

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD

In the Matter of:

Rimi Afroze

Respondent.

No. 2022-027

STIPULATED FACTS,  
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND  
AGREED ORDER

THIS STIPULATION is entered into by Respondent, Rimi Afroze and Board Staff of the WASHINGTON STATE EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD (Board) through KATE REYNOLDS, Executive Director, pursuant to chapter 42.52 RCW, chapter 34.05 RCW, and WAC 292-100-090(1). The following stipulated facts, conclusions of law, and agreed order will be binding upon the parties if fully executed, and if accepted by the Board without modification(s), and will not be binding if rejected by the Board, or if the Respondent does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, to the stipulation. This stipulation is based on the following:

**A. STIPULATED FACTS**

1. On September 2, 2022, the Executive Ethics Board (Board) received a complaint that Rimi Afroze (Ms. Afroze) a Provider Network Capacity Program Manager (PNCM) at the Home and Community Services Division (HCS) with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. According to the complainant, Ms. Afroze was conducting activities that were incompatible with her official duties and using state resources for private benefit or gain.

2. According to DSHS, Ms. Afroze was originally hired by DSHS as a PNCM on August 2, 2021, which is the position she presently holds. Her work hours are Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm, but according to her supervisor she is able to flex her shift if need be.

3. According to the complainant, Ms. Afroze may be mentally abusing a 92-year-old female (CP)<sup>1</sup> who is unable to care for herself.

4. According to the complainant, on the weekend leading up to Monday, August 15, 2022, Ms. Afroze called Maria, CP's caregiver, and told her to withdraw an offer that had been made on CP's home and threatened to go after Maria's license.

5. According to the complainant, on August 15, 2022, two women came to CP's home. One of the women identified themselves as Amy Winehouse with DSHS and the other identified themselves as a nurse. According to the complaint, they were unsure of the time this occurred but believe it occurred prior to the hearing on the sale of CP's home which was scheduled for that day. The complainant states that both females refused to provide identification or credentials.

6. According to the complainant, Ms. Afroze and the nurse demanded a letter from Maria, withdrawing the offer on the home despite Maria not having made an offer to buy CP's home. The complainant states that Ms. Afroze and the nurse forced their way into the home and interviewed CP regarding their concerns that Maria's husband was abusing CP and Maria.

7. According to the complainant, the Associate Legal Director from Clarity Guardians (Clarity), Christian Letts (CL), which is the Court appointed Guardian for CP, provided additional information regarding CP.

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<sup>1</sup> Board staff are using the alleged victim's initials to protect her identity.

8. On August 16, 2022, a case manager from Clarity went to CP's home to meet with her and Maria. According to CL, CP and Maria told the case manager that Ms. Afroze had called CP's home over the weekend harassing Maria about the home sale. CP and Maria believed that this was the same individual who showed up at CP's home on August 15, 2022 and identified themselves as a DSHS employee by the name of Amy Winehouse.

9. According to the complainant, CL said that Maria was able to "immediately" identify Ms. Afroze as the same person based on her voice and that she had even questioned Ms. Afroze. Maria said that Ms. Afroze refused to show any credentials/identification. CL said that Ms. Afroze identifying herself as a DSHS employee was a "red flag". He said there had been another offer on CP's home by an individual named Amani Imran's (Mr. Imran) with "Rimi Afroze" listed as the cosigner on the offer. CL said they found networking profiles for Ms. Afroze that noted she was a DSHS employee. Maria identified Ms. Afroze from the picture.

10. Board staff contacted CL and spoke to him on the telephone. CL said that Yoana is Maria's mom. He said that Yoana has two homes that she uses as adult family homes. She said that Maria works for Yoana. CL said that Yoana was purchasing CP's home and that the sale of her home would allow CP to continue to live in her home. He said the selling plan would allow CP to continue to receive care with the proceeds from the home. He said even if CP used all the proceeds from the sale of the home she would still be allowed to continue to live in her home.

11. CL said that Mr. Imran was Ms. Afroze's husband and was friends with CP. He said that according to Mr. Imran, CP wanted him to purchase the home. CL agreed to provide Board staff with documents they had related to CP and the purchase of the home.

