



**STATE OF NEVADA  
COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

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**MINUTES  
of the meeting of the  
NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

The Commission on Ethics held a public meeting on  
Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 9:30 a.m.  
at the following location:

**Ethics Commission Office  
704 W. Nye Lane  
Suite 204  
Carson City, NV 89703**

These minutes constitute a summary of the above proceedings of the Nevada Commission on Ethics. A recording of the meeting is available for public inspection at the Commission's office.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

Chair Kim Wallin, CPA, CMA, CFM appeared via videoconference and called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. Also appearing via videoconference were Vice-Chair Brian Duffrin and Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald, Esq., Cheryl Lau, Esq., Teresa Lowry, Esq. and Philip K. (P.K.) O'Neill. Commissioner Damian R. Sheets, Esq. and Amanda Yen, Esq were excused. Present for Commission staff in Carson City and via videoconference was Executive Assistant Kari Pedroza. Executive Director Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson, Esq., Commission Counsel Tracy L. Chase, Esq., Associate Counsel Ann Wilkinson, Esq., Investigator Erron Terry and Senior Legal Researcher Darci Hayden appeared via videoconference.

The pledge of allegiance was conducted.

2. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of the August 19, 2020 Commission Meeting.

Chair Wallin stated that all Commissioners were present for the August Commission meeting and therefore all Commissioners present today could participate in this Item.

Commissioner Lau moved to approve the August 19, 2020 Commission Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner O'Neill seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

4. Consideration and approval of the Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report presented by the Executive Director pursuant to NAC 281A.180(2).

Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson presented the Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report to the Commission and summarized each section of the report. She noted that the FY20 case statistics charts and graphs were approved to be incorporated into the Annual Report by the Commission at the August Commission meeting.

Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson highlighted that all Advisory Opinion requests received in FY20 were completed in the same fiscal year and thanked Commission staff for their efforts and hard work. Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson pointed out while the number of Complaint cases received in FY20 was less than those received in FY19, the number of Complaint cases resolved in FY20 were almost double the amount resolved in FY18 and FY19.

Vice-Chair Duffrin moved that Commissioner feedback on the Annual Report be submitted to the Executive Director within 2 weeks so that the Commission could approve the final report at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Lowry seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried as follows:

Chair Wallin:	Aye.
Vice-Chair Duffrin:	Aye.
Commissioner Gruenewald:	Aye.
Commissioner Lau:	Aye.
Commissioner Lowry:	Aye.
Commissioner O'Neill:	Aye.

5. Consideration and approval of the Commission's procedures for reviewing and approving staff recommendations and proposed orders/documents related to ethics complaints and requests for advisory opinions during confidential phases of proceedings, including, without limitation: (1) jurisdictional, evidentiary and investigatory recommendations, proposed orders and proposed confidential letters of caution or instruction related to ethics complaints; and (2) jurisdictional recommendations, recommendations regarding the Commission's review and consideration of requests for advisory opinions via hearing or written submission, and proposed opinions related to requests for advisory opinions.

Chair Wallin recommended this Item be tabled until the next Commission meeting as some Commissioners were excused from this meeting.

Vice-Chair Duffrin posed three questions to Commission Staff to be addressed under this Item at the next meeting:

- (1) Approximately how long has the Commission been following these processes?
- (2) Are there any concerns from Commission staff about the processes?
- (3) Are the processes in compliance with the NAC and NRS 281A?

Commissioner O'Neill asked when the next Commission meeting would be held and if there could be an assurance that all Commissioners would be in attendance for that meeting. Chair Wallin replied that there is a need for a November meeting and that the recording of the meeting could be shared with any Commissioners excused from the meeting.

Commissioner Lowry moved to table the Agenda Item until the next Commission Meeting. Commissioner Gruenewald seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

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6. Report by Executive Director on agency status and operations and possible direction thereon. Items to be discussed include, without limitation:
- FY21 Budget Status
  - 2021 BDR Status
  - Commission Meeting Schedule
  - Media Outreach Status
  - Update on Coronavirus Protocols
  - Education and Outreach

FY21 Budget Status: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson reiterated that during the Special Session of the Nevada Legislature held in July, the Commission's proposed budget cuts were approved for the FY21 budget to address the budget shortfalls as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. She reminded the Commission that the cuts included the closure of the Commission's Las Vegas office in the Grant Sawyer Building, court reporting reductions and travel reductions to accomplish the necessary budget cuts. Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson thanked Chair Wallin for her assistance in transporting the Commission's equipment and supplies from the Las Vegas office to the Carson City office.

2021 BDR Status: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson reiterated that the Commission's proposed BDR submission was approved by the Governor and was forwarded by the Governor to the Legislative Counsel Bureau. She informed the Commission that the BDR has received an identification number and expects to hear back from the drafters within a month.

