

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

March 10, 2022

Regular Meeting: Via Zoom

Roll Call:

- X Member Patty Orth
- X Member Emily Cisneros
- X Member Ian Tomasic
- X Member Kimberley Partridge
- X Member Ricky Bragg
- X Ruth Benien, Administrator

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

Call to Order:

Chairperson Orth called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. via Zoom due to the weather. Commissioners Tomasic, Cisneros, Bragg and Partridge were in attendance. Administrator Benien was present.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Old Business:

a). Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the February 10, 2022 meeting were reviewed and approved. Commissioner Cisneros 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 February 1, 2022 through February 28, 2022 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 UG Ethics Basic training was held by Zoom on September 22, 2021. One UG Ethics Commissioner participated. Any new Ethics Commissioners who were unavailable to attend this training will be trained separately or attend a later basic session. A UG Basic Ethics training was held on November 18, 2021 for the Police Academy in person. A UG Basic Ethics training was held on December 7, 2021 by Zoom at 1:00 p.m. for the Sheriff's Department. A regular UG Basic Ethics training session was held by Zoom on December 15, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. A Basic Ethics training for the police and fire department was held January 13, 2022 in person at the HR training room. A Basic Ethics training is scheduled for March 24, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. in person at Memorial Hall. A special training session will be scheduled for the newly elected Mayor and UG Commissioners in the near future and any remaining UG Ethics Commissioners still needing training.

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.

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

Seven new complaints were received, three by hotline and four by email. eight complaints are pending awaiting additional information, referral or review. Four complaints were closed, four for no jurisdiction and referral. Six new advisory opinion requests were received, four by email and two by phone. Four advisory opinions are currently pending. One advisory opinion request was withdrawn, two were closed with opinion provided of no violation or guidelines for a letter of support. One was resolved by an amendment being passed by the Ethics Commission.

c). Requests for Information:

One new Request for Information was received and is pending.

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 deal with the UG Ethics Code provisions being considered for review and/or amendment.

The review of the UG Ethics Code continued and was concluded with UG Ethics Code Sec. 2-271 through Sec. 2-272 reviewed and notes made for ultimate changes or action. A copy of the 2014 proposed amendments has been provided to the new UG Ethics Commissioners. All new commissioners have been provided with a hard copy of the current UG Ethics Code. The Ethics Administrator will obtain a copy of the UG Human Resources social media policies. The Ethics Administrator will check with UG Legal for assistance in preparation of the amendments eventually approved. In lieu of continuing with the review, the Ethics Commission took under consideration a limited request for a clarifying amendment from the Mayor's Office with respect to Sec. 2-267 regarding political activities. A limited clarifying amendment was passed unanimously by the Ethics Commission with a first by Commissioner Tomasic and a second by Commissioner Bragg. The Ethics Administrator will prepare the proposed amendment and send it with a cover letter to the Mayor and provide to UG Legal for preparation of the appropriate cover documents.

The next monthly meeting will be on April 14, 2022, in person, at the Wyandotte County Courthouse in the Wyandotte County Law Library conference room. Masks required for courthouse entry.

Executive Session:

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment:

Motion for adjournment by Commissioner Cisneros

Seconded by Commissioner Bragg

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Next Meeting is April 14, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. in person.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/Ruth M. Benien

Ruth M. Benien, UG Ethics Administrator