

**City of Troy  
Ethics Commission**

**September 10, 2020**

**Minutes**

Attendance

Present: Thomas Hotte, Peter Kehoe, Ryan Manley (Chairman), Paul McCarthy (via computer), Stephen Muller, Raquel Velho.

Call to Order

Chairman Manley determined that there was a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Public Comments

None, as City Hall was closed to the public.

Update on Commission Membership

New members McCarthy and Velho introduced themselves. Manley said that with the two new members, the Commission had only one vacancy, a Mayoral appointee. He said he would contact the Mayor about the vacancy. Manley also reviewed for the new members the operation of the Commission over the past two years, including the audit by the State Comptroller.

Old Business

Sue Steele Advisory Opinion: Manley said that he drafted and sent a letter to Steele conveying the decision taken by the Commission at its February 20, 2020, meeting regarding potential conflicts between her roles as City Council member and Chair of the Troy Housing Authority. Manley said Steele has not responded.

New Business

Audit: Manley led a discussion of the State Comptroller's audit of the Commission. He said the draft audit is critical of the Commission and the City on the following points: 1) lack of meetings in 2017 prior to the appointment of any current members; 2) lack of ethics training provided to the commission and to the employees of the City of Troy; and 3) an inadequate system to of handling the annual disclosure statements from 2017-2018. It was discussed that since the audit period, the City Clerk's office had taken over the collection of the disclosure statement process and while the process has been streamlined, discussions were held on how the process could be improved and made more efficient. Manley noted that the audit did not find any issues with any of the Commission's advisory opinions or responses to ethics complaints. He also noted that some of the issues identified in the audit are not covered in the City of Troy

Code of Ethics, which is the Commission's operating document. He said he would contact the Mayor and City Council President Mantello regarding some of the points raised in the audit. He said that it is the City's responsibility as a whole to draft a response to the audit.

Annual Disclosure Forms: The City Clerk has passed on to the Commission all disclosure forms received by August 12. She also included lists of who were required to file, with a notation indicating those who failed to file. The forms were distributed to Manley, Muller, Hotte and Velho for review. Velho agreed to draft a proposal to the City to digitize the forms. Along with a digitized list of major City vendors as proposed in the audit, this would give the Commission a way to identify potential conflicts of interest. Velho also agreed to draft a proposed deficiency letter to be sent out through the Clerk's office for those whom had failed to complete annual disclosure forms. Hotte pointed out that it is the City's responsibility to provide ethics training to employees and appointees. Muller said he would follow up with the City Clerk on how to proceed against delinquent filers.

#### Next Meeting

Manley proposed to hold the next meeting the week before Thanksgiving (November 16). Members were asked to indicate which days they were available.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Muller  
Secretary