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

June 15, 2023

Regular Meeting:

Roll Call:

- X Member Patty Orth
- X Member Emily Cisneros
- X Member Ian Tomasic (by telephone)
- X Member Kimberley Partridge (by telephone)
- E Member Ricky Bragg (unavailable to appear by phone)
- X Ruth Benien, Administrator

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

Call to Order:

Chairperson Orth called the Meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. Commissioner Cisneros was present in person, Commissioner Tomasic and Partridge appeared by telephone. Commissioner Bragg was unable to call in but excused. Administrator Benien was present.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Old Business:

a). Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the May 11, 2023 meeting were reviewed and approved. Commissioner Tomasic 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 May,1 2023 through May 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 was held on January 12, 2023, in person, at Human Resources. A Basic Training session is scheduled for the Library Board at its monthly meeting on June 20, 2023. A Basic Training was held March 23, 2023 at George Myen Center. Ethics Commissioner Bragg attended the same and fulfilled his ethics training requirement. A liaison with the Mayor's Office has contacted the Ethic Administrator to schedule training sessions for the advisory committees.

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 will be rescheduled for a later date after COVID limitations are lifted.

Ethics Administrator Benien is in the process of obtaining lists of individuals appointed to the Mayor's Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees and training for those groups will be scheduled. See above re: Liasison.

In the coming year a rewrite and update are planned for the UG Ethic's training materials and video. One new complaint was received by hotline. Fourteen complaints are pending awaiting additional information, referral or review. Seven email complaints were closed but remaining 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. Two complaints were closed with no violation found, procedure followed. Two by email, one by hotline. On new email advisory opinion request opinion was provided. Fifteen requests for advisory opinion are pending. One advisory opinions was provided of no jurisdiction and closed. Two new requests for information were received regarding the upcoming UG Ethics Commissioner openings. Information regarding the same was provided.

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 being considered for review and/or amendment. The status of the pending Ethics Code amendments was discussed.

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. Request for UG Ethics Commissioner members to attend that meeting in lieu of having the regular monthly meeting was made by Administrator Benien. Motion was made by Commissioner Bragg and seconded by Commissioner Tomasic to cancel the April meeting and encourage all to attend the UG Commissioners meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Subsequently the Mayor pulled consideration of the UG Ethics Amendments from the April 13, 2023 Agenda on April 10, 2023. Given the late action no attempt was made to reschedule the April, 2023 meeting and no meeting was held on April 13, 2023. The matter was again sent to the Clerk and asked to be placed on the April 27, 2023 Agenda or next available full commission meeting. The matter was again pulled by the Mayor claiming he wanted time to review the same. Prior to that date, the UG Ethics Administrator had spent three plus hours reviewing the same with his Chief of Staff who has since left. A letter will be sent to the Mayor again requesting placement.

On May 2, 2023, the UG Ethics Administrator spoke with representatives from the Wyandotte County Election Office to ensure that copies of the UG Ethics Code were being provided to individuals filing for UG offices. They have not been but will be added, in hard copy form, to the packets going forward, and the UG Ethics Administrator was advised how to obtain a list of filings with addresses to provide a copy to those who had already filed.

An updated copy of the Political Memorandum was prepared and forwarded to the UG Ethics Commissioners and UG Legal and the UG Court Clerk for distribution dated June 15, 2023.

The next monthly meeting will be on July 20, 2023, in person, due to a conflict, at the Wyandotte County Courthouse in the Wyandotte County Law Library conference room. Masks may be required for courthouse entry.

Executive Session:

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment:

Motion for adjournment by Commissioner Orth

Seconded by Commissioner Cisneros

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Next Meeting is June 15, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in person.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/Ruth M. Benien

Ruth M. Benien, UG Ethics Administrator