



North Dakota Ethics Commission Special Meeting

Minutes of July 30, 2025

600 E Boulevard Ave, Room 321, Bismarck and MS Teams

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Cynthia Lindquist at 9:04 a.m. The following members of the Ethics Commission were also present: Vice Chair Ward Koeser, Commissioners Ron Goodman and Murray Sagsveen, Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, and General Counsel Logan Carpenter.
2. **Discussion of Advisory Opinion Request Nos. 25-03 & 25-04:** ED Binstock and GC Carpenter provided an update on Advisory Opinion Request No. 25-03. Commissioners were provided with a draft of the opinion prior to the meeting. Representative Patrick Heinert made the request for an advisory opinion. The request was regarding his invitation to attend the 2025 Specialty Equipment Market Association ("SEMA") Show in Las Vegas with complimentary credentials and lodging provided by SEMA. GC Carpenter advised on the specifics and summarized the draft opinion.

The Commission discussed concerns with the definition of lobbying and how it extends to issues that may not be limited to North Dakota but may instead occur at the federal level. The Commission discussed potentially revisiting the gift rule to clarify the definition of lobbying with this in mind. For the advisory opinion, the Commission discussed revising the opinion related to the special events occurring during the SEMA Show.

Motion: Commissioner Sagsveen moved to table discussion until the Commission's special meeting on August 18th or earlier after Commission staff is able to discuss the timeline to issue the advisory opinion with Representative Heinert and revise the draft opinion. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

ED Binstock and GC Carpenter provided an update on Advisory Opinion Request No. 25-04. Commissioners were provided with a draft of the opinion prior to the meeting. Representative Zachary Ista made the request for an advisory opinion. The request was regarding his invitation to attend a study tour in Israel made by the Consul General of Israel to the Midwest, with travel, accommodations, meals, and guided programming provided by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. GC Carpenter advised on the specifics and summarized the draft opinion. The Commission again discussed the definition of lobbying and clarifying the definition in the future to specifically address when public officials are lobbied on North Dakota issues while on out-of-state trips.

Motion: Commissioner Sagsveen moved to approve the draft language and issue advisory opinion 25-04 to the requester and for publication on the Commission's website. Motion was seconded by Vice Chair Koeser. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. **Human Resources Follow-Up:** Commissioner Goodman provided an update on his evaluation of treatment of Commission staff by external parties and potential actions to support a respectful, professional, and productive working environment for Commission staff. Commissioner Goodman informed the Commission he met with two individuals from HRMS along with ED Binstock and GC Carpenter. Commissioner Goodman informed the Commission the recommendation from HRMS was to schedule a meeting with the Attorney General to discuss professional expectations from the Office of the Attorney General. Commissioner Goodman further advised to dissolve the subcommittee as he concluded his directive to propose potential actions.

Motion: Vice Chair Koeser moved to dissolve the subcommittee formed during the Commission's July 16, 2025 meeting to evaluate the treatment of staff by external parties and take or recommend appropriate action to support a respectful, professional, and productive working environment for Commission staff. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: Vice Chair Koeser moved to direct Chair Lindquist to schedule a meeting with the Attorney General pursuant to Commissioner Goodman's recommendation. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

4. **Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m. The next special meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., livestreamed with MS Teams. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., livestreamed with MS Teams.

Approved on 8/27/2025



Rebecca Binstock, Executive Director, North Dakota Ethics Commission