

**Report on actions taken by the Rhode Island Ethics Commission
in Executive Session held on March 26, 2024:**

1. Unanimously voted (7-0) to approve the minutes of the Executive Session held on March 12, 2024.
2. In the matter of **In re: David Patten**, Complaint No. 2023-6, the Commission took the following actions:

A motion was made by Commissioner Ricci to amend a proposed Informal Resolution & Settlement to increase the civil penalty to \$10,000. There was no second to the motion, and the motion failed.

The Commission voted (6-1) to approve a proposed Informal Resolution & Settlement by which the Commission imposed a civil penalty of \$5,000.

[Reporter's Note: The vote was as follows:

AYES: Marisa A. Quinn; Frank J. Cenerini; Lauren E. Jones; Emma L. Peterson; Matthew D. Strauss: and Holly J. Susi.

NOES: Hugo L. Ricci, Jr.]

Copies of the Informal Resolution & Settlement and the Investigative Report will be available at the conclusion of the meeting.

3. In the matter of **In re: James E. Thorsen**, Complaint No. 2023-7, the Commission took the following actions:

Unanimously voted (7-0) that probable cause exists to believe that the Respondent, James E. Thorsen, while Director of the R.I. Department of Administration, violated Commission Regulation 520-RICR-00-00-1.4.2 of the Code of Ethics by receiving a gift having a fair market value in excess of \$25 from Scout Ltd, a business that had a direct financial interest in decisions that the Respondent was either authorized to make, or to participate in the making of, as part of his official duties;

Unanimously voted (7-0) that probable cause exists to believe that the Respondent, James E. Thorsen, while Director of the R.I. Department of Administration, violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-5(d) of the Code of Ethics by using his public office to obtain financial gain for himself in the form of a free private lunch at a restaurant;

Unanimously voted (7-0) that probable cause exists to believe that the Respondent, James E. Thorsen, while Director of the R.I. Department of Administration and a procurement official for the Department of Administration, violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14.1-2(b) by accepting free goods or services in the form of a private lunch, valued at over \$100, for his personal use, from Scout Ltd., a state vendor who had sold services to the R.I. Department of Administration and its Division of Capital Asset

Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) during the preceding 24 months, and who the Respondent had reason to know would be making a proposal for the sale of services to DCAMM and the Department of Administration, through the execution of a Master Agreement, within the succeeding 24 months; and

Unanimously voted (7-0) that there does not exist probable cause to believe that the Respondent, while Director of the R.I. Department of Administration, violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-5(g) of the Code of Ethics in that there is not sufficient evidence to cause a reasonable person to believe that the Respondent solicited or accepted favors and gifts from Scout Ltd. with the understanding that such favors and gifts would influence his official judgment as to whether Scout Ltd. should receive state funding for the Cranston Street Armory redevelopment project.

Copies of the Investigative Report will be available at the conclusion of the meeting.

4. Unanimously voted (7-0) in the matter of **In re: Michelle M. Vacca**, Complaint No. 2024-3, to initially determine that the Complaint states facts that, if true, are sufficient to constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics and to authorize an investigation.

An Initial Determination is a preliminary vote that should not be construed as an opinion regarding the truth of the facts alleged in the complaint but is merely a vote to conduct an investigation into the allegations raised.

5. Unanimously voted (7-0) to return to Open Session.