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August 7th, 2014, 8:17 pm

State ethics panel begins to take shape

BY DAWNTHEA PRICE / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

A state election official has been named executive director of the as-yet incomplete Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council.

The Virginia Public Access Project, said Chris Piper, who has been election services manager for the Virginia State Board of Elections, will move to the Division of Legislative Services for his new position.

The council, mandated during the General Assembly’s session this year, was designed to collect and review financial filings and disclosures—a legislative response to the accusations of corruption surrounding former Gov. Bob McDonnell.

The 15-person council, which includes former state Sen. John Chichester, who represented Stafford and the

Northern Neck area, remains nine members shy of a full roster.

Others appointed so far are Sen. Tommy Norment, John Bennett, Bill Leighty, Del. Todd Gilbert and former Del. Bill Janis.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe vetoed seed money for the council in June and has said he will seek tougher ethics reform during next year's session.

Other duties include having to "furnish advisory opinions, conduct training seminars and educational programs, and publish such educational materials" for officials at all levels of government in Virginia about conflicts of interest.

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