

MINUTES and REPORT of the MEETING of the ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY'S INDEPENDENT ETHICS PANEL held in the first-floor conference room, 3030 Union Road, Cheektowaga, New York 14227 on the 6th day of October 2020.

**PRESENT: Paul W. Wolf, Chairman, Ad hoc Member
Maureen Krause, Ad hoc Member
Raymond Herman, Ad hoc Member
Margaret A. Murphy, General Counsel
Jacqueline Mattina, Associate Attorney**

CALL TO ORDER AT 9:48 a.m.

I. - ROLL CALL

II. - READING OF MINUTES

Motion by Maureen Krause, seconded by Raymond Herman. to waive the reading of the Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, March 13, 2020. Motion carried 3-0.

III. - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Krause, seconded by Mr. Herman to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, March 13, 2020. Motion carried 3-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Chair

Motion by Ms. Krause, seconded by Mr. Herman, to nominate Paul Wolf as Chair.

Motion by Mr. Herman, seconded by Ms. Krause, to close the nominations. Motion carried 3-0.

Motion by Ms. Krause, seconded by Mr. Herman, to appoint Mr. Wolf as Chair. Motion carried 3-0.

2. Review Financial Disclosure Statements for Calendar Year 2019

Round #1: The Panel reviewed and approved in the first round 30 financial disclosure statements.

Round #2: In Round Two, the Panel reviewed and approved the financial disclosure statements submitted by current and former commissioners, members of the Executive Staff and the former Deputy Director. The Panel noted the former Deputy Director disclosed he had not read the provisions of the Whistleblower Policy. Since the Deputy Director is now retired, the

Panel accepted the disclosure statement. The Panel decided to draft and send a confidential letter to one individual relating to an indirect relationship with three Authority vendors, so the individual is aware of the standard of conduct set forth in the Public Officers Law and the Public Authorities Law, if a potential conflict of interest were to arise in the future. Commissioner LaGree had submitted a financial disclosure statement to the Panel at the time of her appointment, which had previously been approved by the Panel.

Round #3: Four individuals mistakenly indicated they were required to file a financial disclosure statement with the Erie County Board of Ethics. Even though the Panel approved these financial disclosure statements, the Panel will also be sending these individuals a letter to have them review the applicable provisions of the Authority's Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures.

Round #4: The Panel reviewed and approved financial disclosure statements for six individuals. One individual was an attorney who disclosed representing several municipalities for which the Authority provides domestic and commercial water services. Four individuals disclosed the name of family members who work at the Authority but who are subject to the grandfather provision of the Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures. One individual disclosed accepting a gift valued not in excess of \$75.00, and sharing such gift with office members, prior to the new amendment prohibiting gifts of any value.

Post-meeting, one additional financial disclosure statement was found in a pile of envelopes to be thrown away. This individual disclosed a family member works for the Authority but whose employment is subject to the grandfather provision. This individual's statement was reviewed and approved by the Panel.

Round #5: One current and one former employee failed to check one box on their disclosure statements. The Panel will send a follow-up email or communication to these employees.

Post-meeting, the current employee was informed by email of the failure and submitted a supplemental disclosure form correcting the error, which was reviewed and approved by the Panel. Mr. Wolf agreed to contact the former employee regarding the omissions.

3. Common Errors and Omissions

The Panel noted the following errors and omissions found while reviewing these financial disclosure statements: (1) failure to put full name on the top of each page; (2) failure to date the statement on the last page; and (3) failure to return the Acknowledgement. The Panel suggests the Acknowledgement be made part of the 2020 Financial Disclosure Statement.

4. Topics for Further Discussion and Review

Panel members would like to discuss the following at its next meeting: (1) review and consider amendments, if any, that should be made to the Authority's Whistleblower Policy and its Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy; (2) review of the Authority's Nepotism Policy; (3) review, revise and approve forms for 2020 Financial Disclosure Statement, Acknowledgment,

Vendor List, and employee communications.

5. Next Meeting

The Panel tentatively scheduled its next meeting for Friday, February 12, 2021 at 9:30 am at the first-floor conference room at the Service Center. Staff will contact the IT Department to see if the meeting can otherwise be held via Zoom, WebEx, or Teams.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Krause and seconded by Mr. Herman. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.