

## **Executive Ethics Board News**

**Judy Golberg, Chair**  
**Neil Gorrell, Vice-Chair**  
**Evelyn Yenson, Member**  
**Linnaea Jablonski, Member**  
**Mike Connelly, Member**

April 14, 2008

The Executive Ethics Board (Board) met on Friday, April 11, 2008. The Board welcomed its new member - Mike Connelly - who was recently appointed to fill the at-large position. He is the City Attorney for the City of Spokane Valley and was a previous member of the Public Disclosure Commission. All other members were present. Others attending included Melanie de Leon, Executive Director, Nancy Lewin and Susan Jones, Investigators, Ruthann Bryant, Board Secretary, Ted Miller AAG, and Linda Moran, Sr. AAG. Other members of the public also attended.

### **Enforcement**

In lieu of an enforcement hearing, the Board accepted a stipulation from Rick McNeely, former Chief Administrator for the Community & Family Health Division of the Department of Health. The stipulation admits that he used the state computer system for personal gain. Mr. McNeely agreed to pay a penalty of \$1,500.

### **Ethics Issues**

The Board is beginning discussions regarding several issues that have surfaced over the past few months. These issues include:

- Whether providing notice to state employees of discounts offered by private businesses would be construed as “promoting” or “supporting” a business, which is prohibited by the Ethics Act.
- Whether providing a link to a state website can be construed as a “use of state resources.”

The Board was also asked to define “ethics.” The Board determined that the legislature defined ethics as the conduct allowed or prohibited in RCW 42.52 and if the legislature had wanted to define the actual word, “ethics,” it would have.

The Board will discuss and address proposed changes to the de minimis rule at their July retreat.

The Board held a special meeting on March 31, 2008 to decide whether members of the Interagency Committee for State Employed Women (ICSEW) could solicit donations from its members, businesses, state employees, and political figures. These donations were to be sold at a silent auction during a conference sponsored by the ICSEW, with the committee donating the proceeds from the auction to a charity. The Board determined that ICSEW members could inform employees of their own individual state agencies of the upcoming silent auction and allow these state employees to voluntarily donate items to the auction if the member’s state agency had a policy in place that allowed them to do so. For future activities, the “agency head” of the ICSEW would need to have a policy approved by the Board that specifies the activities of the ICSEW that support organizational effectiveness and delineates what and how state resources can be used for these activities. If these activities include soliciting for charities, the policy should state who can be solicited and provide guidance for this solicitation.

## **Staff News**

The Board Staff updated their training course and they are now available to train any state agency. In March, the Board staff addressed over 78 ethics questions via the Ethics website, e-mails and direct calls to Board staff or in-person meetings. These issues were usually answered the same day, unless Board staff needed to complete extensive research. Asking the Board staff to provide an informal opinion on ethics questions is a good way to address potential issues before they blossom into actual violations.

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Meeting agendas can be found at [www.ethics.wa.gov](http://www.ethics.wa.gov) under "Meetings."

*The next meeting of the Executive Ethics Board is scheduled for May 9, 2008.*