

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS HEARING BOARD

City of Pittsburgh Ethics Hearing Board (“Board”)

Video Meeting via Zoom and Livestreamed on Pittsburgh City Channel YouTube

March 1, 2022

Board Members Present:

Patrick Bigley
Samantha Bushman
Brazitte Poole
Alexander Fisher
Maryann Herman
Alex Matthews
Rhoda Neft
Orlando Portela-Valentín
Jennifer Richnafsky

Board Members Absent:

Lynn Davenport

Staff, Advisors and Others Present:

Leanne Davis, Executive Director
Karl Gassmann, Investigator & Engagement Coord.
City Channel Staff (during open sessions of the meeting)

- I. Call to Order
 - a. This meeting was called to order at 4:22 p.m. by Board Chair, Alex Matthews. The meeting was livestreamed on the City’s YouTube Channel.

- II. Public Comment:
 - a. There was none.

- III. Minutes:
 - a. After a review of the February 1, 2022 minutes, Alex Matthews called for a vote for their adoption. Patrick Bigley moved to adopt the minutes. Orlando Portela-Valentín seconded the motion, whereupon the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

- IV. Committee Reports
 - a. Gifts Committee Report
 - i. Patrick stated that the gifts committee met on February 14, and discussed the structure of an annual form to supplement the Statement of Fianacial Interests disclosure. He pointed out that it would make up the difference between state and city reporting thresholds, as the state does not require reporting until the value equals or exceeds an aggregate of \$250, whereas our local laws penalize failing to report a gift valued in the aggregate of \$100.

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- ii. The Director then displayed and discussed the draft gift disclosure forms and web page updates.
- iii. The Board provided suggested revisions to the form, such as coming up with a better title for the SOFI Supplementary Form and adding an “additional comments” section. Feedback was also provided with suggested edits to the web page, which is still under construction.
- iv. The discussion shifted into related topics of compliance, Board-initiated complaints, and the Board’s investigation procedure. The Executive Director highlighted the development of pittsburghpa.gov/ehb/tips, which helps explain our bifurcated structure and also improves accessibility to request an ethics investigation.

b. Legislation Committee Report

- i. None.

c. Campaign Finance and other Disclosures

- i. There was no committee report. The Executive Director noted ongoing work related to the Statements of Affiliation conflicts database and provided a reminder that the Statement of Financial Interests is due May 1. Additional discussion regarding Statement of Financial Interests was discussed, including local filing instructions.

d. Engagement

- i. The Executive Director introduced the new Investigator and Engagement Coordinator, who gave a summary of current outreach efforts, including personal emails to those required to file a SOFI, a draft of an all-user email aimed at raising awareness of EHB resources and increasing engagement, as well as communication with department leaders to determine interest in receiving tailored trainings on various ethics topics.
- ii. There was also discussion of a #MeetUsMondays campaign.
- iii. Our outgoing media and communications intern was thanked for her valuable contributions.

V. Old Business

- a. Agenda items discussed relating to old business are formatted in the related committee sections above.

VI. New Business

- a. None

VII. Adjournment to Executive Session

- a. At 4:44 p.m., the meeting was adjourned into executive session to discuss Section 197.12 enforcement matters and an administrative/conference matter; due to timing, the conference matter will be continued in the next meeting.

Minutes Drafted by Karl Gassman and reviewed by Leanne Davis.