



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

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

The Commission on Ethics held a public meeting on
Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.
at the following location:

**State Bar of Nevada
3100 West Charleston Boulevard, Suite 100
Las Vegas, NV 89102**

Zoom Meeting Information

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87605057620?pwd=Q1MyanFhSnd4MDgwSi9DUVJyemhvZz09>

Zoom Meeting Telephone Number: 720-707-2699

Meeting ID: 876 0505 7620

Passcode: 205088

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 and on the [Commission's YouTube channel](#).

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

Chair Kim Wallin, CPA, CMA, CFM appeared in-person at the State Bar of Nevada in Las Vegas and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Also appearing in-person were Vice-Chair Brian Duffrin and Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald, Esq., James Oscarson, Thoran Towler, Esq. and Amanda Yen, Esq. Commissioner Teresa Lowry, Esq. was excused and Commissioner Damian Sheets, Esq. was absent. Present for Commission staff in Las Vegas were Executive Director Ross E. Armstrong, Esq., Associate Counsel Elizabeth J. Bassett, Esq., Investigator Erron Terry and Executive Assistant Kari Pedroza. Deputy Attorney General Laena St-Jules, Esq. also appeared in person in Las Vegas.

2. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

3. Recognition of Senior Legal Researcher Darci Hayden for her years of dedicated and outstanding service to the Commission.

Chair Wallin introduced the Item and expressed her gratitude for the administrative assistance Senior Legal Researcher Darci Hayden provided to the Commission, specifically with Ethics Complaints, Advisory Opinions and in her role as liaison between the Commission Counsel and Associate Counsel when cases moved forward to a hearing. She thanked Darci for her many years of service to the State of Nevada and congratulated her on her retirement. Chair Wallin wished her all the best as she begins to write a new chapter or even a novel about her next phase.

Commissioner Yen echoed the Chair's comments and added that Darci deserved the highest regard and recognition for her contributions behind-the-scenes. She expressed her appreciation to Darci for her years and service and stated that Darci will be missed.

Commissioner Gruenewald personally thanked Senior Legal Researcher Hayden for all the times she assisted Commissioner Gruenewald with changing her password and accessing her email account.

Commissioner Oscarson thanked Senior Legal Researcher Hayden for her hard work in preparing materials for the Commission. He shared his appreciation for her time and effort in everything she did for the Commission.

Commissioner Towler agreed that Darci will be missed. He thanked her for her contribution to the Commission and shared his hope that she enjoys retirement. Commissioner Towler echoed the Chair's comment about Darci's next book and stated he looked forward to any books she may write about her future endeavors.

Vice-Chair Duffrin shared that he had the honor of seeing Darci before she left when he last visited the Commission's office, and she shared with him her goals for retirement. He also echoed his fellow Commissioner's comments and thanked Darci for her service. Vice-Chair Duffrin congratulated Darci and wished her well going forward.

Former Commission Counsel Tracy Chase thanked the Commission for the opportunity to recognize Senior Legal Researcher Hayden. Tracy shared that she had the privilege of working closely with Darci for many years and commended her dedication, hard work and service to the State of Nevada. Former Commission Counsel Chase expressed her gratitude for Darci's task management skills and collaborative effort. She shared that Darci was instrumental in assisting with litigation proceedings. Tracy commented her personal appreciation for Darci's support over the years and wished her a wonderful retirement.

Commissioner Oscarson commented on how relaxed Former Commission Counsel Chase and Senior Legal Researcher Hayden looked and that it shows they are enjoying retirement.

Former Executive Director Yvonne Nevarez-Goodson thanked the Commission for the invitation to say a few words about Darci. She congratulated Darci on her retirement and noted her appreciation for the many years she and Darci worked together at the Commission. Former Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson shared one of her priorities as Executive Director for the Commission was to surround herself with staff who believed in the mission and the work of the Commission and Darci certainly fit the bill. She commended Darci on taking pride in her work and encouraging professional growth among the Commission staff. Former Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson congratulated Darci for her efforts with National Association for Legal Support Professionals and promoting collaboration and cohesion between professionals in the administrative law field. She recognized Darci for all of the work she performed silently behind the scenes during her tenure with the Commission. Former Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson thanked Senior Legal Researcher Hayden for her keeping staff on track with statutory deadlines and her administrative talents. She shared a few anecdotal experiences and expressed her gratitude for Darci's support and friendship.

Chair Wallin thanked Former Commission Counsel Chase and Former Executive Director Nevarez-Goodson for their heart-felt remarks in recognition of Senior Legal Researcher Hayden.

Executive Director Armstrong echoed the comments made by his predecessor and former colleague. He thanked Darci for her assistance and historical knowledge of Commission cases as it was hugely beneficial to him as the newly appointed Executive Director. Executive Director Armstrong acknowledged her critical role and contribution to the Commission over the years and stated that she would be greatly missed. He shared with the Commission that he presented her with a pen inscribed with her pen name on it as a token of the Commission's appreciation.

