

Merom Brachman, *Chairman*  
Mark A. Vander Laan, *Vice Chairman*  
Bruce E. Bailey  
Megan C. Kelley  
Mary M. Ross-Dolen  
Elizabeth E. Tracy



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Paul M. Nick  
*Executive Director*

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OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
AUGUST 23, 2024

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Merom Brachman	Megan C. Kelley	Bruce E. Bailey
Elizabeth E. Tracy	Mary M. Ross-Dolen	Mark A. Vander Laan

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Ohio Ethics Commission was called to order at 12:06 p.m. in Room 2 on Level 2 of the William Green Building, at 30 West Spring Street, in Columbus, Ohio.

ROLL CALL

The following Commission Members were present: Mr. Brachman, Mr. Bailey, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Tracy, and Mr. Vander Laan. Staff present: Executive Director Paul M. Nick; Deputy Director/General Counsel Jed Hood; Education and Communications Administrator Susan Willeke; IT & Financial Disclosure Administrator Brian Ring; HR & Fiscal Manager Alan Carlson; Investigative Attorneys Molly Bruns and Nicole Candelora-Norman; Investigative Case Manager Shana Rolfe; and Assistant Attorney General Brittany Collins. Joining the meeting after Executive Session were Chief Advisory Attorney Christopher Woeste; Advisory Attorney's Katie Saks and Melissa Riggins.

Commissioner Kelley was not in attendance with an excused absence.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Bailey, seconded by Mr. Vander Laan, to go into Executive Session to discuss matters that are statutorily confidential, including pending litigation, updates on investigations and complaints, the confidential financial disclosure report. Mr. Bailey, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Tracy, Mr. Vander Laan, and Mr. Brachman voted "yes." The motion was approved, and the Commission, pursuant to Section 102.06 and 121.22 of the Revised Code, went into Executive Session at 12:07 p.m.

The Commission returned to open session at 12:35 p.m.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Advisory Committee members reviewed the draft minutes from the June 27, 2024, Advisory Committee meeting.

MOTION by Ms. Ross-Dolen, seconded by Mr. Bailey, that the Committee approve the minutes of the June 27, 2024, Advisory Committee meeting. The motion passed.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the July 12, 2024, Commission meeting.

MOTION by Ms. Tracy, seconded by Mr. Vander Laan, that the Commission approve the minutes of the July 12, 2024, Commission meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ADVISORY OPINIONS AND STATISTICS

Mr. Nick introduced the Advisory Statistics and Advisory Activity Report.

Mr. Brachman asked Ms. Saks about the Staff Opinion issued to Chris Liu. Ms. Saks provided background on the request and the resulting opinion.

Mr. Brachman also noted that staff has been consulted on a potential advisory matter involving the Ohio State University's relationship with Battelle.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nick reviewed the material in the packet and commended Alan Carlson, Kayla Parillo, Brian Ring, and Jen Boger for their diligent work on the Commission's fiscal side which led to a clean audit. The Auditor's Office conducted tests for appropriate internal controls and proper accounting of funds and reported that they found no issues or concerns. The Commission's cost for the audit is approximately \$12,000. The Auditor's report has been shared with the Governor's office and leadership at the General Assembly.

Mr. Nick also summarized the budget information contained in the packet and noted that staff will assess whether all three current Commission owned cars must be replaced or whether staff can adequately share two new cars. Cars must be leased as the state no longer allows boards and commissions to purchase the vehicles. He noted that the request will include funding for a 20<sup>th</sup> staff member who would be a full time Program Administrator to primarily assist the financial disclosure section as well as funding for needed equipment upgrades.

Mr. Brachman inquired about the budget submission process and Mr. Nick reported that staff will work on a summary request in coordination with an Office of Budget Management Budget Analyst assigned to the Commission. Mr. Nick noted that the Commission's primary expense item is payroll. Mr. Ring will be generating revenue projections from financial disclosure statement filings and fees. Mr. Carlson noted that there is time between when staff submits the budget request on September 27, 2024, and before it is sent over to the General Assembly in early 2025 by OBM. Staff will remain in communication with the OBM Budget Analyst if anything were to come up during that timeframe.

#### LEGISLATION UPDATE

Mr. Hood summarized the legislative report and pointed out the only bill movement since the previous Commission meeting was HB 316 which passed the House and was reported to the Senate.

Mr. Brachman inquired about SB 133 and Mr. Hood reported that there has been no movement on that bill. The Chairman opined that the Commission may want to revisit the bill in the future.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Ms. Willeke referred to the information in the packet and stated that the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter newsletter will be issued in September. Mr. Brachman added that he is working with Ms. Willeke and Mr. Nick to compose a submission to the newsletter regarding the Commission's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Ms. Willeke invited the Commission to notify her if there are any specific sections of the Ethics Law they would like to see emphasized in 2025 as she is currently working on materials for next year.

### FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATISTICS REPORT/COMPLAINT REPORT

Mr. Ring reported that the candidate filing deadline for the November 5, 2024, general election is October 7, 2024, with the write-in candidate deadline as October 16, 2024. He will have a better idea of the number of candidates at the next Commission meeting. Mr. Ring shared with the Commission his pleasure of the low number of non-compliant filers this year.

Ms. Bruns informed the Commission of 11 upcoming filings to the City of Columbus prosecutor. She anticipates numerous hearings before the end of the year.

### MOTIONS

#### Late Fee Waivers:

MOTION by Ms. Ross-Dolen, seconded by Mr. Vander Laan, to waive the financial disclosure statement late fees for the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Referrals to Ohio Attorney General's Office for Collections:

MOTION by Mr. Vander Laan, seconded by Ms. Ross-Dolen, to refer to the Attorney General's Office for collections the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion passed unanimously.

### DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Commission set the next meeting for Friday, October 4, 2024, at noon with the Investigative Committee meeting at 11 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by:

*/s/ Paul M. Nick*

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Paul M. Nick  
Executive Director