12. Clarity provided Board staff with a copy of a Petition for Protection Order (PO) filed in King County Superior Court by Michael Letts (ML) a Certified Professional Guardian and



Financial Director and Partner at Clarity. The PO was signed by ML on September 26, 2022. The PO named CP as a Vulnerable Adult (VA) and the person being protected. Paul King (Mr. King) was named as the “Restrained Person” in the PO. Mr. King and his wife are referred to as friends of CP in the PO.

13. According to the PO, CP resides in her own home and requires a 24/7 caregiver. CP had a caregiver, Myonica Gibler (Ms. Gibler), living with her since November 2020 but because of Mr. King’s “pattern of undue influence and exploitation” of CP and repeated interference with the caregiver doing her job, the caregiver notified ML on May 23, 2022, that she would be resigning as caregiver on June 30, 2022. According to the PO, Ms. Gibler extended her departure date to July 13, 2022, so Clarity could establish in-home services with a new caregiver.

14. According to the PO, Ms. Gibler’s resignation resulted in a significant increase in the cost of caregiver service for CP because Ms. Gibler had provided caregiving services at a reduced cost in return for receiving housing.

15. According to the PO, a hearing was scheduled for August 15, 2022 to confirm the sale of CP’s home to Yoana, the party Clarity believed made the best offer to purchase the house. The PO states that Mr. King opposed the sale of the home to Yoana as Mr. King wanted the house to be sold to Mr. Imran who appears to be aligned with Mr. King and is also a “professed friend” of Mr. King.

16. According to the PO, on August 13, 2022 Yoana received a call from someone claiming to be from DSHS and stating her name was Amy Winehouse. Yoana said the caller told her that she needed to send her a written statement that she was withdrawing her offer to buy CP’s house. Yoana said that the caller told her she must do that immediately or DSHS would take her



license away. According to the PO, Yoana said the caller also told her that if she acted quickly, she would keep this confidential and would not report the issue to her superiors at DSHS.<sup>2</sup>

17. According to the PO, shortly after the phone call to Yoana, Mr. King and his wife arrived at CP's home and even though Maria told them CP had already eaten lunch, they took CP from the home and out to lunch. Maria stated that against CP's established practice, CP told her that she was leaving her phone at the house and if anyone were to call that Maria should answer the phone. Maria said that CP never let caregivers pick up her calls. Maria stated that no more than 10 minutes later CP's phone rang and it was Amy Winehouse again threatening the "preferred home buyer" to withdraw their offer to buy CP's home and if they failed to so Maria's license to own/operate an Adult Family Home would be revoked.

18. According to the PO, on August 15, 2022, the day of the hearing, an individual claiming to be Amy Winehouse from DSHS showed up at CP's home. Maria asked her to show her identification which she refused to do. Maria then called the police and the person claiming to be from DSHS left.<sup>3</sup>

19. According to PO, Clarity spoke to the police officer that contacted Maria. The officer said he called the number that called Maria and a women answered the phone. Maria said it sounded like the caller from August 13, 2022. The officer asked to speak to Amy Winehouse and was told that Amy Winehouse doesn't work in her department.

20. According to the PO, it is the Guardian/Conservator's strong belief that Ms. Afroze, Mr. Imran, Mr. King and his wife Diane King (Ms. King), were allied in an effort to

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<sup>2</sup> Board staff were provided with a copy of Yoana Aitonean's signed declaration.

<sup>3</sup> Board staff were provided with a copy of Maria Aitonean's (Maria) signed declaration.

intimidate Yoana so that she would withdraw her offer to purchase the house. According to the PO, this would allow CP's home to be sold to Mr. Imran and Ms. Afroze.

21. Board staff contacted Officer Mathew Hurst (Mr. Hurst) at Renton Police Department (RPD) and asked him about his phone call with "Amy Winehouse." Mr. Hurst said he never spoke with Maria or with CP and never went to the residence. Mr. Hurst said he received a call from Michael Letts (ML) from Clarity and was provided with the telephone number. He said he called the number and asked for Amy Winehouse. He said a female with an accent answered the phone. Mr. Hurst said the female said her name was Crystal Williamson and was with DSHS but never gave her job title. He said he did not confirm that the number was Ms. Afroze's number. Mr. Hurst said that a case was not opened.

