

## **Attorney General's Business Advisory Council**

**Minutes - June 1, 2011**

**The Office of the Attorney General, Conference Room, Third Floor  
150 South Main Street, Providence, RI 02903**

**Staff Present:** Mike Morrissey, Daniel Carrigg, Amy Kemp

**Business Advisory Council Attendees:** Roland Snead, Steve Cronin, Vin Massino, Vanessa Toledo-Vickers, Nathaniel J. Ginsburg, Denice Spero, Edward Cooney, Edward Quinlin, Irene Fasano, Jeremy Crisp, John Palumbo, Kerry McKay, Laurie White.

**1. Call to Order-** The meeting is called to order at 10:05am

### **2. Introductory Remarks by the Attorney General**

The meeting is called to order by Attorney General Kilmartin. The Attorney General discusses the Council and what he hopes it will accomplish. The Council agrees to focus on industry and business hurdles, regulations, fees, tax issues, workers compensation, and insurance fraud- in addition to any other topics that members see fit to address. The Attorney General's Office agrees to take the role of a facilitator and to have an open door when it comes to business and working through business problems.

### **3. Open Discussion – Identifying Goals**

Ed Quinlin asked: "Was any legislation filed [on behalf of the Attorney General's Office] this year that would benefit the business community?"

The Attorney General responded that most of the legislation filed this year was regarding the criminal division of The Office. Legislation was filed on ethics and creating a permanent White Collar and Corruption Crime Unit in The Office to make a policy statement that no matter who the Attorney General is moving forward, it will be a priority. The AG further remarks that The Office is also in the process of putting together an employee misclassification task force.

Ed Cooney, Council Chair, then makes an introductory statement.

Chairman Cooney remarks that the Rhode Island economy is in such a condition that everyone needs to contribute and examine how they can use their particular state office to improve economic conditions in Rhode Island. He further states that he has had conversations to this end with the Attorney General. He says that the Council will be tasked with identifying the negative aspects of the state's economy and identifying ways to improve and build upon the positive aspects. He states that the Council can use its collective backgrounds and knowledge to address topics that may even lead to legislation in the future.

The Attorney General then interjects about a change in the name of the group. The Business Advisory Council is changing to Business Task Force so that the group would be able to open and present issues that may include confidential information and candid discussion on instances of fraud. The Attorney General wants the group to be able to work as a Task Force and be able to be open and present confidential issues. The Attorney General also states that if there is a topic that is coming up for discussion for which Task Force members think The Office should have one of the staff attorneys' available – the Attorney General will make the attorney available. He then proceeds to state that The Office has several specialized attorneys that deal with topics ranging from environmental issues to insurance issues.

Ed Quinlin asked the Attorney General, "What are your thoughts on 195?"

The Attorney General responded by stating that his concern was frankly oversight. He states that the Office's position is that the development process should go through the state property commission, and that The Office sent a letter to that effect. The AG continues: "This is probably the biggest event in Providence since the moving of the rivers and so forth, so it should be done right. It is a huge opportunity that shouldn't go by the wayside."

Kerry McKay then commented, "One of the things it seems to me dealing with the public every single day is that State of Rhode Island has a very serious problem of perception. The attitude of people in general is very poor. It seems as though the other side of the coin is that other people are still struggling no matter what. They are hearing a lot of information on a daily basis, and if anything comes out of this whole thing, if we could help to change the perception of not only the consumer but the voter in the State of Rhode Island, we would be coming out far ahead of every other Commission or Task Force that has ever been in place here. Aren't there old antiquated laws that could actually, if you took a proactive stand on them, be removed? That would in itself actually be a very forward thinking idea to help streamline government."

The Attorney General then addressed the overall functions, powers and limitations of the Office. He states that the Task Force can be used to look at overall problems and shed light on them. The AG states that he will be happy to assist in communicating specific problems that are identified by the Task Force to another statewide office, the legislature, or another industry. The AG maintains that he is committed to open lines of communication.

Vanessa Toledo-Vickers states that sometimes the Minority Business Enterprise process through state purchasing does not inform her whether or not a contract was awarded in situations where her company is a partner on a bid.

Ed Cooney requests that members go back to their own businesses and take a look at some of the regulations that they deal with everyday and bring those that impede doing businesses and achieving goals to the Task Force at the next meeting. He wants members to have suggestions for improvement and some ideas as to how the Task Force can move forward. He reiterates that the ultimate goal of those changes would be to grow the economy of Rhode Island

Attorney General Kilmartin makes another statement about communication and breaking down some of the traditional barriers. He states that one of the reasons that The Office is in constant contact right now with the General Treasurer is on the issue of pension fraud. He states that the Treasurer's office will take the lead on the project but that The AG's Office is working along with them because at some point The Office will be involved.

The Attorney General states that it is important to forget territorial arguments and that likeminded people who have the same ultimate goals and are working in good faith can accomplish a lot and save taxpayers a lot of money at the same time. He remarks that doing so will help with getting rid of the stigma and the negative perception that people have in the state. He asks the Task Force to recommend members if they think that any business sector or type is not currently represented.

#### **4. Scheduling**

The Attorney General and the Task Force agree to quarterly meetings, with the next meeting being in September, after Labor Day.

#### **5. Closing Remarks**

The Attorney General thanks the members for taking time out of their schedule to meet. Chairman Cooney makes a final comment reminding members to work on the goals of the task force for the next meeting.

#### **6. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **7. Adjournment**

The Attorney General adjourned the meeting at 10:52am.