

**April 7, 2025, 3:30 pm**  
**ETHICS REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jeni Arndt, Councilmember Julie Pignataro, Councilmember Tricia Canonico

STAFF PRESENT: Rupa Venkatesh, Sarah Kane, Briana McCarten

OTHER PRESENT: Halee Wahl

**A. Call Meeting to Order**

**B. Roll Call**

**C. Elect Chairperson**

Councilmember Pignataro moved, seconded by Mayor Arndt, to nominate Councilmember Canonico as Chairperson of the Ethics Review Board ("ERB"). Councilmember Canonico expressed her willingness to serve as chair. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Agenda Review**

Carrie Daggett, City Attorney, provided an overview of the topics for the ERB to consider.

Daggett stated that at under Other Business at the January 21, 2025, Council meeting, several Councilmembers supported a request that the ERB meet to review the City's requirements around the acceptance of gifts, gift disclosures, and financial disclosures and consider recommending changes. The ERB may present any recommended Code changes to Council.

Canonico noted she would like to see a better definition of which social events that must be posted. Venkatesh will supply a previously-drafted memo addressing this topic.

**E. Approval of May 22, 2023, Minutes**

Councilmember Pignataro moved, seconded by Mayor Arndt, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2023, meeting of the Ethics Review Board. The motion passed unanimously.

**F. Agenda Item 1: Overview – Gift Restrictions**

Daggett noted that the packet includes basic overview information about each of the three topics the Ethics Review Board had been asked to review.

The first item presented was review of the gift restrictions for City officers and employees. She noted that the meeting packet contains gift restriction language from the State

Constitution as well as from other Colorado cities that have their own provisions.

Pignataro commented that the ERB should consider what the issues have been with the gift restrictions.

Pignataro questioned where the information on the Council Gifts and Favors FAQ came from because it isn't from City code language. Daggett responded that the City Attorney's Office ("CAO") and City Manager's Office ("CMO") worked together to prepare the document to assist with day-to-day decisions related to accepting and reporting gifts. Assistant City Manager Rupa Venkatesh stated that Councilmembers should report any tickets to events received directly should be reported. She noted that at times donors give tickets to the City and then the City will redistribute the tickets to whoever will be representing the City at the event. When Councilmembers receive tickets from the City to attend and represent the City, those are not a "gift" and so do not need to be reported.

Pignataro questioned who defines an event wherein a Councilmember is carrying out their role as a Councilmember. Arndt stated that the State's approach is to distinguish attending to be part of the program or speaking at the event from just attending. The Board discussed different scenarios that are undefined and difficult to discern whether they are gifts that may be accepted.

Daggett suggested adding provisions to City code that clarify these questions.

Pignataro asked for a good way to distinguish when a Councilmember is acting as an elected official versus a member of the community attending an event. This will be discussed further by the Board. It was noted one indicator of attending on behalf of the City is wearing a City badge.

## **G. Agenda Item 2: Overview – Gift Disclosures**

Daggett noted that the packet included background and comparison information about the gift disclosures requirements. Arndt expressed frustration with having to report gifts with a very small value. Pignataro suggested that a dollar limit would be helpful. Daggett stated that having parameters for gifts not significant enough to report would make reporting easier.

The Board discussed instances wherein an official or employee could potentially accept gift before realizing that the gift is not acceptable. The Board discussed possibly changing the policy so that gifts received by one individual or entity are reported only once they meet a certain threshold in a certain period of time.

Pignataro referenced the other municipalities' code sections provided in the meeting packet for comparison and requested that data be provided in a table format that calls out the outliers.

Daggett asked the ERB to consider the purpose and benefit of the requirement to report gifts.

#### **H. Agenda Item 3: Overview – Financial Disclosures**

Daggett again noted the packet included background and comparison information about the financial disclosures requirement. She explained that the financial disclosures required for candidates theoretically provides voters with information to evaluate conflicts of interest a candidate or elected official may have.

Mayor Arndt confirmed that currently elected officials must submit their financial interests to the State via the State's form.

Daggett stated that different municipalities have different reporting thresholds. Daggett isn't sure how the City decided on its \$10,000 threshold. Pignataro was curious how long that threshold has been in place. Information about this will be presented when this item returns to the Board's agenda. Canonico pointed out that a \$10,000 threshold from many years ago is different than that amount today.

Arndt expressed an opinion that a spouse's financial interests are only relevant when that interest is jointly shared with the reporting person. Arndt went on to say that these financial disclosures may deter a person from running for office. Arndt discussed her preference for a requirement to report only real property located in the jurisdiction in which a reporting person serves.

Pignataro asked if a personal address must be included on the disclosures and suggested reporting only the district in which the reporting person lives. Daggett explained that the requirement has to do with providing the public with information to evaluate a conflict of interest when an elected official is making a decision about a certain location in the City.

Arndt expressed a desire to ensure the financial disclosures for all reporters, including City Attorney and City Manager, be made publicly available in the same way. Pignataro suggested the disclosures be made available to the public upon request to the Clerk's Office. The group discussed that the disclosures are currently intended to be posted and available on the City's website, but the links to the disclosures on the website do not work.

Daggett suggested that considering the scope of interests that must be reported will be an important part of the discussion of this item.

#### **I. Discuss Work Plan and Schedule for Future Meetings**

Daggett suggested the Board discuss gift restrictions at its next meeting because the policy is the foundation for other requirements and applies to all City officials and employees. Daggett suggested discussing one topic per meeting, but that each discussion may require more than one meeting. The Board discussed summer schedules and decided to schedule meetings through August.

Daggett asked if the Board would expect a Council Work Session on the Board's recommendations to be needed. The Board thought it would want to complete its work in time for recommended Code changes to be presented to Council in August.

Daggett noted staff will present information to the Board to assist in Board discussion of the gift restrictions recommendations at the May 5 meeting. The June meeting will finish the gift restriction discussion, if necessary, and begin the gift disclosure discussion. The July meeting should begin discussing financial disclosures. The goal is to have proposed code language ready for the Board to review once the discussion has proceeded to that point.

#### **J. Other Business**

None.

#### **K. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:32.

Minutes approved by the Chair and a vote of the Board on May 5, 2025.