

ULSTER COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS

DATE: January 14, 2025

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Ulster County Human Services Complex
100 Development Court, Building #2, Suite 400
(Veterans Agency Entrance)
Kingston, New York

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Taane Pegg, Chair
Stephanie Ellis
Robert Nuzzo
Paul Tully (via phone – non-voting)
Brigid Walsh
Anne Zahradnik

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Deborah Schneer

OTHERS ATTENDING: Judy Riley, Secretary to the Board of Ethics
Kayleen Scali

The Acting Chair Robert Nuzzo called the meeting to order at 6:02. Due to Paul Tully being out of town and joining the meeting by phone he attended as a non-voting member.

Kayleen Scali introduced herself to the Board as she will be replacing Judy Riley as the Secretary to the Board of Ethics. The Board members welcomed her and introduced themselves.

The Board discussed who should serve as Chair for the 2025 meetings. Robert Nuzzo recommended Taane Pegg who was willing to serve. Motion was made to appoint Taane Pegg as Chair for the Board of Ethics for 2025, Stephanie Ellis 1st, Robert Nuzzo 2nd, unanimously approved.

The new Chair, Taane Pegg, officially started through the agenda. He asked if anyone had any revisions to the minutes from the December 10, 2024 meeting. No discussion. Motion to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2024 Board of Ethics Meeting, Anne Zahradnik 1st, Robert Nuzzo 2nd, unanimously approved.

Old Business:

6:07pm A motion was made to enter into Executive Session to discuss a Complaint which was a follow up request from Complainant, Robert Nuzzo 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.

6:22pm Motion was made to exit Executive Session, Anne Zahradnik 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.

Motion was made to respond to the 2nd Complaint – the Board will reach out to the Comptroller's Office to find out what agency is the appropriate agency to refer this Complaint to, whether it is the Comptroller's Office or the Attorney General's Office or some other agency; and then respond to the Complainant referring them to said agency with a statement from the Board that she must allege in her complaint the facts and circumstances surrounding these allegations around because the blanket statement contained in this Complaint is likely to be inactionable. Anne Zahradnik 1st, Stephanie Ellis 2nd, unanimously approved.

6:23pm A motion was made to enter into Executive Session to discuss a Complaint which was a follow up request from Complainant, Anne Zahradnik 1st, Stephanie Ellis 2nd, unanimously approved.

6:48pm Motion was made to exit Executive Session, Anne Zahradnik 1st, Stephanie Ellis 2nd, unanimously approved.

Motion was made to respond to the second letter of correspondence received in response to the Boards dismissal of the Complaint stating that the Complaint has already been dismissed and that the previous decision of the Board stands, Brigid Walsh 1st, Anne Zahradnik 2nd, unanimously approved.

Update was given regarding the 2023 Financial Disclosure Forms. Judy has been in touch with most of the individuals who have outstanding forms – there are a couple that stated they are sending them in soon, there is only 2 that did not respond at all. Penalties were discussed. Most received the letter from the Board which stated that the documents were due 12/31/24. Financial penalty is up to \$10,000 or the Board can recommend other disciplinary action, including removal from the board/committee they serve on. Some people called the County

Attorney's office upset with the letter they received. The forms for 2024 go out in February. One person was out of town recently and another in the hospital. Should the Board send a letter to the County Executive with the names of those people who have failed to file the forms?. They have violated the law. Approximately 8 are outstanding. Should include the Chair of the Legislature too since they appoint some of the people. Bob Nuzzo suggested they get direction from the County Attorney. These individuals failed to submit their Financial Disclosure Forms pursuant to 44-7D of the Ethics Law after numerous attempts to get them and ask what the Board's recourse is. It needs to be documented – the forms are 16 months past due. Going forward, when people are appointed to the various boards, they need to be told upfront that they will need to file this form annually. Motion was made to contact the County Attorney's Office and request what the Board's recourse is for individuals who are non-compliant with the Ethics law with regard to filing their Financial Disclosure Forms, Robert Nuzzo 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.

The Board discussed the creation of a form for the website. Judy had Dan Shortt, Esq. from the County Attorney's office review the drafted letter that was proposed at the last meeting and he had a couple of small suggestions. With regard to creating a fillable form on the county website, UCIS has agreed to assist with the fillable form. The County will be rolling out a new website sometime soon but not sure when that is planned. Does the Board want to wait for that or get it done now? Anne- let's get in line. Regarding the drafted letter – some of the language in it can be used on the website. Once form is drafted a ticket will need to be submitted to UCIS. Form will need to be drafted first. The Board wants the form to include sections of the Ethics Law that Complainants can refer to when submitting complaints. It will be more efficient. Anne and Stephanie will draft a form and get it to everyone to review. Taane – maybe include a miscellaneous category in case it does not fit one of the sections. Anne – they will get a free form text box to include their information but really need to have them include what is being violated. Taane – there could be some basic examples where there is a check mark or X – whether something is permissible vs. not permissible – conflict of interest.

New Business:

7:09 pm A motion was made to enter into Executive Session to discuss a Request for Advisory Opinion, Robert Nuzzo 1st, Anne Zahradnik 2nd, unanimously approved.

7:30pm Motion was made to exit Executive Session, Stephanie Ellis 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.

Motion was made to respond to Request for Advisory Opinion, requesting additional information, particularly a job description of the Ulster County employee's current position, job description of being a Board member for the Town of Olive, and provide a copy of the 5 year cooperative agreement referenced in the request, as well as any other information or documents that requester feels is pertinent, Stephanie Ellis 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.

The Board thanked Robert Nuzzo for his service as past Chair and Judy Riley for her service as Secretary.

7:21pm Motion to adjourn meeting, Taane Pegg 1st, Brigid Walsh 2nd, unanimously approved.