Associate Counsel Bassett echoed Executive Director Armstrong's comments and commented that she would miss the great energy that Darci brought to the office. She thanked her for the tremendous amount of work she did for the Commission and the assistance she provided to Associate Counsel Bassett. She congratulated Darci on her retirement and expressed her well wishes to Darci in her creative endeavors.

Executive Assistant Pedroza thanked the Commission for the opportunity to acknowledge Senior Legal Researcher Hayden on the record. She expressed her gratitude for all of Darci's assistance and collaborative efforts as her counterpart in the Administrative Team during their time together at the Commission. Executive Assistant Pedroza shared that although Darci will be truly missed at the Commission, she extended her excitement about being able to witness what Darci might do in the future.

Senior Legal Researcher Hayden thanked the Commissioners and Commission staff, both former and current, for their well wishes. She shared what an honor and a privilege it had been working for the Commission. Senior Legal Researcher Hayden shared she was overwhelmed by the kind words and warm regards by all that shared. She stated she would miss each and every one of her colleagues and Commissioners.

4. Approval of Minutes of the March 15, 2023, Commission Meeting.

Chair Wallin stated that all Commissioners were present for the March Commission Meeting, except for Commissioner Sheets who was absent and therefore precluded from participating in this item.

Commissioner Towler moved to approve the March 15, 2023 Commission Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Yen 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 Oscarson:	Aye.
Commissioner Towler:	Aye.
Commissioner Yen:	Aye.

5. Discussion and approval of a Proposed Stipulation concerning Consolidated Ethics Complaint Nos. 20-081C & 20-085C regarding Leonardo Blundo, Member, Board of County Commissioners, Nye County, State of Nevada.

Chair Wallin introduced the item and stated for the record that proper notice had been provided and waivers were received regarding this item. Chair Wallin further noted that Vice-Chair Duffrin and Commissioners Gruenewald and Sheets served as members of the Review Panel and would be precluded from participating in the consideration of the dispositive motions under this item pursuant to NRS 281A.220(4).

Chair Wallin asked Counsel in the Complaints to identify themselves and their clients for the record. Associate Counsel Elizabeth J. Bassett, Esq. appeared on behalf of Executive Director Armstrong before the Commission in this matter. Brian Hardy, Esq. appeared via Zoom on behalf of Leonardo Blundo, who was not in attendance but was provided proper notice of the Agenda Item and understood that the Commission would proceed in his absence.

Associate Counsel Elizabeth J. Bassett, Esq. presented an overview of the Proposed Stipulation to resolve Consolidated Ethics Complaint Nos. 20-081C & 20-085C regarding Leonardo Blundo.

Counsel Hardy commended Associate Counsel Bassett on providing the recitation of the Proposed Stipulation. He confirmed his client is in agreement with the terms of the Proposed Stipulation and acknowledged that the Stipulation is the product of negotiations between the parties. Counsel Hardy acknowledged that the diligent work of the Commission staff was critical to the resolution of this matter and thanked Commission staff for their collaborative efforts. He expressed his appreciation to the Commission for its consideration.

Chair Wallin asked questions of Associate Counsel Bassett, Counsel Hardy and Executive Director Armstrong, and each provided responses to the questions.

Commissioner Oscarson stated that he struggled with the purported determination of willfulness and could not support the Stipulation as proposed.

Commissioner Yen clarified the finding of a willful violation as outlined in the Proposed Stipulation. She added that consideration should be given to the fact that the parties negotiated and came to a stipulation of the matter and that each party conceded slightly on their stance.

Commissioner Yen made a motion to accept the terms of the Stipulation as presented by the parties to resolve Consolidated Ethics Complaint Case Nos. 20-081C & 20-085C (Blundo) and direct Deputy Attorney General Laena St-Jules to finalize the legal form of Stipulation and any matters relating thereto. Commissioner Towler seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried as follows:

Chair Wallin:	Aye.
Vice-Chair Duffrin:	Abstain pursuant to NRS 281A.220.
Commissioner Gruenewald:	Abstain pursuant to NRS 281A.220.
Commissioner Towler:	Aye.
Commissioner Oscarson:	Nay.
Commissioner Yen:	Aye.

Chair Wallin thanked Counsel Hardy for his assistance in the resolution of this matter. Counsel Hardy thanked the Commissioners for their constant and consistent professionalism and that of its staff.

6. Discussion regarding Senate Bill 431 and possible direction to the Executive Director on how to proceed with advocating for the Commission's position on the bill.

Chair Wallin introduced the item and asked the Executive Director for his presentation on the matter.

Executive Director Armstrong noted that the Legislative Subcommittee had a meeting scheduled the week prior to consider this item, but unfortunately was unable to meet due to technical issues. He summarized the intent and potential impact of Senate Bill 431 on the Commission. He referred to the meeting materials corresponding to the item and asked the Commission for feedback pertaining to the proposed letter outlining the Commission's position on Senate Bill 431. He further requested direction from the Commission on how to proceed with advocating the Commission's position on the bill.

