



Washington State Executive Ethics Board

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Executive Ethics Board News

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

March 17, 2008

The Executive Ethics Board (Board) met on Friday, March 14, 2008. All members were present. Others attending included Melanie de Leon, Executive Director, Sue Jones and Nancy Lewin, Investigators, Ruthann Bryant, Board Secretary and Linda Moran, Sr. AAG. Other members of the public also attended.

Legislative Matters

The legislature passed several bills this session that will impact the Board or amend the Ethics in Public Service Act, RCW 42.52.500. These bills include:

- ESSB 6570 – This bill adds a new section to RCW 42.52 that gives the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Parks and Recreation Commission the ability to approve private business activity in state-owned housing, provided that they adopt a private business activity policy that is approved by the Executive Ethics Board. Under this policy, the ranger (during off-duty hours), their spouse or children could, under certain restrictions, conduct the private business in their state-owned housing.
- ESSB 6776 – This bill amended the Whistleblower Act and expanded the definition of an “improper governmental action” to include gross mismanagement and a new section regarding scientific opinions. The bill adds the Board as one of the “public officials” designated to receive reports of improper governmental action and gives the Board 15 calendar days to forward these reports to the State Auditor's Office. There are many questions regarding how the Board will handle this new workload that will be answered in the next few months.

Other bills the Board was tracking that did not pass include:

- HB 3292 – Required the recording of all executive sessions.
- HB 3134 – Added a new section to RCW 42.52.160 to allow the selling of merchandise or services under the terms of a contract with an official wellness program of a state agency.
- HB 2915 – Amended RCW 42.52 to remove the requirement that the Board offer a respondent the use of an Administrative Law Judge for cases where the proposed fine was more than \$500.

Other

The Board discussed an agency question regarding whether members of the Interagency Committee for State Employed Women could solicit legislators for donated items to be sold during a silent auction at the committee's conference in May and then give the proceeds to a local charity. The Board requested that

their legal advisor provide a legal analysis of the issue to determine if this solicitation was consistent with the WAC and past advisory opinions.

Staff News

The Board Staff will be reviewing and updating the on-line Ethic's Challenge in the next quarter and will publish single-topic training discussion outlines to give supervisors and managers the tools and information to conduct mini ethic's training sessions during weekly/monthly team meetings. Once completed, these training discussion outlines will be posted to our website.

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

The next meeting of the Executive Ethics Board is scheduled for April 11, 2008.