Regular Meeting:

Roll Call:

X Chair Ms. Rhonda Smiley
X Member Ms. Mary Ann Slattery
X Member Mr. J. Anthony Snorgrass
X Member Mr. John Zawacki
X Member Mr. Gilbert Castro
X Ruth Benien, Administrator

X (Present)
E (Excused)
U (Unexcused)

Call to Order:

Chairperson Rhonda Smiley called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Commissioners Slattery, Snorgrass, Zawacki and newly appointed Commissioner Castro were present.

Swearing In of New Commissioner and Signing of Ethics Oath and Pledges:

The Honorable Phillip Sieve, Wyandotte County District Court Chief Administrative Judge was present and administered the Ethics Oath of Office to newly appointed Ethics Commissioner Gilbert Castro. Thereafter Commissioner Castro signed the Ethics Oath and all of the Commissioners additionally signed the Ethics Pledge. The signed Oaths of Office for all Commissioners are retained in the Legislative Auditor’s Office.

Introduction of Ethics Administrator:

At the request of Chairperson Smiley, the newly appointed Ethics Administrator, Ruth M. Benien, made a presentation to the Board of her background and the current status of the transfer of the Ethics Office and training from outgoing Administrator Frederickson.
Old Business:

Minutes of the February 7, 2008 meeting were reviewed. Motion to Approve the Minutes was made by Commissioner Slattery with a second by Commissioner Snorgrass. Chairperson Smiley noted a need for correction in the Minutes to fully identify the persons to whom the Revised Code would be submitted as Tom Standish, Jerry Gorman and Phillip Sieve. Commissioner Slattery moved to approve the Minutes with the amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Snorgrass and approved.

The issue of the taking of Minutes generally was discussed and it was suggested and agreed that to enable more detailed Minutes to be prepared and retained for a historical perspective that Administrator Benien would either tape record and/or have an assistant present for purposes of taking the minutes so that less time would be taken and more discussion and presentation of matters before the Commission would be possible.

Administrator Benien reviewed the monthly report with the Commission which outlined the training provided in February, 2008 and the nature of the ethics opinions rendered.

In summary, one Basic Ethics training was provided in February, 2008 and two Continuing Ethics courses were presented. The Administrator was asked to follow-up with Human Resources and the Legislative Auditor's Office to determine the current status of training. At the February, 2008 meeting the Commissioners were advised that 75 per cent of the ethics training was now complete and it was unclear what that figure meant. There were two requests for opinions or assistance on the filing of a complaint and whether certain solicitations would be appropriate. There was one complaint over the use of e-mail by a UG employee which was forwarded to Human Resources. An outstanding complaint from a UG employee who personally appeared at the February 7, 2008 meeting is to be reviewed by the new Administrator per Board request.

Administrator Benien advised that she was in the process of determining the current status of various contact and communications with respect to the ANDA/NBR funds and had no additional update at this time.

The status of the updates and revisions to the Ethics Code were reviewed. A hard copy with the most recent changes was provided to the Ethics Administrator with the request that she review the same and provide any additional input as to changes before it is submitted to Tom Standish, Jerry Gorman, Judge Phillip Sieve, Dennis Hays and ultimately the Commission.

New Business:

Administrator Benien reported on additional training that had been conducted in the month of March, 2008 and noted that the amount of training was substantially increased due to the desire of the Unified Government to include elected and appointed boards, committees and task forces in its Ethics training. As a result, the budgetary costs of the
training will be increasing. Additionally, Administrator Benien reported that to address employee complaints in the seminars and to upgrade the materials, a rewriting of the current training materials will be required. The current program is using factual scenarios that some employees have heard one or more times and is of insufficient length to fill the time periods required. Revisions to the Code will also need to be incorporated. Administrator Benien was authorized to review the issue and, if need be, address the same or make administration aware of the same with respect to upcoming budget reviews and preparation.

Administrator Benien advised the Commission that although the Ethics Code required that each employee upon taking the Basic Ethics class was to sign an Ethics Pledge included in the Code, it did not appear that had been done in all cases in the past. The Commissioners approved renewed use of the Ethics Pledge and each Commissioner signed such a pledge.

The need for newly appointed Commissioner Castro to take the Basic Ethics training and any other Commissioners to complete the refresher course was mentioned. Dates and times for such training will be provided and/or a special session scheduled.

In a final matter of new business Administrator Benien advised the Commission that she had spoken with and intended to continue retaining the services of Sabine Jones to handle the day to day monitoring of the hotline and certain administrative tasks such as typing of the minutes, sending of agendas, etc. It is Administrator Benien’s current intention to perform the actual training sessions herself.

**Executive Session:**

Commissioner Snorgrass made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues with respect to non-elected officials and legal issues with respect to ethics for 45 minutes (5:20-6:05 p.m.). Motion was seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive session ended at 6:03 p.m.

Open Meeting resumed at 6:04 p.m.

**Adjournment:**

Motion for adjournment by Commissioner Zawacki

Seconded by Commissioner Snorgrass

Meeting Adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next Meeting April 3, 2008
Respectfully Submitted,

s/Ruth M. Benien_____

Ruth M. Benien
Ethics Administrator