

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS HEARING BOARD

May 14, 2020

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

Board Members Present:

Samantha Bushman
Sean Coleman
Lynn Davenport
Maryann Herman
Alex Matthews
Jennifer Richnafsky

Board Members Absent:

Khalif Ali
Patrick Bigley
Gregory Monaco

Staff, Advisors and Others Present:

Leanne Davis, Executive Manager
Dana Robles, Investigator

- Call to Order:
 - This primary monthly meeting was called to order at 4:17 p.m. by Board Chairman, Alex Matthews.
- Public Comment:
 - There was no public comment.
- Approval of Minutes:
 - Alex Matthews called for a review of the draft minutes from April 9, 2020. Sean Coleman moved to approve the minutes. Samantha Bushman seconded the motion. There were no corrections, objections or abstentions. The motion passed.
- Executive Manager’s Report:
 - The Executive Manager gave an update on the status of the Statement of Financial Interests (SoFI) disclosures. There have been several questions both substantive and technical in nature. The work continues, with a COVID-related administrative extension to July 14, 2020.
- Request for Advisory Opinion:
 - The Executive Manager discussed a request for an advisory opinion submitted by a person who is not covered under the Ethics Code, meaning the Board would have no jurisdiction to take enforcement action against the requesting party based on the facts described in the inquiry.
 - The Board entered into Executive Session to deliberate.

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- The Board resumed the public meeting noting that based on a review of Section 197.13 (a) of the Code, which limits formal advisory opinions of the Board to only be issued to "any person covered under this Code," it was determined that the Board does not have jurisdiction to give an Advisory Opinion with regard to this request.
- Executive Manager Davis will send an explanatory letter to the requestor.
- Employment Waiver Review:
 - The Board also reviewed a request for an employment waiver per Section 197.05 of the Ethics Code.
 - The Board entered into executive session to review and deliberate on the submitted information.
 - The Board later exited the executive session and noted they determined that more information is needed prior to making a determination as to whether an approval is appropriate in the case at hand.
 - The Executive Manager will convey the Board's response and distribute the received information to the Board members for the matter to be continued at the next meeting.
- Valuable Gifts Committee ("VGC") Report:
 - The VGC reported their receipt, deliberation and determination related to a request to evaluate the propriety of accepting a gift with a combined value over \$500, the threshold amount for a valuable gift review. The VGC decided that the gift is not appropriate to accept because it involved travel to meet with a vendor of the City, and, as stated in their opinion, the VGC is concerned the gift could potentially influence future business dealings.
 - It was noted that the matter at hand is solely the VGC's recommendation, and not that of the full Board. The Board will provide an independent review if reconsideration is requested.
 - Lynn Davenport motioned to enter the VGC's opinion. Maryann Herman seconded the motion. There was no opposition to recording the opinion, and there were no abstentions.
 - The Executive Manager will post the VGC's opinion on the Board's website, after the period for reconsideration has passed.
- Adjournment:
 - At approximately 5:21 p.m., after confirming there was no new public comment or new business, the meeting was adjourned, whereupon the meeting concluded.

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 Dana Robles and reviewed by Leanne Davis.