The Commissioners shared their thoughts and discussed the operational and fiscal implications of the proposed bill as it related to the Commission.

Commissioner Oscarson moved to support the letter that the Executive Director has written and any outreach efforts the Executive Director can establish starting with the Governor's Office to see what their thoughts are, which may negate some other needs, but still reach out to make sure they are onboard as well. Vice-Chair Duffrin seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

7. Consideration and approval of the Use of Information Services and Equipment Policy as presented by the Executive Director.

Chair Wallin introduced the item and asked the Executive Director for his presentation on the matter.

Executive Director Armstrong referred to the proposed Use of Information Services and Equipment Policy provided in the meeting materials and highlighted the provisions. He reported that he reached out to the State IT department EITS prior to completing the policy.

Chair Wallin thanked Executive Director Armstrong for his work on the policy.

Commissioner Towler moved to accept the Use of Information Services and Equipment Policy as presented. Commissioner Yen seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

8. Consideration and approval of the Commissioner Salary Policy as presented by the Executive Director.

Chair Wallin introduced the item and asked her fellow Commissioners if there were any disclosures.

Each Commissioner provided the following disclosure separately on the record:

I am a Commissioner with the Nevada Commission on Ethics. Pursuant to NRS 281A.139, I have a pecuniary interest in the proposed Nevada Commission on Ethics' Commissioner Salary Policy as I have a beneficial interest in any payments that are authorized pursuant to NRS 281A.210(2) and (3). However, after consultation with Deputy Attorney General St-Jules and pursuant to NRS 281A.420(4), I do not believe abstention is required in this matter as any benefit or detriment accruing to me would not be greater than the benefit or detriment accruing to the group of Nevada Commission on Ethics Commissioners, and the independence of judgment of a reasonable person in my situation would not be materially affected by my pecuniary interest.

Executive Director Armstrong referred to the proposed Commissioner Salary Policy provided in the meeting materials and highlighted the provisions.

Vice-Chair Duffrin asked a question pertaining to the tracking procedure of the policy and Executive Director Armstrong addressed his question.

Commissioner Oscarson moved to accept the Commissioner Salary Policy as presented. Vice-Chair Duffrin seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

9. Report by Executive Director on agency status and operations, and possible direction thereon. Items to be discussed include, without limitation:

- a. Education and Outreach
- b. Quarterly Case Log
- c. Legislative Update
- d. Budget Update
- e. Commission Recruitment Updates

Chair Wallin introduced the Item and asked Executive Director Armstrong for his presentation.

a. Education and Outreach: Executive Director Armstrong noted the written report submitted on Education and Outreach in the meeting materials.

Executive Director Armstrong informed the Commission that he had completed a couple training session videos for the Online Learning Management System.

Executive Director Armstrong reported an increase in LinkedIn followers and provided the number of training attendees for the Fiscal Year.

b. Quarterly Case Log: Executive Director Armstrong referenced the updated Quarterly Case Logs provided in the meeting materials noting that with the matter resolved during the meeting that day there are no pending cases prior to FY22 and after the next few months workload, there will be no pending cases from FY22.

c. Legislative Update: Executive Director Armstrong noted that the Legislative Update report was provided to the Commissioners and included in the meeting materials earlier that week to ensure all updates were included. He outlined important dates for the conclusion of the current Legislative Session.

d. Budget Update: Executive Director Armstrong reported that the work program for temporary contract services for the Senior Legal Researcher position was being processed and expected to be complete within 2 weeks. He also stated that minor work programs would be processed for the Commission's operations and information technology budget accounts.

e. Commission Counsel Hiring Update: Executive Director Armstrong reiterated that the Personnel Subcommittee would be holding interviews that afternoon for the Commission Counsel position and depending on the outcome, the full Commission could interview the final candidates at the next monthly Commission meeting.

Executive Director Armstrong informed the Commission that he had two interviews scheduled the following week for the Senior Legal Researcher position.

Commissioner Yen moved to accept the Executive Director's agency status report as presented. Commissioner Oscarson seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

10. 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.

Vice-Chair Duffrin extended his thanks to Commission staff for their hard work, especially since the Commission has two vacant positions.

Commissioner Oscarson echoed Vice-Chair Duffrin's sentiment and expressed his appreciation for fellow Commissioners.

Commissioner Yen commented in agreeance with her fellow Commissioners and expressed her gratitude to Executive Director Armstrong and Associate Counsel Bassett for their professional representation of the Commission, acknowledging comments made by opposing counsel in various Ethics cases.

11. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

12. Adjournment.

Commissioner Towler made a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Vice-Chair Duffrin seconded the motion. The Motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Minutes prepared by:

[/s/ Kari Pedroza](#)

Kari Pedroza
Executive Assistant

[/s/ Ross Armstrong](#)

Ross Armstrong, Esq.
Executive Director

Minutes approved May 17, 2023:

[/s/ Kim Wallin](#)

Kim Wallin, CPA, CMA, CFM
Chair

[/s/ Brian Duffrin](#)

Brian Duffrin
Vice-Chair