

Executive Ethics Board News

Jan Jutte, Chair
Kelli Hooke, Vice Chair
Megan Abel, Member
Cam Comfort, Member

March 13, 2024

The Executive Ethics Board (Board) met on Friday, March 8, 2024, for their regular meeting. Board members present were Chair Jan Jutte, Vice Chair Kelli Hooke and Member Megan Abel. Others attending included: Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Eric Allen, Assistant Attorney General, Julia Eisentrout, Assistant Attorney General, and Ruthann Bryant, Administrative Officer. Members of the public also attended.

Enforcement

In lieu of an enforcement hearing, the Board accepted stipulations from:

- **Shawn Long**, Correctional Lieutenant with the Department of Corrections, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for private benefit or gain. Evidence indicated that Shawn Long extensively browsed the internet, visiting sites including YouTube, Amazon, ESPN and social media sites. Evidence also found that Shawn Long submitted overtime requests on several days that the investigation revealed they were spending time on the internet for personal use. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$6,000 with \$1,000 suspended.
- **Vanessa Gomez-Castillo**, an Office Assistant 3 with the Department of Corrections, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for private benefit or gain. Evidence indicated Vanessa Gomez-Castillo used their state computer to browse the internet including travel, real estate, social media and shopping websites. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$5,500 with \$1,000 suspended.
- **Bobbi Ahmann**, a Brand Inspector 1 with the Department of Agriculture, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for personal benefit. Evidence indicated that Bobby Ahmann used their state issued MiFi device for personal use, resulting in a high amount of data used. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$3,000 with \$1,000 suspended.
- **Jessica Payne**, a Communications Consultant 5 with the Health Care Authority, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for private benefit and gain. Evidence indicated that Jessica Payne used the state electric vehicle charging station overnight on three different occasions to charge their personal vehicle. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$2,000 with \$750 suspended.

The Board found Reasonable Cause in EEB Case 2023-016 (McDole), EEB Case 2023-017 (Malone), EEB Case Nos 2023-025 and 046 (Larsen), and EEB Case 2023-037 (Buikema).

Meeting agendas can be found at www.ethics.wa.gov under "Meetings."

The next meeting of the Executive Ethics Board is scheduled for May 10, 2024.

The Board dismissed EEB Case 2023-029 (Hoppe), EEB Case 2023-030 (Bills), EEB Case 2023-031 (Fortson), EEB Case 2023-032 (Follett), EEB Case 2023-047 (Unland), and EEB Case 2023-048 (Wekler).

The Board issued Motions for Default in EEB Case 2023-014 (McHale), EEB Case 2023-023 (McMillan), EEB Case 2023-027 (Keith), and EEB Case 2023-043 (Black).

The Board affirmed an Executive Director Dismissal in EEB Case 2023-041 (Clearman).

The Board also reviewed one Executive Director Dismissal in EEB Case 2023-018 (Krause).

Board Action:

A. The Board reviewed and approved the following policy:

- Employee Line of Duty death or Life-Threatening Injury – Department of Corrections

Approved versions of policies are posted on the Board's website at www.ethics.wa.gov.