***City of Scranton***

**Ethics Board**

340 N. Washington Avenue

Scranton, PA 18503

Board Members: Stephanie Bressler, David Falchek,

Andrew Heller, Brad Kovaleski, Matthew Meyer

Solicitor: John M. Hart

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.**

**Governor’s Room, Scranton City Hall**

1. **Call to Order**

Ethics Board Chairman Matthew Meyer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Welcome and Roll Call**

Ethics Board Chairman Meyer, Board Members Stephanie Bressler and Dave Falchek, and Solicitor John Hart were in attendance and answered affirmatively to the roll call. Board Members Andrew Heller and Brad Kovaleski were absent.

1. **Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the April 21, 2021, meeting**

Board Member Falchek made a motion to suspend the reading of and approve the minutes of the April 21st meeting. Board Member Bressler seconded the motion. The motion passed with yes votes from Board Members.

1. **Reports**
2. Solicitor’s Report
3. Pending Complaint

Solicitor Hart reported there is no new information on the status of Complaint 20-001. At the completion of investigation, a Findings Report could be issued.

Solicitor Hart notified the Board of a pending objection to Attorney Ryan Campbell’s serving as Investigative Officer since his law firm is suing the City.

1. Advisory Opinions

Solicitor Hart summarized Advisory Opinion 21-004 in which he concluded that an appearance of conflict exists if City Solicitor Joseph O’Brien reviews invoices submitted to the City for payment of services by Oliver Price & Rhodes, given Attorney O’Brien’s affiliation with the law firm.

Solicitor Hart reported on Advisory Opinion 21-005 in which he concluded that a Scranton Police Officer is prohibited from seeking or accepting election, nomination or appointment as a candidate for election to political office while maintaining employment with the police department.

Board Member Bressler made a motion to accept the Advisory Opinions and Board Member Falchek seconded the motion. The motion passed with yes votes from Board Members.

Solicitor Hart advised the Board that an Advisory Opinion might be requested based on a whistleblower complaint received by City Solicitor O’Brien concerning the appropriateness of the City’s using a vendor whose wife works in the City Controller’s Office.

1. Chair’s Report

Board Chairman Meyer advised the Board that Andrew Heller’s term on the Board will expire in August 2021. He will discuss this with Board Member Heller and suggest that he inform the Mayor if he does not want to continue to serve.

Board Member Falchek noted that his term will also expire in August and he plans to request re-appointment.

1. Finance Report

In Board Member Brad Kovaleski’s absence, Board Chair Meyer reported Board Member Kovaleski plans to email a finance report.

1. Gift Subcommittee Report

Board Member Bressler reported receiving Gift Reporting Forms from the City Clerk’s Office. These reports from the Mayor represent de minimus gifts and require no further evaluation from the Gift Subcommittee.

1. **Other Business**
   1. Scranton Code of Ethics: A Quick Guide

Board Chairman Meyer advised the Board that in an effort to meet Board responsibility to educate the community on provisions of the Code of Ethics, Board Member Bressler drafted a quick guide to the Code. He suggested some edits including clarification of gift reporting. The Board agreed to review the guide and consider how to publicize it. Board Chairman Meyer said he would explore with City Human Resources how best to distribute the guide when it is finalized.

* 1. Candidates’ Compliance with the Code

Board Member Bressler reported that four candidates for City Elected Office in the primary election have filed campaign finance reports with the City Clerk. The Board discussed how best to enforce the Code’s reporting requirements. Board Chairman Meyer suggested his writing a letter to noncompliant candidates.

* 1. Invoice Approval

The Board considered an invoice for $82.80 from the Scranton Times Tribune for a legal ad that appeared on June 3, 2021, announcing the changed date of the June meeting and the resumption of in-person meetings in the Governor’s Room in City Hall.

Board Member Falchek made a motion to approve payment of the invoice and Board Member Bressler seconded the motion. The motion passed with yes votes from Board Members.

* 1. Email Account Update

Board Member Bressler announced that access to Board email is restored. Bedrock Technology informed her that the City server was upgraded and provided her with the new log-in site. The City is moving to an Office 365 upgrade soon and the Board will be directed to the new log-in site.

1. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 19 at 6pm**

Board Chairman Meyer confirmed the next Board meeting on May 19 at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Public Participation**

Joan Hodowanitz expressed her appreciation for the Board’s returning to in-person meetings. She reminded the Board that many members of the public do not have access to the Internet to communicate via email and recommended providing access through a mailbox. She informed the Board that the Fire Union contract is up for negotiation and suggested that union contracts be reconciled with the Code of Ethics. She plans to put her concerns in writing in an email to the Board.

1. **Adjournment**

Board Member Falchek made a motion and Board Member Bressler seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. The motion passed with yes votes from Board Members.

**Respectfully Submitted**

**Stephanie Bressler**

**Board Member/Secretary**