TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING
WORKSHOP ON ELECTRONIC FILING MINUTES
May 29, 2013, 3:18 p.m.
Capitol Extension, Room E1.010
Austin, Texas 78701

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Jim Clancy, Chair; Paul W. Hobby, Vice Chair, Hugh C. Akin, Tom Harrison, Bob Long, Tom Ramsay, and Chase Untermeyer.
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Paula M. Mendoza
STAFF PRESENT:	Natalia L. Ashley, Margie Castellanos, Jessie Haug, Becky Levy, Mike McElhaney, Melissa Ramos, David A. Reisman, and Tim Sorrells.

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 Clancy. David A. Reisman, Executive Director, called the roll. All Commissioners were present, except for Commissioner Mendoza.

Agenda Item 2:   Introduction and comments by the Chair.

Chair Clancy thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He discussed funding the Commission received from the Legislature for the new electronic filing software. He explained the new software will be user friendly and will simplify electronic filing. He also discussed that the Commission will work on simplifying the disclosure filing forms.

Agenda Item 3:   Presentation, discussion, and possible action on simplification of disclosure filing forms.

David A. Reisman, Executive Director, presented this agenda item. He discussed the number of different filer types, schedules, and filing forms the Commission currently has. Mr. Reisman talked about the subcommittee's suggestion to create a new form for all filer types by combining all 23 schedules into one form. He explained the filers would only complete the schedules that apply to them. Mr. Reisman stated the subcommittee would like to have an accounting format for the new filing form. He made clear the objective of the Commission is to simplify the current filing forms.

Agenda Item 4:   Communication to the Commission from the public.

Glen Maxey spoke before the Commission. Mr. Maxey discussed his expectations of the new filing form. He expressed his concerns with password retrieval. Mr. Maxey also conveyed the problems of not being able to download the current filing software. He believes the problem will be solved when the Commission replaces the current electronic filing system with web-based software.

Gardner Pate spoke before the Commission. Mr. Pate encouraged the Commission to address importing and exporting issues. He suggested the Commission work with database vendors to make the integration of information seamless. Mr. Pate expressed problems with computer freezes when trying to submit a large filing. Mr. Pate also stated his concerns with moving to an accounting-based system. Mr. Pate suggested the new electronic filing system should be compatible with Macintosh systems.

Chris Gober spoke before the Commission. Mr. Gober expressed his agreement with moving towards an accounting-based filing system. He explained real time disclosure on the federal level. Mr. Gober explained paper form filing must be provided for indigent filers on the federal level.

Members of the Forms Subcommittee including Chair Clancy and Commissioners Harrison and Untermeyer closed the discussion by reiterating the Commission's desire to simplify the disclosure filing forms.

Agenda Item 5:   Presentation and discussion on specifications for the proposed electronic filing software system.

David A. Reisman, Executive Director, presented this agenda item. Mr. Reisman briefed the audience on the history of the filing software system. He expressed the need for a comprehensive system that is easy to maintain and can serve different functions for filers in addition to staff. Mr. Reisman also conveyed his hopes that the new filing system will encourage filers to file online. He explained that the new system will allow staff to easily provide agency data to the public. Mr. Reisman stated the Ethics Commission should own the rights to its electronic filing software system. He explained the new system will create cost savings for the Commission. Mr. Reisman also discussed the need for a secure filing system. He stated the system should allow filers to view fines, fees, and collections in addition to past and present filings. Mr. Reisman explained the new system will be implemented in stages with the final stage implemented at the end of 2014. Lastly, Mr. Reisman expressed the desire to make the new electronic filing software system easy on both the filers and the Commission.

Agenda Item 6:   Communication to the Commission from the public.

Shawn Stevens spoke before the Commission. Mr. Stevens stated the electronic password recovery feature will be helpful to filers. He highlighted measures in HB 1637 and SB 219.

Laurie Pair spoke before the Commission. Ms. Pair stated she would like the new filing system to include safeguarding when submitting reports given that the new system will be web-based. She expressed her agreement that filers should be able to run analyst reports to review filing information to prevent from submitting wrong information. Ms. Pair stated she agrees with the TurboTax format that the Commission has decided on adopting for

the new filing system. She suggested the new system flag important reminders to the filer when they have logged on.

Susan McClain spoke before the Commission. Ms. McClain requested that staff include subtotals for clarifying schedules in the new filing system.

Agenda Item 7:   Comments by the Commissioners

None.

Agenda Item 8:   Adjourn

Commission meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.