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**APPROVED MINUTES OF
ETHICS COMMISSION OF THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT
Courtroom No. 18, 2nd Floor, Wyandotte County Courthouse
710 N. 7th Street, Kansas City, KS 66101**

August 10, 2023

Regular Meeting:

Roll Call:

- X Member Ricky Bragg
- E Member Ian Tomasic
- X Member Kimberley Partridge
- X Member Joseph Wittman
- X Member Adrienne Ford
- X Ruth Benien, Administrator

X (Present) E (Excused) U (Unexcused)

Call to Order:

Acting Chairperson Bragg called the Meeting to order at 4:12 p.m. in Division 18 of the Wyandotte County Courthouse. Commissioner Partridge, Wittman and Ford were present. Commissioner Tomasic was absent but excused. Administrator Benien was present.

Commencement of Official Meeting/Election of Chairperson:

Prior to the meeting being called to Order the two new UG Ethics Commissioners, Joseph Wittman and Adrienne Ford were sworn into office by the Honorable Courtney Mikesic, Wyandotte County District Court Judge. Official photographs for the website were taken for use on the website and personal use.

The first order of business was the selection and election of a new chairperson. Motion to elect Commissioner Ricky Bragg as Chairperson was made by Commissioner Partridge and seconded by Commissioner Wittman. The Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Old Business:

a). Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the July 20, 2023 meeting were reviewed and approved as corrected. Commissioner Ford moved for approval with a second by Commissioner Partridge. The Motion passed unanimously.

b). Monthly Administrator's Report:

Administrator Benien provided the individual monthly report for the time period from July 1, 2023 through July 31, 2023 which outlined the training provided in the month and scheduled and the nature of the ethics opinions rendered, and complaints received.

Continuing Ethics training presentations by video have and are being provided by the Human Resources department for the police and fire department and are also used for a section of the sheriff's department and water treatment plant due to the shifts in each department.

A special training session will be scheduled for the newly elected Mayor and UG Commissioners and any remaining UG Ethics Commissioners still needing training. Ethics training will also be scheduled for the newly created citizen's committees created by the Mayor. A Basic Training session was held for the Library Board at its monthly meeting on June 20, 2023. A Basic Training was held on June 29, 2023 by pre-recorded Zoom at George Myen Center. A Basic Training session was presented June 30, 2023 at the Police Academy. A liaison with the Mayor's Office has contacted the Ethic Administrator to schedule training sessions for the advisory committees. The next Basic Ethics training is scheduled for 1:00 p.m., September 21, 2023 at George Myen Center. A Continuing Ethics training is scheduled for September 6, 2023 in person at the HR Training Center at 1:30 p.m.

A request from the UG Legal Department was received to provide UG Ethics training for the Advisory Council on Aging. The same was coordinated and materials provided in advance for review. The training is still awaiting rescheduling as the legal liaison has left the legal department.

In the coming year a rewrite and update are planned for the UG Ethic's training materials and video.

Ten new email complaints, one verbal, two by email and seven by hotline or phone were received. Thirty nine complaints are pending awaiting additional information, referral or review. One complaint was closed with no violations found, two complaints were closed for lack of jurisdiction, two or the pending remain pending as the two individuals keep filing new complaints on the same issues and the same is simply noted for statistical purposes; they were closed for lack of jurisdiction and referred long ago. Two new hotline advisory opinions were requested. One request for advisory opinion was closed

with the provision of a formal advisory opinion. Seventeen requests for advisory opinion are pending. No new requests for information were received.

A request was made and will be followed in the future to have bold face used on the “closed” status when a matter is closed.

c). Status of Ethics Code Revisions and Amendments and Schedule for Review:

Administrator Benien advised that the status of the ethics amendments remains the same, i.e. they are pending awaiting the Mayor’s placement on the full UG Commission Agenda. Several options were discussed. Administrator Benien advised of her telephone meetings and discussions with the Mayor’s Chief of Staff. Administrator Benien was instructed to contact the Mayor’s Office and request a specific date for the amendments placement on the UG Commission meeting calendar and consideration and vote,

d). Ethics Training and Schedule:

Administrator Benien advised the new ethics commissioners of the ethics training requirement. The next regular Basic Ethics Training is scheduled for September 21, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at the George Myen Center. If that can’t be attended another will be scheduled during the final quarter or a special session can be arranged.

New Business:

Ethics Administrator Benien will try at each meeting to cover a limited provision of the UG Ethics Code to better help the UG Ethics Commissioners understand its provisions or answer questions they may have. The topic this month and in upcoming months will continue to deal with the UG Ethics Code provisions up for Amendment.

The final draft of the proposed UG Ethics Code changes and amendments were forwarded to the Mayor and Clerk for placement on the April 13, 2023 Agenda. They have been pending since as noted above. Discussion was had regarding an invitation to attend the UG Ethics Commission meetings being extended to the Mayor and, for that matter, other UG elected officials.

An updated copy of the Political Memorandum will be prepared and forwarded to UG Legal and the UG Court Clerk for distribution in October, 2023 for the upcoming general election.

Arrangements will be made and instructions provided for the new commissioners to obtain badges allowing for entry into the Court House and City Hall through other exits. Parking areas and arrangements were also discussed.

The next monthly meeting will be on September 14, 2023, in person, at the Wyandotte County Courthouse. Discussion was had but no vote taken on whether to hold the meetings in Division 18 or in the Wyandotte County Law Library conference room. There is an issue with the lighting in Division 18 and the Commission was asked to leave the lights on when closing up the chambers. Masks may be required for courthouse entry for future entry.

Executive Session:

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment:

Motion for adjournment by Commissioner Wittman

Seconded by Commissioner Partridge

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Next Meeting is September 14, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in person.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/Ruth M. Benien

Ruth M. Benien, UG Ethics Administrator