

CITY OF SPOKANE
ETHICS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2017 MEETING

Dennis Cronin commences the meeting at 4:08 p.m.in 5A. Present are Sarah O'Hare, Brian Steverson and Amina Fields. Commission Counsel, Michael Piccolo, is present.

The agenda for the meeting is reviewed and Brian moves to adopt the agenda. Sarah seconds that Motion and all approve. Agenda is approved.

The Minutes from the May 3, 2017 meeting are reviewed. Dennis moves we adopt the Minutes and Amina seconds that Motion. All approve. Minutes from 5-3-17 are approved and will be entered.

There are two candidates to serve on the Commission who are present: Michelle Bleek and Ken Hall.

The Commission has Michelle come in and Brian asks her to tell them about her interest in serving on the Ethics Commission. Michelle responds that she received a notice by "Community Watch" that announces openings/opportunities to serve the City of Spokane. The Ethics Commission attracted her as a good way to give back to the community. Michelle has been a paralegal for 16 years and through her work she is always aware of what constitutes a conflict of interest in following the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys. She states she is a member of Spokane NOW and she occasionally participates in some meetings or movements they have going, but notes the Spokane chapter of NOW is not as active as some chapters in other communities. She would like to see them do more. Michelle states she is not active in campaigns and has not declared a political party because she prefers to see things individually and not through some political motivation, but on a more case by case basis considering the circumstances of each situation. Michelle is also involved with COPS Blockwatch and offers her computer skills there - at which she is well versed.

Amina asks if she Michelle could give them an example of an ethical issue in her life and Michelle responds that she sees them every day on a small basis through her work, such as a conflict of interest issue – like needing to disclose a relationship someone may have. Transparency is a daily issue in her job and she knows it is an issue for the City and in government.

Michelle does not have any friends, that she is aware, who work for the City. She states she has a small family and her work and kids are her focus.

Dennis asks Michelle again about the NOW relationship, noting the Commission had had a prior complaint by NOW against Mayor Condon and asked if she could be impartial in such a case. Michelle responds that transparency supports Ethics, but it is also the ability

to look at things in an unbiased manner and she thinks she is good at doing that. The Commission concludes Michelle's interview and thanks her for coming today.

The next interview is with Ken Hall. Mr. Hall had originally applied to serve on the Ombudsman Commission, but the Mayor had asked if he would be willing to serve on the Ethics Commission, which he states he is. Mr. Hall says his interest is to serve. His family, who are from Chewelah, have always been involved in serving their community. After this last election, he wanted to do more. His friend, a county sheriff, recommended the OPO Commission, but the Mayor had suggested this Commission to him and he is interested in it. He works in personnel and works with over 180 employees. He would like to be a peace keeper. Dennis states that their role here is not to be peacekeepers and Ken states, but it is similar in that you are evaluating two sides and reaching a fair decision. He says he is level headed and believes he would serve them well.

Amina asks why he thinks the Ethics Commission is important he Ken states, he would just say ethics, in general, are important because it is the framework of our lives. Dennis inquires if he has any conflict with the City to be able to serve and he says no and he has never had any issue with the City or any departments/employees. The Commission concludes Ken's interview and thanks him for coming today.

Following discussions regarding the interviews, the Commission votes, (Brian so moves, Amina seconds and all approve) to recommend Michelle Bleek for service on the Commission and Mike will forward that request to the Mayor.

The next item is the request for approval to contract with Ellie Brown, after she retires, for the months of July and August in order to help the transition in the office e to a new employee. She would work 10 to 15 hours per week at first, and then less. Amina, Brian and Sarah all state they see no problem with this situation and this exactly the situation that serves the City well to contract with an employee after employment. Amina moves to approve the contract and Brian seconds. All in favor. The prosecutor's office may contract with Ellie Brown as requested for their transition.

The next matter is the review of the proposed Amendments to the Ethics Code. Mike Piccolo states he has compiled these proposed changes to the code, as issues have come up along the way through the matters that have come before them.

The first issue would be the possibility of having something similar to an Inspector General to review complaints. Dennis states he would oppose delegating their responsibility or duties to another body. He states it has not been shown they have not / could not handle the matters that come before them. Amina added that there is no guideline on which matters the EC would decide and which they would send off to another body. The commission members generally opt to not pursue this option – at least at this time.

Mike states they can set a study session meeting in August if they would like, in order to review the code in depth.

Amina moves to adjourn and Sarah seconds that Motion. Meeting adjourned.

Reviewed and approved this 12th day of July:

Dennis Cronin, Chair