Commission Meeting Schedule: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson stated that the November and December Commission meetings were previously scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month instead of the typical third Wednesday of the month to accommodate holiday schedules, however the second Wednesday of November is Veteran's Day, a State holiday. She requested that the Commission consider November 18 for its next Commission Meeting and December 16 for the December Commission Meeting. Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson indicated that if a Commissioner was not available for either of these meeting dates, they could send an email to her attention.

Media Outreach Status: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson informed the Commission that this item was included on the Agenda at the request of the Chair and Vice-Chair. She acknowledged that this topic would be discussed at length in the next Agenda item and offered that the current method for media outreach utilized by the Commission is Twitter and responsiveness to media inquiries. Based on the Commission's direction in the next agenda item, the Commission may consider additional media outreach.

Update on Coronavirus Protocols: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson stated that there has been no further direction from the Governor's office regarding when offices must be reopened to the public or when state employees will be required to work from the physical workplace. She informed the Commission that Commission staff are continuing to work remotely for the most part, however she has implemented a rotating schedule for staff to work from the office to ensure that there is a staff member in the office each business day, Monday – Thursday. Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson provided that safety procedures in the office have been imposed, such as social distancing, masks and a temperature log.

Education and Outreach: Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson told the Commission that the number of requests for virtual training has increased and shared that she has provided virtual training to state and local government agencies. She further shared that she intends to produce a more formal recording of her training to be posted on the Commission's website.

Vice-Chair Duffrin moved to accept the Executive Director's agency status report as presented. Commissioner Lau seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

7. Approval and establishment of Commission vision for Fiscal Year 2021 and beyond, including possible direction on the Commission's mission statement, guiding principles, media and public outreach, education and training, and 2021 Legislative Session and participation therein by Commission Members and Staff, with confirmation of authority for Executive Director to represent the Commission in budgetary and legislative matters.

Chair Wallin informed the Commission that she and Vice-Chair Duffrin requested this Item be placed on the Agenda so that the Commission may have an opportunity to discuss its vision and direction for the future.

Commissioner O'Neill suggested that the Commission's existing Mission Statement be added to the Annual Report and the other Commissioners agreed.

Vice-Chair Duffrin moved that the Commission retain its current Mission Statement. Commissioner Lau seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Duffrin presented his proposed Guiding Principles to his fellow Commissioners which could accompany the Commission's existing Mission Statement.

Commissioners Lowry and O'Neill thanked Vice-Chair Duffrin for his effort in compiling the Guiding Principles.

Chair Wallin suggested the addition of the Commission's directive to include public outreach to the third Guiding Principle, "We are committed to providing outreach and education to *the public*, public officers and employees to enhance their awareness and understanding of ethics requirements and prohibitions under the Nevada Ethics Law". Vice-Chair Duffrin agreed with the addition.

Vice-Chair Duffrin made a motion to accept the Commission's Guiding Principles, as amended by the discussion. Commissioner Lau seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

On the subject of Media Outreach, Commissioner O'Neill acknowledged that he has been a consistent proponent of a proactive approach to provide information to the public. He suggested additional outreach to traditional media sources, including television, newspapers and radio stations.

Chair Wallin suggested that meeting highlights be posted after each Commission Meeting on the Commission's website and Twitter. She further recommended Press Releases including the sanctions imposed by the Commission and the resolution of public cases be made following Commission meetings.

Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson requested clarification from the Commission on criteria for Press Release topics and provided feedback about last year's Annual Report Press Release received from media sources.

The Commission directed that a summary of case resolutions during Commission meetings should be prepared going forward. Further direction received from the Commission included notification of case statistics each month, and summaries of any relevant publications, opinions or other matters, in consultation with the Chair.

Commissioner O'Neill moved to delegate authority to the Executive Director and Commission Chair to coordinate official press releases after each Commission meeting. Commissioner Lau seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried as follows:

Chair Wallin:	Aye.
Vice-Chair Duffrin:	Aye.
Commissioner Gruenewald:	Aye.
Commissioner Lau:	Aye.
Commissioner Lowry:	Aye.
Commissioner O'Neill:	Aye.

8. Commissioner comments on matters including, without limitation, identification of future agenda items, upcoming meeting dates and meeting procedures. No action will be taken under this agenda item.

There were no Commissioner comments.

9. Public Comment.

No public was present for public comment.

10. Adjournment.

Commissioner Lau made a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Commissioner O'Neill seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Minutes prepared by:

/s/ Kari Pedroza

Kari Pedroza  
Executive Assistant

/s/ Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson

Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson, Esq.  
Executive Director

Minutes approved November 18, 2020:

/s/ Kim Wallin

Kim Wallin, CPA, CMA, CFM  
Chair

/s/ Brian Duffrin

Brian Duffrin  
Vice-Chair