22. Board staff called the number which was provided by Mr. Hurst. Board staff asked the person that answered the phone if this was Rimi Afroze and she confirmed it was. Board staff told her that this number was provided to Board staff by RPD and was the number that called the caregiver in the complaint. When asked why she gave the officer a false name (Crystal Williamson), she said she didn't know he was from RPD and there was no way she could verify the caller was or who they were claiming to be. Ms. Afroze denied using the alias Amy Winehouse.

23. Clarity also provided Board staff with a Verified Petition of Order to Confirm Sale of Real Property (Petition) that was filed by Clarity in King County Superior Court. According to the Petition, there were two offers submitted for CP's property.

24. The first offer was submitted by Yoana who is the owner/operator of an Adult Family Home in which CP previously resided. Yoana's purchase price was \$600,000 with a five-year term and a monthly payment of \$9,668.67.

25. According to the Petition, Yoana's offer will provide in-home caregivers for CP on a 24/7 basis. The caregiving services are valued at \$9,668.67 per month (the amount of the monthly payment) and will satisfy the monthly payment requirement. According to the Petition, CP currently has an outstanding debt to Yoana in the amount of \$53,617.13 for time CP spent in Yoana's adult family home from March 17, 2020 to December 2, 2020. That amount would be credited as a payment on the purchase price.

26. According to the Petition, the second offer was submitted by Mr. Imran and Ms. Afroze. The original offer provided for a purchase price of \$515,000. In response to Clarity's counter offer, Mr. Imran increased his initial offer to \$600,000 but did not offer to reduce the term of the contract from his original 15-year term.<sup>4</sup>

27. According to the Petition, Mr. Imran's offer included a down payment of \$75,000 with a fifteen-year term and seller financing. According to the Petition, the offer would provide for a monthly payment in the amount of \$3,901.47.

28. The Petition states that Clarity believes Yoana's offer is the better of the two offers as it guarantees in-home caregiving services for CP on a 24/7 bases for a five-year term. The services are secured regardless of any increases in CP's care needs. The offer made by Mr. Imran would provide funds to pay caregiving services of \$3,901.47 per month, but the cost of caregiving services could significantly exceed the amount of the monthly payment.

29. According to the Petition, on June 1, 2022 the Court authorized the sale of CP's property subject to CP's retaining a life estate interest in the property or an agreement containing a "rent-back" provision that would allow CP to reside at her property for the remainder of her life.

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<sup>4</sup> Board staff were provided with a copy of the Residential Purchase and Sale Agreement and Counter Offer Addendum, which lists the buyers as Mr. Imran and Ms. Afroze.



30. In Ms. Afroze's initial email response to Board staff, she said would like to know what picture was used to identify her. She also went on to explain that CP is a neighbor, and she has interacted with her over the years; including handing out Halloween candy and celebrating CPs' birthday.

31. Board staff advised Ms. Afroze that according to the complaint, she was identified by the picture on a Research Gate profile, <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rimi-Afroze-2>.

32. Board staff provided Ms. Afroze with specific questions to answer in regards to the complaint. Ms. Afroze admitted to calling Yoana on August 13<sup>th</sup> to speak to her about the sale of CP's house as CP's neighbor. She indicated that Yoana told her CP owed money for previous care and that CP's guardian made the deal. Ms. Afroze indicated she did not threaten Maria's license and does not even know what license(s) she holds. She also indicated she never identified herself as a DSHS employee but that she made the calls from her work number.

33. Board staff asked Ms. Afroze about an email from her husband to Clarity on May 26, 2022 in which he states:" My wife mentioned to me yesterday that if the Guardian needs any help for CP to let her know, she is one of the DSHS Directors in Olympia and can help with information." Ms. Afroze indicated that she could provide information on Medicaid in-home and residential programs if the guardian needed it for CP. She said they were looking at Medicaid options to move CP to a facility, as she did not have enough money to afford a caregiver.

34. Ms. Afroze said she filed a complaint with the Complaint Resolution Unit (CRU) with the Residential Care Services (RCS) shortly after her conversation with Yoana and CP because she was suspicious about "a deal" Yoana mentioned during their conversation.

35. Ms. Afroze said it sounded like it was financial exploitation of CP and that they were taking advantage of CP's situation. Ms. Afroze said that as a state employee, she was

mandated to report her suspicion. She said she felt strongly about her suspicions and took action based on her ethical and moral obligations as a public servant.

