

City of Rochester Board of Ethics – October 10, 2023

MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm by Board Chair Carl Steinbrenner.

The Chair introduced the board's new member, Councilmember LaShay Harris who will serve as the City Council representative to the Board of Ethics.

Members present:

Doug Escher
Kevin Graham
Councilmember LaShay Harris
Carl Steinbrenner
Timothy Weir

Members Not Present:

Mia Cannon
James Patterson

Non-Members Present:

Linda Kingsley, Corporation Counsel
Lori Thomas
Cheryl Robinson
Chris DiFrancesco
Barbara Campbell

Pending Business:

- Chair Steinbrenner and Secretary Weir provided an overview of the board's intention to revise and update the Code of Ethics. This will include updating the specific language pertaining to several ethical standards set forth in the code and better clarify the board's scope of authority, jurisdiction, and overall process.

New Business:

- Chair Steinbrenner noted two complaints reflected in the meeting agenda and requested Secretary Weir provide a summary of each to the board. Secretary Weir explained that both complaints were submitted by Ms. Lori Thomas regarding two unrelated issues. The first matter, designated C23-1a, alleges a conflict of interest in regards to a Zoning Board of Appeals member and his/her participation in matters involving Home Leasing Inc. The second matter, designated C23-1b, expressed concern over City Council's decision to separate Speak to Council sessions from the monthly City Council meetings.

With respect to C23-1b, Corporation Counsel Kingsley advised the board has no authority to review the complaint and stated that it's not a matter the board may consider. Council's decision to separate the two meetings are within their authority and not a violation of any ethical standard. Based on this guidance, the board voted 5-0 to not accept the complaint.

Regarding C23-1a, Corporation Counsel Kingsley recommended the board move to an executive session and noted this complaint involved a potential personnel matter.

At 7:05pm the open meeting was adjourned and the board moved to an executive session.

At 7:18pm the executive session was adjourned and at 7:19pm the board resumed the regular meeting.

Based on the information provided by Ms. Thomas in executive session, Chair Steinbrenner made a motion to accept the complaint, C23-1a and the board voted 5-0 in favor of acceptance. Secretary Weir will coordinate with Corporation Counsel Kingsley to obtain additional information to provide to the board at the next meeting in November.

Adjournment:

- The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:25pm

**Next Scheduled Meeting: November 21, 2023; 6:30pm
Council Chambers**