

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS HEARING BOARD

City of Pittsburgh Ethics Hearing Board (“Board” or “EHB”)

March 4, 2025

Conference Rm. 904¹ City-County Building, 414 Grant St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219 and Microsoft Teams

Board Members Present:

Robert Bernstein

Patrick Bigley

Taya Cohen

Maryann Herman (Present for discussion/votes on minutes and regulation, did not participate in discussion on legislation or other matters)

Alex Matthews

Rhoda Neft (Marked as present for attendance purposes, however technical error with Microsoft Teams prevented sign-on and discussion/votes)

Staff and Others Present:

Leanne Davis, Executive Director

I. Call to order:

- a. This meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Board Vice Chair, Patrick Bigley.

II. Public Comment:

- a. There was none.

III. Minutes:

- a. Discussion of February 6, 2024 minutes. Robert Bernstein moved to approve the minutes, Taya Cohen seconded the motion, the Board voted to approve, with no abstentions.

IV. Disclosures – the Executive Director noted campaign finance disclosures are currently being collected. She also provided a reminder to file the Statement of Financial Interests.

V. Regulations – Campaign Finance Audits

- a. The Board discussed and updated the proposed regulation relating to campaign finance audits.
- b. The first point initially directed the selection to be randomly generated. It was noted that while this is a preference, there may be reason that a particular

¹ The main conference room was occupied by a public hearing being conducted by the Commission on Human Relations. Multiple signs were posted to direct any members of the public to room 904, where the meeting was held. Signs were posted by the elevator entrance, the 9th floor hallway, and on the door. Staff of the Commission on Human Relations were also updated as to this meeting and agreed to assist any members of the public in finding the updated location.

contribution or expenditure appears suspect, in which case that additional inquiry would be warranted.

c. Accordingly, the updated regulation follows:

CITY OF PITTSBURGH ETHICS HEARING BOARD CAMPAIGN FINANCE AUDITS:

- 1) The Ethics Hearing Board's staff will request from each party engaging in campaign finance activity under Chapter 198 documentation a selection of at least one expenditure or contribution. Staff will document its methods for the selection.
- 2) The Board, through staff's correspondence, shall provide a minimum two-week period before receipt of the requested documentation is due.
- 3) Any concerns regarding the produced documentation, or the failure to comply with the request, shall be recorded and referred to the Allegheny County Bureau of Elections for further processing and enforcement.

VI. Legislation – A stimulating discussion occurred surrounding different options for proposed revision to Section 161.22. Of interest to the Board are the 161.22 subsections intersecting with Board's mission, such as conflicts of interest, dishonesty and other matters impacting public trust. Staff noted the intent of any revision in this area would be for the Board to serve as an optional tool in assisting the City, given the Board's unique position as a removed impartial body with existing frameworks for factfinding and hearings. There was consensus that any service by the Board in this regard would only be provided upon request, on a case by case basis, and that the Board would maintain its ability to decline as needed (as such discretion is established in 197.12). The main discussion hinged on procedure (concurrent w/enforcement or recommendations only) and ensuring the language makes clear that the Board wishes to be of service, upon request and as appropriate, and not hinder any process.

VII. Advisory Opinion:

- a. No opinions were discussed at this meeting due to lack of time.

VIII. Adjournment:

- a. At 4:50 p.m., the Board adjourned.