36. In regards to the offer to purchase CP's residence, Ms. Afroze said her name was only on the offer as a co-signer with her husband. The offer was not accepted and that was okay for them on a business level. Ms. Afroze said she did not receive any private gain from any of this.

37. DSHS provided Board staff with an email thread that DSHS had found in Ms. Afroze's work email history. The emails began on August 18, 2022 at approximately 3:42 pm and ended on August 19, 2022 at 9:51 am. The email conversations were initiated by Ms. Afroze with representatives from the City of Seattle Human Resources Department, Aging and Disability Services and included representatives of Northwest Justice Project (NWJ) and Aging Washington.

38. Board staff found that Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 13 emails at her DSHS work email address from [chelseah@nwjustice.org](mailto:chelseah@nwjustice.org) and [cathy.knight@agingwashington.org](mailto:cathy.knight@agingwashington.org).

39. In an email sent by Ms. Afroze to Chelsea Hicks (Ms. Hicks), Managing Attorney at NWJ, on August 19, 2022 at 8:43 am Ms. Afroze stated, in part:<sup>5</sup>

*Good morning Chelsea,  
Just to let you know that a neighbor filed a court grievance after the court ruled the sale in favor of the AFH owner on Monday. There is an active investigation underway.*

*CP spoke with a court secretary yesterday and also with Linda Vaas from WA Courts and stated about the issue clearly and her wish to sell her property to her friend, not to the AFH owner. She called several neighbors last night including us to inform what was going on.*

*Her fear is that she will be pressured by the guardianship company and her attorney to sign the final sale procedure. She is also scared that the AFH owner's*

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<sup>5</sup> Board staff redacted the alleged victim's name from all emails found by Board staff and DSHS and inserted the initials CP.

*mother has been placed as her 24/7 live in caregiver and she is concerned about talking openly in front of her.*

*I am also communicating with the State's residential care policy folks to see the legality of buying a past client's primary home within 3 year of stay or release....*

40. In an emailed response at approximately August 19, 2022 at 9:51 am, Ms. Hicks indicated that NWJ will not become involved with the matter and suggested she contact CP's attorney. At 10:05 am, Ms. Afroze emailed NWJ and asked if CP could request an attorney change. The email thread continued between Ms. Afroze and NWJ until 10:30 am when NWJ advised they would not be able to represent CP but did offer some other options.

41. In a written response to Board staff regarding these emails, Ms. Afroze said, "These emails were communications related to CP's <sup>6</sup> concern regarding her guardian and the buyer of her home. As a public servant and a DSHS employee, advocacy for the vulnerable when we feel, hear, or sense any wrongdoing, is part of our responsibility. We take APS training every year so that we are always aware, report, and provide information to any who asks for it. This is part of our organizational vision of "Transforming Lives."

42. Board staff contacted Ms. Afroze's supervisor Andrea Meewes-Sanchez (Ms. Sanchez), who is the Unit Supervisor for the Washington Cares Fund. Board staff asked her if Ms. Afroze contacting NWJ during work hours on her work computer was within her job description. Ms. Sanchez said:

"Rimi's position is focused on building an adequate provider network for long-term care services for a new program DSHS is implementing. Her job is primarily working with stakeholders to define services, qualifications, and strategies for growing the provider network to meet the demand for our program. She does not work directly with clients and has no case management duties."

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<sup>6</sup> Board staff changed the alleged victim's name to her initials.



43. Ms. Sanchez said that all DSHS employees are mandated reporters by law and required to follow DSHS Administrative Policy 08.02. Ms. Sanchez said that it is reasonable that Ms. Afroze could make a report to APS or the CRU during work time following AP 08.02.

44. Ms. Sanchez said that reports to the Office of the Public Guardian are not required under that policy. She said that the requirement is to report to APS if abuse is suspected. Neither of these email addresses are associated with APS. She said it is outside of DSHS policy to investigate independently as a non-APS employee.

