



TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Workshop on Filing and Enforcement
Meeting Minutes
August 31, 2012, 8:33 a.m.
Capitol Extension, Room 2.002(A), Austin, Texas 78701



COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Tom Ramsay, Chair; Jim Clancy, Vice Chair; Tom Harrison, Paul W. Hobby, Bob Long, Paula M. Mendoza.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Hugh C. Akin and Chase Untermeyer.

STAFF PRESENT: Natalia L. Ashley, Margie Castellanos, David A. Reisman, Tim Sorrells, and Mary Young.

MINUTES

This meeting was recorded. These minutes are a summary record of the Commission's actions at the meeting. For a detailed record of discussions and statements made by persons speaking at the meeting, please consult the audio recordings on file at the Commission's office.

Agenda Item 1: Call to order: roll call.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ramsay. David A. Reisman, Executive Director, called the roll. All Commissioners were present, except Hugh C. Akin and Chase Untermeyer.

Agenda Item 2: Introduction and comments by Chair Tom Ramsay.

Chair Ramsay thanked everyone for coming to the workshop. He then asked David A. Reisman, Executive Director, to speak and introduce the facilitator. Mr. Reisman introduced Linda Edwards Gockel, Communications/Public Affairs Consultant and Trainer. He stated that Ms. Edwards served as director of communications and chief spokesman for George W. Bush in the Office of Governor during his last year and a half in office before being elected President. She also served on his senior staff for three years, joining the Governor's press office as deputy communications director. She has worked as communications director of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Prior to working for the State of Texas, Ms. Edwards was an award-winning television news anchor and reporter at KCAL-TV in Los Angeles, KDFW-TV in Dallas, KXAN-TV in Austin, and KHOU-TV in Houston. She graduated with honors from the communications school at the University of Central Missouri.

Agenda Item 3: Consensus building and message development, discussion and possible action. Facilitated by Linda Edwards Gockel, Communications Counselor and Trainer at Edelman.

Linda Edwards Gockel presented this agenda item. She asked each commissioner to state each of their objectives. Each commissioner stated their objectives. The following issues were discussed:

1. The agency's mission: (a) to encourage, not discourage participation in public office; (b) to better educate constituents about what the agency does; (c) to better educate the public; and (d) to foster trust in government.
2. One issue discussed pertained to the misconception of complaints.
3. The next issues discussed were regarding the Commission's objectives or goals: (a) be more respected; (b) have more authority; (c) wield that authority more responsibly; (d) be compassionate, just, accessible, and reliant; (e) reduce the burden of compliance; (f) educate the regulated community; (g) increase the pursuit of genuine wrong doers; (h) be more aggressive; (i) prioritize; and (j) be more proactive.
4. The possible agency pursuits were then discussed: (a) make it simpler to file by simplifying forms; (b) reduce the number of filing dates/deadlines; (c) update the electronic filing system; (d) increase efficiencies to better allocate resources; (e) reduce attorney time answering questions and providing legal guidance; (f) survey the regulated community; (g) review how the agency communicates with the public; (h) simplify the sworn complaint process; (i) shift resources to focus less on technical reporting and more on violations to breaches of public trust; (j) create an enforcement division to conduct investigations; and (k) develop legislative relations.

Agenda Item 4: Adjourn.

Commission meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:25 p.m.