

MINUTES  
**HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 20, 2019  
**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Room EW41  
**MEMBERS:** Chairman Dixon, Representatives Horman, Barbieri, Gannon, Wintrow  
**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None  
**GUESTS:** Betsy Russell, Capitol Correspondence Association

**Chairman Dixon** called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

**Chairman Dixon** noted this would be the first open meeting of the House Ethics Committee to discuss House policies. He said the committee would address the first five policies first and would discuss the Respectful Workplace Policy at a later meeting.

**Carrie Maulin**, Chief Clerk of the House, addressed the committee and answered a question regarding why the House Ethics Committee is able to meet. She said the House Ethics Committee is a standing committee and can meet throughout the Legislative Session. She said House Rule 76 does address how the committee is constituted for the entire Legislative Session. Ms. Maulin answered further questions from the committee regarding the source of the policies and how they were established and the difference between a policy and a rule, saying the policies are more for use and do not rise to the level of a House Rule. She also stated, in statute, the Speaker of the House has a fiduciary obligation for the operation of the House and these policies fall in line with that obligation.

In answering further questions from the committee, **Ms. Maulin** explained she cannot speak to how the policies were disseminated, but it was her understanding the policies have been disseminated to the body over the years. The process for creation of the policies has come from the Speakers Office over the years when a situation has come up when a policy was needed to be put in place.

**Ms. Maulin** reviewed the House Internet Use Policy, saying this is a basic policy which states what is acceptable for internet use and has basic guidelines on how to use the internet services provided to the Legislature. Ms. Maulin reviewed the House Copy Policy and stated because an excessive number of colored copies were made during 2017, this policy was implemented. She reviewed the cost of the copier leases and said Representatives have the opportunity to use the copiers during the session and there is a part time constituent services staff member available during the interim to provide this service to Representatives. She said the number of copies made by LSO during the interim went down after this policy was implemented. She said Legislators do receive compensation for constituent services and those funds should be used for this type of service.

**Ms. Maulin** continued the review of the House Mail Policy, saying this policy changed during the beginning of the current Speaker's administration. She said it appears as though most people are now using virtual means to get information to their constituents and this policy seems to be cost effective compared to the cost of postage. Ms. Maulin reviewed the House RS Policy, saying this policy is straight forward and relates to the confidentiality of an RS and includes the Statement of Purpose and Fiscal Note in that confidentiality. In answer to committee questions, Ms. Maulin said since virtual committees are still a new concept, the person who owns the RS gives permission for the RS to be distributed to the committee members only, she agrees this policy needs to be revised to reflect this.

**Betsy Russell**, President, Capitol Correspondence Assoc., addressed the committee with concerns with the House RS Policy, and stated she would recommend the first line of the policy be stricken, because an RS is not the property of any one person but does fall under an exception of a public records request. She said when an RS is taken up in a public meeting, is the moment when it becomes public. She said the custom in the past for reporters was to get copies of an RS at that time, because there is a lag in time from that point to when the bill is available on the website. She said the press thinks there needs to be a new mechanism to have the RS's appear on the website before they are read across the desk on the House floor and are on the website as a bill.

**Ms. Maulin** reviewed the process for when legislation is brought from the committee meetings to when they could be read across the desk.

**Ms. Maulin** reviewed the Legislative Newsletter Checklist, she said this was written by the Attorney General's office with LSO to clarify what is acceptable to include in a newsletter and to clarify the law against the use of using public dollars for personal gain and to remember not to use newsletters as a campaign device.

The committee discussed having **Brian Kane**, Legislative Deputy Attorney General, present at the next meeting regarding the issue of a policy verses a rule. The committee also expressed the need for House members to come and give their input on the policies and a representative from the Senate to present on the Senate policies compared to the House policies in light of House members possibly having a disadvantage to Senators in regard to the copy and mail policies specifically.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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Representative Dixon  
Chair

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Susan Werlinger  
Secretary