45. Ms. Sanchez said, “Her emails to NJP discussing representation of the victim are not within her job duties at DSHS.”

46. Board staff requested a copy of Ms. Afroze’s work email history and an image of Ms. Afroze’s work computer from DSHS. Board staff were provided with the emails in a PST format for the period of July 27, 2021 through October 23, 2022 and a forensic image of Ms. Afroze’s work computer.<sup>7</sup>

47. Board staff found that between July 27, 2021 and August 31, 2022, Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 39 emails at her DCYF work email address from her personal email address at yahoo.com. Those emails included:

- An email received and sent on April 13, 2022 from Ms. Afroze’s work email address. The subject line *Fwd: Dadu’s report*. The email had 15 attachments which appear to be a Cardiology report.
- An email originating from Ms. Afroze’s work email address that was sent to courts.wa.gov on August 14, 2022 with the subject line *Urgent concern from an elderly regarding Guardianship*. The email thread continued through August 16, 2022 and included Mr. Paul King. Ms. Afroze’s email states in part: “....My name

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<sup>7</sup> Board staff processed the PST file and computer hard drive on a Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device (FRED) using the Magnet Axion Digital Investigation Platform to acquire and analyze the PST file and computer hard drive.

is Rimi Afroze, and I am the Provider Network Capacity Unit Manager with the Home and Community services of DSHS, Headquarter, Lacey, WA. I am bringing a guardianship matter to your attention regarding an elderly neighbor of mine who showed up at my door today with the hope of having some answers as she thought I work for DSHS...”

48. Board staff also found that between September 15, 2021 and September 26, 2022, Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 40 emails at her DCYF work email address from her husband Mr. Imran’s email address at amani.seattle@gmail.com.<sup>8</sup> There were some emails with attachments that did not appear to be work related. Those emails included:

- An email sent on April 26, 2022 with the subject line *Rental Subsidy Tenant Letter*. The attached document certified that Mr. Imran and his son are currently occupying a residence in Surrey BC and quoted the payment and effective date.
- An email sent on May 3, 2022 with the subject line *Proposal*. The attached document was a two page typed proposal to purchase CP’s property. Ms. Afroze later indicated she edited this at CP’s attorney’s request.
- An email sent on March 25, 2022 with the subject line *Fwd: Pic*. The attached document was a photograph of an adult male, identified by Ms. Afroze as her husband.
- An email sent on March 22, 2022 with the subject line *Fwd Rimi pdf file*. The email had nine attached documents that appeared to be diagrams for a single family home.
- An email sent on September 15, 2021 with the subject line *Updated*. The email included two attachments which were identified as Mr. Imran’s resume and a cover letter for a job application.
- Two emails sent and received February 15, 2022 with the subject line *Documents and Documents Corrected*. Both emails contained the same documents that appeared to be legal documents written in a different language but with the header of High Court Form P.

49. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze indicated that the emails were done “in poor judgment.”

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<sup>8</sup> Board staff spoke to Ms. Afroze’s supervisor and was advised that staff did not have access to a printer so they were authorized to print documents at home as long as the documents did not contain confidential information.

50. In a written response regarding the emails sent and received from her and her husband's personal email addresses, Ms. Afroze said that most of the emails that were forwarded to her personal email and to her husband's personal email were for printing of work-related documents.

51. She said since she was working remotely full time and doesn't have a work printer at home, she asked her supervisor if she could print on her personal printer. She said her supervisor was okay with her doing that. Ms. Afroze said she would forward those general documents to her personal email and to him so that her husband could print for her.<sup>9</sup>

52. Board staff contacted Ms. Ms. Sanchez and according to Ms. Sanchez, the practice of printing non-client related and non-confidential documents on a home printer is a work around used by many staff.

53. Board staff found that between February 8, 2022 and October 20 2022, Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 18 emails at her DSHS work email address from the email address mnzaamaan@yahoo.com. Those emails all appear to be in reference to plans for building a home and some have the subject line *External Drawing of Noria House*. Some of the emails include the plans referred to in emails to Mr. Imran. The body of the emails discuss details in the building of the home in question and who the home is for.

54. Board staff found that between December 20, 2021 and May 18, 2022 Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 12 emails at her DSHS work email address from the email address kamrankaza!1010@gmail.com. The majority of the emails sent to this email address include the

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<sup>9</sup> Board staff's review confirmed that other than the emails listed on this report, the majority of the emails sent to her and her husband's personal email addresses appeared to be work related.



same discussions about the building of a home and have attached documentation referred to in previous emails including the house plans.

