



**STATE OF NEVADA
COMMISSION ON ETHICS**
<http://ethics.nv.gov>

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

December 16, 2015

The Commission on Ethics held a public meeting on
Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.
at the following location:

**Workforce Connections
6330 West Charleston Blvd., Suite 150
Las Vegas, Nevada 89146**

These minutes constitute a summary of the above proceedings of the Nevada Commission on Ethics. Verbatim transcripts are available for public inspection at the Commission's office located in Carson City.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chair Cheryl A. Lau, Esq. called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. Also present were Vice-Chair Keith A. Weaver, Esq. and Commissioners John C. Carpenter, Magdalena Groover, Barbara Gruenewald, Esq. and Dan Stewart.

Present for Commission Staff was Executive Director, Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson, Esq., and Commission Counsel, Tracy L. Chase, Esq.

The pledge of allegiance was conducted.

2. Public Comment.

Mike McGreer offered comments regarding his opinion concerning conflicts of interest with respect to Nevada journalists running for and holding public office.

3. Approval of Minutes of the September 16, 2015 Commission Meeting.

Commission Counsel Tracy L. Chase, Esq. suggested this agenda item be tabled, as a quorum of the members who participated in the September 16, 2015 meeting was not present to vote on the related Minutes. Chair Lau agreed and tabled the agenda item.

4. Authorization for Commission Counsel to continue to defend and represent the interests of the Ethics Commission of the State of Nevada in pending legal proceedings entitled “Hansen and Wheeler vs. The Commission on Ethics of the State of Nevada”, Case No. 15OC000761B, filed in the First Judicial District Court of Nevada, and associated Appeal filed in the Supreme Court of the State of Nevada, Case No. 69100, entitled “The Commission on Ethics of the State of Nevada vs. Hansen and Wheeler,” including direction to Commission Counsel to continue to pursue the Appeal, and ratification and approval of the actions taken by Commission Counsel to file or institute the Appeal, as the official legal counsel of the Nevada Commission on Ethics. (This item was not an admission of wrongdoing for the purposes of civil action, criminal prosecution or injunctive relief.)

Vice-Chair Weaver moved to authorize Commission Counsel to continue to defend and represent the interests of the Ethics Commission and the State of Nevada in pending legal proceedings entitled Hansen and Wheeler vs. The Commission on Ethics of the State of Nevada. Commissioner Groover seconded the motion.

Commission Counsel Tracy L. Chase, Esq. requested clarification on the Motion.

Upon request from Commission Counsel Tracy L. Chase, Esq., Vice-Chair Weaver confirmed that his Motion included the ratification of all actions taken by Commission Counsel on behalf of the Executive Director and Commission Chair to file the appeal and pursue the case in that manner. Commissioner Groover seconded the amended Motion.

Commissioner Carpenter disclosed that he served as a member of the Nevada Legislature for 24 years, during which the Legislative Counsel Bureau provided official legal advice in all legislative matters. Commissioner Carpenter disclosed his view that he had a conflict and would abstain from participating in the agenda item.

The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously, with Commissioner Carpenter abstaining.

5. Report by Executive Director on agency status and operations.

Executive Director, Yvonne Nevarez-Goodson, Esq. welcomed and introduced newly appointed Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald and Dan Stewart.

Ms. Nevarez-Goodson stated that the Associate Counsel vacancy had been filled and she is looking forward to Judy Prutzman joining the Commission Staff in January. She reported that Ms. Prutzman currently serves as the Public Information Officer for the Department of Education and previously worked for Governor Sandoval as a Policy Advisor, where she was a liaison between the Ethics Commission and the Governor.

Ms. Nevarez-Goodson reported on the 2015 Conference for the Council on Government Ethics Laws (COGEL) which was held in Boston, Massachusetts on December 5-9 and attended for the first time by the Commission’s Executive Director and Commission Counsel. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to attend the conference where she and Commission Counsel learned a wealth of information about trends in other states’ ethics laws and how she might be able to offer some ideas for potential reforms to the Commission before the next legislative session.

Ms. Nevarez-Goodson gave a brief update regarding the Commission’s outreach and education. She reported that since the last Commission meeting she has traveled to various jurisdictions to present Ethics training, including the City of Henderson, Clark County, and City of Reno. Ms. Nevarez-Goodson reported that she has also presented trainings to the Certified

Public Manager Program in Carson City and Las Vegas, as well as other state agencies. She discussed her goals to increase awareness of the ethics laws by making the training more easily accessible through NEATS and the Commission's website.

Ms. Nevarez-Goodson gave a brief update on the current fiscal year budget, stating that the agency is on track for spending in our base budget year. She stated that she will begin preparing the budget request for the next biennium after the New Year.

Ms. Nevarez-Goodson provided the Commission with the proposed 2016 Commission Meeting dates and the proposed matters for the January 20, 2016 agenda.

Lastly, Ms. Nevarez-Goodson discussed the Commission's Request for Opinion Log (Case log) and the current case load of the Commission and Staff. She reported that staff has been diligent in issuing timely Opinions.

6. Open Session for Commissioner Comment on matters including, without limitation, future agenda items, upcoming meeting dates and meeting procedures.

Vice-Chair Weaver welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald and Dan Stewart.

7. Open Session for Public Comment.

Sandra Ramaker, Virgin Valley Water District of Mesquite Nevada expressed her displeasure with the Commissions processes regarding a Third Party Request for Opinion that she filed. At the direction of the Chair, Executive Director Yvonne Nevarez-Goodson provided a thorough explanation of the Commission's procedures regarding the review of a Third-Party Request for Opinion (Complaint), including the requirements for a minimum level of credible evidence. Ms. Nevarez-Goodson welcomed Ms. Ramaker to contact her independently for further explanation.

8. Adjournment.

Vice-Chair Weaver moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Groover seconded the Motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

/s/ Valerie Carter

Valerie Carter, CPM
Executive Assistant

/s/ Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson

Yvonne M. Nevarez-Goodson, Esq.
Executive Director

Minutes approved March 16, 2016:

/s/ Cheryl A. Lau

Cheryl A. Lau, Esq.
Chair

/s/ Keith A. Weaver

Keith A. Weaver, Esq.
Vice-Chair