

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS HEARING BOARD

City of Pittsburgh Ethics Hearing Board (“Board”)
Video Meeting via Zoom and Livestreamed on YouTube
August 13, 2020

Board Members Present:

Pat Bigley
Sean Coleman
Lynn Davenport
Maryann Herman
Alex Matthews
Rhoda Neft
Brazitte Poole

Board Members Absent:

Samantha Bushman
Jennifer Richnafsky

Staff, Advisors and Others Present:

Leanne Davis, Executive Manager

- Call to Order:
 - This primary monthly meeting was called to order at 4:18 p.m. by Board Chair, Alex Matthews.
- Public Comment:
 - The Executive Manager reviewed email and the YouTube livestream page for any public comments. There was none.
- Approval of Minutes:
 - Alex Matthews called for a review of the draft minutes from June 25, 2020.
 - Lynn Davenport requested a correction to the minutes related to the Board’s response to an employment waiver.
 - Patrick Bigley moved to approve the minutes as amended, with Maryann Herman seconding the motion. The minutes as amended were approved with abstentions from new members Rhoda Neft and Brazitte Poole, who were not members of the board as of the June 25 meeting.
- Executive Manager’s Report:
 - New members Rhoda Neft and Brazitte Poole were welcomed to the Board. Both took a moment to introduce themselves and were thanked for taking on this civic duty of service.
 - The Executive Manager shared her screen to review the new online inquiry and complaint forms. The complaint form for the first time lists the approximately 45 substantive areas under the Board’s jurisdiction. These new forms can be found online at <https://pittsburghpa.gov/ehb/contact-ehb>. The Executive Manager highlighted that the complaint form can be submitted as an anonymous tip, due to the Board’s ability to file self-initiated complaints. Technological aspects such as automatic responses to the forms were discussed.

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- Campaign Finance Committee Report:
 - Maryann Herman, on behalf of the Board's Campaign Finance Committee, reviewed a number of the Committee's proposed campaign finance regulations. These regulations will serve to provide clarity and direction to the Ethics Office and candidates as we move toward the 2021 campaign season.
 - The proposed regulations include:
 1. "Candidates may file campaign finance reports by submitting the relevant files by email or fax."
 2. "Pursuant to Pennsylvania Act 2020-15, the appropriate Pennsylvania form for unsworn statements should be completed if a notary is not obtained due to public health concerns."
 3. "Reports filed by email or fax are timely if received before midnight on the filing deadline."
 4. "Hand-delivery of reports is strongly discouraged due to public health concerns, as our office remains primarily closed. If you do not have access to submit your forms by email or fax, and must hand-deliver your reports, then you must schedule an appointment to occur prior to 4:00 p.m. on the filing deadline."
 5. "To assist the ease of compliance by candidates, as to only the filings due the month of an election, the Board hereby postpones the deadline to file City reports to coincide with the deadline for candidates for City-elected office to file campaign finance reports with Allegheny County. Therefore, the Board will not consider filings to be late during the month of an election until the day after Allegheny County requires its reports to be filed for City-elected office."
 6. "The reporting dates and filing deadlines for the 2021 primary election is as follows:
 - Deadline of Monday, March 1, will cover the reporting period of January 1 to February 28, 2020.
 - Deadline of Thursday, April 1, will cover the reporting period of March 1-31, 2020.
 - Deadline of Friday, May 14, (2nd Friday Pre-Primary date) will cover the reporting period to match that which is required by the Allegheny County Board of Elections 2nd Friday Pre-Primary Report."
 - There was discussion noting that some of the policy considerations include: ease of use, increased compliance, and greater alignment with the County.
 - It was also noted that there has been an established practice to allow for emailed or faxed reports.
 - Finally, it was noted that due to the unpredictable nature of the current pandemic, the regulations and operations of the office may need to be modified in the future.

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- Rhoda Neft moved to adopt the committee's proposals, with Pat Bigley seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, with no objections or abstentions.

- New Business:
 - There was no new business.

- Public Comment:
 - The Executive Manager conducted a second check for public comment. There was none.

- Adjournment:
 - At approximately 5:15 p.m., after confirming there was no new public comment or new business, the public portion of the meeting concluded and the Board adjourned into executive session. The executive session was called to privately discuss an internal matter related to the Board's personnel and the City's 2021 operating budget.

Next meeting dates:

All meetings will be held via video conference and livestreamed until further notice, with a link to the livestream posted on <http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/ehb/ehb-meetings>, which also provides a full list of 2020 scheduled meetings.

Minutes prepared by Leanne Davis.