



Washington State Executive Ethics Board

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Executive Ethics Board News

Matthew Williams III, Chair
Lisa Marsh, Vice Chair
Linnaea Jablonski, Member
Michael Bahn, Member
Anna Dudek Ross, Member

September 17, 2012

The Executive Ethics Board (Board) met on Friday, September 14, 2012. All members were present. Others attending the meeting included: Melanie de Leon, Executive Director, Bruce Turcott, AAG, Board Counsel, David Killeen, Investigator and Ruthann Bryant Board Secretary. Members of the public also attended.

Enforcement

In lieu of an enforcement hearing, the Board accepted stipulations from:

- **Jean Wheat**, an Administrative Support Manager for the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises, (OMWBE) for using her position to provide a special privilege to family members. Evidence indicated that Ms. Wheat solicited her subordinates to donate sick leave to her daughter, who was also a state employee. Evidence also indicated that when agency staff raised the idea of adopting a family for the holidays for whom they would purchase gifts, Ms. Wheat announced that she knew of a family in need. It was not until after gifts were purchased by staff and delivered to the family that OMWBE staff found out that the "family in need" receiving the presents was actually Ms. Wheat's son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$2,500.
- **Ming Zhu**, a Mental Health Counselor for the Department of Corrections, for using state resources for personal gain. Records indicated that Mr. Zhu used the agency's computer to visit sites that were not related to his position and to send correspondence relating to his outside employment with the Oregon Department of Corrections. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$2,500, suspending \$1,000.
- **Raquel Salinas**, Coordinator of Student Support Services, First Peoples Advising Services (FPAS) for the Evergreen State College, for using state resources to promote an outside business that her husband owned. Evidence indicated that Ms. Salinas attached a link to her husband's website to an agency-wide e-mail where a book and FPAS merchandise could be purchased. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$500, suspending \$250.
- **Edwina Smith**, a Support Enforcement Officer for the Department of Social and Health Services, for using state resources for personal gain and to conduct a personal business. Records indicated that Ms. Smith visited wedding related websites 348 times during a 1 month timeframe, plus a direct sales website 295 times, an online university 236 times and her personal e-mail accounts 935 times in 19 months. Evidence further indicated that Ms. Smith used her state computer to visit sites directly related to her outside business. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$3,000, suspending \$1,500.

Meeting agendas can be found at www.ethics.wa.gov under "Meetings."

The next meeting of the Executive Ethics Board is scheduled for November 9, 2012.

- **Rudy Aparicio**, Interviewer for the Employment Security Department, for using state resources for personal gain. Information gathered over a 51-day period indicated that over 34 percent of Mr. Aparicio's internet use was for personal business. Further records revealed that Mr. Aparicio's computer contained 117 mp3 music/sound files that were not work related. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$2,500, suspending \$1,000.
- **Lorenzo Rodriguez**, a WorkSource Specialist for the Employment Security Department, for using state resources for personal gain. Records indicated that between June and October 2011, Mr. Rodriguez used his state-issued cell phone for over 200 personal phone calls. Evidence further indicated that 91 of these calls were made while Mr. Rodriguez was on annual leave. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$1,250, suspending \$250.
- **Monica Ruiz**, a WorkSource Specialist for the Employment Security Department, for using state resources for personal gain. Records indicated that Ms. Ruiz used her SCAN card to make over 100 personal phone calls, although she had indicated via her signature on the phone logs that all of the calls were for legitimate state business. The Board levied a civil penalty \$250.
- **Joe Hawe**, former Executive Director of the Washington Criminal Justice Training Center (CJTC), for securing a special privilege for others, using state resources for personal gain and for conducting activities incompatible with public duties. Evidence indicated that Mr. Hawe provided an outside non-profit organization the use of state facilities and his staff to conduct their meetings. Evidence further indicated that Mr. Hawe used state resources for his outside employment. Mr. Hawe also used his position to purchase tickets for a motivational seminar for a family member and friend using the agency's special discounted rate and that he had his agency purchase motivational wall art from his sister. Further, Mr. Hawe gave two of four free tickets (valued at \$400 each) to attend a grant writing workshop being held at CJTC to his son and a friend. The Board levied a civil penalty \$12,500.
- The Board found Reasonable Cause in four cases: 2012-024 (Nelson), 2012-031 (Meinzer), 2012-032 (Venditti) and 2012-033 (Clayton).
- The Board signed the final order in EEB Case 2010-004, Susan Drake. The Board found that Susan Drake violated RCW 42.52.070 when her professional relationships and communications with patients in the performance of her duties constituted solicitations for patients to be placed in her private rental home. She used her experience as a patient group leader to inform patients that she had rooms for rent that might be a placement opportunity for them. This influenced the patients to seek placement with her, and therefore provided her with a special privilege and a financial interest in the patients' placement, regardless of whether Ms. Drake ever had a patient placed in her rental home from Western State Hospital. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$300.

Board Action:

- A. The Board reviewed and approved the Ethical Conduct policy for the Washington State Horse Racing Commission.
- B. The Board continued to review and update their strategic plan, which should be finalized at their November 2012 meeting.
- C. Board staff is updating training material to be placed on the website for all agencies to access and use.
- D. The 2012 state employee surveys have been deployed to all state agencies and the responses are due by the end of October.

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Other:

September was Member Linnaea Jablonski's last meeting as her term expires at the end of September. Board staff has contacted the Governor's Office to start the process to replace her.

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