55. There was one email dated March 25, 2022 with the subject line *Sajal's passport copy* and has Mr. Imran's US Passport attached to it.

56. Board staff found that between October 21, 2021 and June 9, 2022, 2022, Ms. Afroze sent and received approximately 9 emails at her DSHS work email address from the email address [kaziriham98@gmail.com](mailto:kaziriham98@gmail.com). The majority of these emails were in regards to the guardianship of a young child and included approximately seven attached documents including a Guardianship Order, a document regarding "the child's routine" and other legal documents.

57. Board staff found that on November 11, 2021 Ms. Afroze sent an email from her DSHS work email address to [bdhelicopterservice@gmail.com](mailto:bdhelicopterservice@gmail.com). The subject line was *Rate Inquiry from a US Govt Official visiting Dhaka*. The email was written by Ms. Afroze and stated:

"...I will be visiting Dhaka for 3 weeks in December for an official purpose. I plan to visit my in-laws home in Noria, close to Shariatpur, in mid-December for 3 days. Our plan is to take a ride from Dhaka to Noria/Shariatpur where the chopper can drop us off. And then pick us up from Noria/Shariatpur after 3 days. We will be a family of 5 people. Can you please send me the rate as soon as you can? I am expecting all arrangement such as Helipad and other safety measures to be part of your service..."

58. In a written response to Board staff regarding the emails, Ms. Afroze indicated that the emails were either brief communications and/or not related to her job and "poor judgement on my end."

59. A review of Ms. Afroze's work computer revealed that Ms. Afroze conducted approximately 72 Google searches between March 11, 2022 and August 18, 2022 that did not appear to be work related.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The number of searches using a specific search term is in parenthesis.

60. Approximately 22 searches using the following search terms that appear to be related to CP:

- CP Rehab Record Renton (2)
- Clarity Guardians (1)
- Best Elderly Support Lawyer Renton (1)
- Looking for a place to exchange for caregiver Washington (1)
- States Elderly Right Law Group, Renton, WA, (2)
- State's Elderly Right Lawyer Group (3)
- 4612 NE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, Renton (6)
- Adult Family Homes in Renton owned by Joan (4)
- Adult family homes in Renton (2)

61. According to Ms. Afroze, she believes the searches for Clarity Guardians, Best Elderly Support Lawyer Renton, States Elderly Right Law Group, Renton, WA and 4612 NE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, Renton, were work related. According to Ms. Sanchez, they do not appear to be related to Ms. Afroze's job duties.

62. In regards to the searches using the search term, CP Rehab Record Renton, Ms. Afroze said she could not remember why she did this search. She said, "I will take it as poor judgment on my end."

63. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze said that her search on Adult Family Homes in Renton owned by Joan was done when "CP brought to my attention that she was told by Ioana that CP owed \$50K to Ioana from her stay at her facility. But she could not remember which facility she was talking about. CP was extremely concerned about that and it was my DSHS responsibility to help her with information since she is a vulnerable adult." <sup>11</sup> According to Ms. Sanchez, these searches appear to be unrelated to Ms. Afroze's work duties.

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<sup>11</sup> Ioana is Yoana.

64. Two searches with the search terms How to write a Current Market Analysis and Real Estate Sale agreement were conducted on April 29, 2022 and April 30 2022. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze she could not remember clearly why she searched these two subjects She said it was “very possibly a personal search and a poor judgment on her end. “ According to Ms. Sanchez, these searches appear to be unrelated to Ms. Afroze’s work duties.

65. Approximately 22 searches with the following search terms that appear to be related to travel:

- Shwapno Bangladesh (2)
- Turkish Airlines (6)
- Service Apartment in Gulshan Diplomatic Zone Dhaka (3)
- Dewan Furniture Dhaka Bangladesh (2)
- VFS Global Services Dhaka Bangladesh (1)
- US Embassy Dhaka Tourist Visa Application (1)
- Qatar Airways Flight from Seattle to Dhaka (1)
- Which Air Condition is Best for Bangladesh (2)
- Lab Aid Cardiac Hospital Dhaka (2)
- Parents Visitor Visa to US from Bangladesh (1)

66. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze said that the searches for Lab Aid Cardiac Hospital Dhaka, Parents Visitor Visa to US from Bangladesh and US Embassy Dhaka Tourist Visa Application were “personal, poor judgement on my part in a time when my mom was in that hospital and eventually passed away.”

67. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze said that the other searches were “personal search(s), poor judgement on my part.”

68. Ms. Afroze said that the search for Turkish Airlines Lost and Found Seattle Airport Contact was a “very brief search when my luggage were lost, just to find the phone number to report. Personal search and poor judgement on my end.”



69. Between April 18, 2022 and August 4, 2022, Ms. Afroze conducted approximately 26 Google searches, which included the following search terms for what appears to be children's movies including: Spider Man Cartoon, Scooby Doo Movie, The Amazing Spider Man, Thor Love and Thunder, Star Wars Lego Movie, Hercules, Beauty and the Beast and the Little Mermaid.

70. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Afroze said the searches for movies was for team building activities that can bring team members together. Ms. Afroze said since she was not well-versed with US movie/pop culture when the team discussed things like favorite movie songs, characters, festivities, etc., she might have searched just to know what her peers were talking about. She said on one occasion she put together a fun PowerPoint with favorite songs and asked for permission to search YouTube or Google for that. She said she was told she could do that.

71. In a written response to Board staff, Ms. Sanchez said that "It is unlikely this is related to team building given the extended timeframe of the searches, although the specific activity mentioned to put together favorite songs for a team building activity is legitimate."

72. Between April 3, 2022 and May 31, 2022 Ms. Afroze conducted approximately three Google searches using the search term, Safe Splash Swimming School. According to Ms. Afroze, these searches may have been work related. According to Ms. Sanchez, these searches appear to be unrelated to Ms. Afroze's work duties.

73. Board staff did not find any evidence that Ms. Afroze was storing documents on her computer that were not work related.

74. At the beginning of Board staff's investigation into the allegations made against Ms. Afroze, Board staff were advised by DSHS that Adult Protective Services (APS) were conducting an investigation into the allegations as well. On November 15, 2022, Board staff

contacted Alyssa Powers (Ms. Powers), a Social Service Specialist 4 (SSS4) with APS, to get an update on their investigation. Ms. Powers stated: "The investigation is still open, but not because of any new information or evidence I've found. I just need to wrap it up and close it. From the information I have, it doesn't look like any of Rimi's actions were directed at CP, and I don't have enough evidence to prove she was at CP's home with a nurse."<sup>12</sup>

## B. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Ethics in Public Service Act, Chapter 42.52 RCW, prohibits state employees from Use of persons, money or property for private gain. RCW 42.52.160 states:

No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officers or employees official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee or another.

WAC 292-110-010 Use of state resources states, in part:

.....  
**(3) Permitted personal use of state resources.** This subsection applies to any use of state resources not included in subsection (2) of this section.

(a) A state officer or employee's use of state resources is de minimis only if each of the following conditions are met:

- (i) There is little or no cost to the state;
- (ii) Any use is brief;
- (iii) Any use occurs infrequently;
- (iv) The use does not interfere with the performance of any state officer's or employee's official duties;
- (v) The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information systems, or software;
- (vi) The use is not for the purpose of conducting an outside business, in furtherance of private employment, or to realize a private financial gain; and
- (vii) The use is not for supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group.

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<sup>12</sup> Board staff changed the alleged victim's name to her initials.

2. The Board is authorized to impose sanctions for violations to the Ethics Act pursuant to RCW 42.52.360. The Board has set forth criteria in WAC 292-120-030 for imposing sanctions and consideration of any mitigating or aggravating factors.

### **C. AGGRAVATING AND MITIGATING FACTORS**

In determining the appropriateness of the civil penalty, the Board reviewed the criteria in WAC 292-120-030. In the matter at hand, it is an aggravating factor these types of violations significantly reduce the public respect and confidence in state government employees. In the matter at hand, there are no mitigating factors.

### **D. STIPULATION AND AGREED ORDER**

1. Pursuant to chapter 42.52 RCW, the Executive Ethics Board has jurisdiction over Rimi Afroze and over the subject matter of this complaint.

2. Under RCW 34.05.060, the Board can establish procedures for attempting and executing informal settlement of matters in lieu of more formal proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, including adjudicative hearings. The Board has established such procedures under WAC 292-100-090.

