



**CITY OF CLARKSVILLE
ETHICS COMMISSION
APRIL 7, 2021**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Ethics Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson Childs on April 7, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall.

ATTENDANCE

Bishop Anthony Alfred, Ms. Bridget Childs, Ms. Suzanne Marsh, Mr. Mark Rassas, Mr. Patrick Young

Also Present: Mr. Lance Baker, Ms. Stephanie Fox, Ms. Paige Lyle, Mr. Mark Olson, Mr. Mayor Joe Pitts, Mr. Bill Purcell, Mr. Jimmy Settle, Mr. Saul Solomon, Mr. Richard Stevens, Ms. Stacey Streetman, Mr. Joel Wallace

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 16, 2021 & SEPTEMBER 16, 2021,
MEETING**

The minutes of the March 16, 2021, and the September 16, 2020, meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

**ADOPTION OF THE WRITTEN DECISIONS FROM THE MARCH 16, 2021,
MEETING**

Ms. Lyle explained that the six written decisions from the last meeting were in the Commission members' packets for review.

The written decisions were all adopted by unanimous vote.

EVALUATION OF THE COMPLAINTS

The Commission evaluated a number of the complaints before it to determine whether, assuming what was alleged in the complaints was true, a violation of the City's Ethics Code occurred.

Regarding the complaints, Ms. Lyle and Mr. Solomon explained that the Commission had three choices:

- 1) dismiss the complaint for failure to state a violation of the ethics code;
- 2) vote the complaint forward to a hearing on the merits; or
- 3) request more information from the complainant or any other person with material information.

1. August 21, 2020 Complaint brought by Jeff Robinson against Lance Baker

The Commission discussed the facts alleged in the Complaint and examined the Ethics Code provisions at issue.

The Commission ultimately decided to defer any ruling on the Complaint until the next meeting and to exercise their right to request additional information from the Complainant.

Mr. Rassas motioned to request additional information from the Complainant regarding his allegations. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

2. August 28, 2020 Complaint brought by Jeff Robinson against Lance Baker

The Commission discussed the facts alleged in the Complaint and examined the Ethics Code provisions at issue.

After a full discussion, Mr. Rassas motioned to dismiss the complaint. Ms. Marsh seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. August 28, 2020, Complaint brought by Jeff Robinson against Joe Pitts, Jeff Burkhart, Stacey Streetman, Valerie Guzman, Timothy Chandley, Jeff Henley, and Lance Baker

First, the Commission heard from Ms. Lyle that Mr. Robison indicated in an October 2020 email that he would like to formally withdraw his complaints against Commissioner Jeff Henley, Commissioner Valerie Guzman, and Deputy City Attorney Jeff Goodson. Mr. Robinson's counsel verbally confirmed that this remained Mr. Robinson's desire. Based

on this, Mr. Alfred motioned to dismiss Goodson, Burkhart, Guzman, Henley, and Chandler from the complaint. Ms. Marsh seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Next, the Commission discussed the contents of the Complaint and reviewed the relevant provisions of the Ethics Code.

After a full discussion, Ms. Childs made a motion to dismiss the Complaint. Mr. Rassas seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. **September 8, 2020, Complaint brought by Jeff Robinson against Joe Pitts**

The Commission reviewed the Complaint and the relevant provisions of the Ethics Code. They voted on each independent violation contained in this Complaint.

Violation No. 1:

The Commission unanimously determined that the alleged conduct was acceptably within the scope of Mayor Pitts' employment and did not rise to the level of an ethical violation. A motion was made to dismiss Violation No. 1; it carried unanimously.

Violation No. 2:

The Commission unanimously determined Mayor Pitts made the statement at issue in a moment of frustration and that it did not rise to the level of an ethical violation. Mr. Rassas motioned to dismiss the complaint. Ms. Marsh seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Violation No. 3:

The Commission determined that the statements in question did not rise to the level of an ethical violation. Ms. Marsh moved to dismiss Violation No. 3. Mr. Alfred seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Because all three of the violations contained in the Complaint were dismissed, the September 8, 2020 Complaint against Mayor Pitts was dismissed in its entirety.

DISCUSSION OF HEARING PROCEDURES AND SCHEDULING

The Commission discussed how to handle Complaint No. 5 procedurally given the involvement of Mr. Solomon, and whether a hearing on the Complaints against Richard Garrett should be postponed until a new commission member is appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Commission decided to take up Complaint No. 5 at its next meeting and to postpone scheduling a hearing on the Garrett Complaints until a fifth commission member is seated.

NEXT STEPS

The next meeting of the Ethics Commission was scheduled for May 26, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. At that meeting, the Commission will evaluate Complaint No. 5 and review any supplemental material submitted by the Complainant related to Complaint No. 1.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Alfred moved to adjourn. Mr. Rassas seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.