

Erie County Ethics Board
July Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2019 8 a.m. 16th Floor Budget Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Schwartz, Chair
Chris Trapp, Vice-Chair
Rebecca Town, Secretary
Brian Downey
Ellen Kennedy

STAFF: Vianne Uthman, Administrative Staff

EXCUSED: Leslie Ortiz-Fogg, Counsel

OTHERS PRESENT: Forrest Wynn, Legislature Office (recording)

1. Meeting called to order at 8:09 a.m.
2. June 2019 meeting minutes reviewed and approved on motion of Kennedy seconded by Schwartz.
3. Website / Email Updates:
 - i. Request for opinions/actions:
 - a. Prior to the May meeting the Board received information related to a concern about improper use of county property. An investigation was conducted.
 - b. A complaint was received June 24, 2019 relating to improper use of county supplies and disclosure of confidential information.
 - c. A second communication was received dated June 29, 2019 that included a large file of documents that will be reviewed prior to the next meeting if it can be downloaded and read.
 - ii. Updates to website: Minutes and Agenda posted.
 - iii. FOIL Requests: The Board then received a FOIL request dated June 20, 2019 for personal communication from a county employee submitted to the Board. The Chair acknowledged receipt of this request on June 30, 2019. This raises issues of confidentiality of communication to the Board. The Board will review this prior to responding.
 - iv. Other communications:

On 6/19/19 The Board received an inquiry regarding the Buffalo & Erie County Workforce Investment Board and whether the Board has jurisdiction requiring the filing of financial disclosures. Although the county does have the right to make appointments to the board, the Workforce Investment Board is not a county board and therefore is outside the purview of the Board. Chair Schwartz will respond.
4. Old Business:
 - i. Chair Schwartz and Vice Chair Trapp investigated the issues raised in communications and complaints regarding improper use of county property. Based on this investigation, the Board concluded that a violation has occurred and be recognized as an unintentional matter for which no further action be taken.

- ii. Financial Disclosures submitted in 2019 for calendar year 2018
 - a. The Board has received 343 Financial Disclosures with 41 requiring follow-ups and 4 letters warning of the potential for conflicts. Follow-ups were required in many instances of missed questions or pages, unclear abbreviations and membership on Boards. Only two disclosures are outstanding that require additional information.
 - b. Member Downey continues to follow up with formal letters to political party chairs to determine who must file disclosures. If it is determined that they must file, the multiple members will review these disclosures
- ii. One individual running for a primary did not file the required disclosure. They have been notified. It is not clear if that individual had been previously notified. The Board of Ethics will reach out to the Board of Elections to ensure that notification of filers for County office of requirement to file financial disclosures has occurred and request a list of all individuals to whom the Board of Elections sends notifications.

5. New Business:

- i. In the absence of new issues that would necessitate a meeting, the August 5, 2019 meeting is cancelled.
- ii. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 9, 2019 at 8 a.m.

6. Public Comments: None

7. Motion to Adjourn made by Trapp and seconded by Kennedy and passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Financial Disclosures reviewed by Board after the meeting.