3. Pursuant to WAC 292-100-090(1), the parties have the authority to resolve this matter under the terms contained herein, subject to Board approval.

4. Rimi Afroze agrees that if any or all of the alleged violations were proven at a hearing, the Board may impose sanctions, including a civil penalty under RCW 42.52.480(1)(b) of up to \$5,000, or the greater of three times the economic value of anything received or sought in violation of chapter 42.52 RCW, for each violation found. The Board may also order the payment of costs, including reasonable investigative costs, under RCW 42.52.480(1)(c).



5. Rimi Afroze further agrees that the evidence available to the Board is such that the Board may conclude they violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. Therefore, in the interest of seeking an informal and expeditious resolution of this matter, the parties agree to entry of the stipulated findings of fact, conclusions of law and agreed order.

6. Rimi Afroze waives the opportunity for a hearing, contingent upon acceptance of this stipulation by the Board, or their acceptance of any modification(s) proposed by the Board, pursuant to the provisions of WAC 292-100-090(2).

7. If the Board accepts this stipulation, the Board agrees to release and discharge from all further ethics proceedings under chapter 42.52 RCW for any allegations arising out of the facts in this matter, subject to payment of the full amount of the civil penalty due and owing, any other costs imposed, and compliance with all other terms and conditions of the stipulation. Rimi Afroze in turn agrees to release and discharge the Board, its officers, agents and employees from all claims, damages, and causes of action arising out of this complaint and this stipulation.

8. If the Board accepts this stipulation, it does not purport to settle any other claims between Rimi Afroze and the Washington State Executive Ethics Board, the State of Washington, or other third party, which may be filed in the future. No other claims of alleged violations are pending against Rimi Afroze at this time.

9. If the Board accepts this stipulation, it is enforceable under RCW 34.05.578 and any other applicable statutes or rules.

10. If the Board rejects this stipulation, or if Rimi Afroze does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, this matter will be scheduled for an administrative hearing before the Board. If an administrative hearing is scheduled before the Board, waives any objection to participation by any Board member at the hearing to whom this stipulation was presented for

approval under WAC 292-100-090(2). Further, Rimi Afroze understands and agrees that this stipulation as well as information obtained during any settlement discussions between the parties shall not be admitted into evidence during the administrative hearing, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

11. Rimi Afroze agrees to pay a civil penalty in the amount of two-thousand-five-hundred dollars (\$2,500) associated with violations of RCW 42.52. The Board agrees to suspend one thousand dollars (\$1,000) on the condition that Rimi Afroze complies with all terms and conditions of this Stipulation and Order and commits no further violations of RCW 42.52 for a period of two years from the date this agreement is executed

12. The civil penalty in the amount one-thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) is payable in full to the Washington State Executive Ethics Board within forty-five (45) days after this stipulation is signed and accepted by the Board, or as otherwise agreed to by the parties.

#### I. CERTIFICATION

I, Rimi Afroze, hereby certify that I have read this stipulation in its entirety, that my counsel of record, if any, has fully explained the legal significance and consequence of it. I further certify that I fully understand and agree to all of it, and that it may be presented to the Board without my appearance. I knowingly and voluntarily waive my right to a hearing in this matter and if the Board accepts the stipulation, I understand that I will receive a signed copy.

Rimi Afroze                      01/25/2023  
Rimi Afroze                                      Date  
Respondent

Presented by: K. Reynolds                      2/28/2023  
KATE REYNOLDS                                      Date  
Executive Director

## II. ORDER

Having reviewed the proposed stipulation, WE, THE STATE OF WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD, pursuant to WAC 292-100-090, HEREBY ORDER that the Stipulation is

✓

ACCEPTED in its entirety;

\_\_\_\_\_

REJECTED in its entirety;

\_\_\_\_\_

MODIFIED. This stipulation will become the order of the Board if the Respondent approves\* the following modification(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATED this 10th day of March 2023.

Approved Virtually  
Shirley Battan, Chair

Approved Virtually  
Jan Jutte, Vice Chair

Absent  
Earl Key, Member

Approved Virtually  
Kelli Hooke, Member

Approved Virtually  
Megan Abel, Member

\* I, Rimi Afroze, accept/do not accept (circle one) the proposed modification(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rimi Afroze, Respondent                      Date