics Commission office in the Gilliam Building. The Commission discussed methods to destroy confidential documents which were damaged beyond repair by the water that flowed from the ceiling into the Commission's storage closet. Investigator Carr has offered his assistance in transporting the ruined documents for destruction and to document such destruction for the Commission.

**Old Business:**

The 2021 COGEL Conference will be held live but virtually. Cost of registration is \$400 per person. Counsel will send an email to Commissioners about interest in attending. Ms. Lewis will register Counsel and any Commissioner who wishes to attend.

Commissioner Roster: Commissioner Jenkins-Massie's current term expired recently, and she has agreed to stay on until the County Executive appoints a new Commissioner. Counsel advised the Commission that County Executive Meyer is moving forward to appoint Mr. Brandon Brice, and if that appointment moves forward as planned, Mr. Brice should be sworn-in by the Commission's November meeting.

Everyone on the Commission, as well as Counsel and Ms. Lewis, thanked Commissioner Paula Jenkins-Massie for her service on the Commission. Her service on the Commission over the years has been impressive and unique, as Paula has served as a Commissioner, a member of Commission committees, the Vice Chair, and the Chair of the Commission. Her innumerable contributions to the Commission and to New Castle County are undeniable. Everyone in attendance at the meeting expressed how much they will miss Paula as part of the Commission.

**New Business:** None

**Public Comment:** No members of the public were present at the meeting.

At 5:42 p.m., Commissioner Jensen made a motion to move to Executive session. Commissioner Bishop seconded the motion.

At 6:03 p.m., Commissioner Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Jensen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

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