

STATE OF VERMONT
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAM

In re: Norman Watts
PRB File Nos. 2019-102 and 2020-011

PARTIAL OPPOSITION TO RESPONDENT'S
MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE ANSWER

Navah C. Spero, Esq., Specially Assigned Disciplinary Counsel ("Special Disciplinary Counsel") in this matter, partially opposes Respondent's Motion for Extension of Time to File Answer ("Motion") as follows:

The Petition in this matter was filed on March 18, 2021. Per Rule 14.A, Special Disciplinary Counsel served the Petition of Misconduct on Respondent by certified mail. According to the United States Postal Service, Respondent received the Petition of Misconduct by certified mail on April 2, 2021.¹ Pursuant to Rule 11.D.3, Respondent's answer is therefore due no later than April 22, 2021. As a courtesy, Special Disciplinary Counsel provided the Petition to Attorney Watts by e-mail on March 18, 2021, and it appears Attorney Watts is using that date to calculate his response time.

Respondent's Motion seeks an extension of time until May 28, 2021. Based on Respondent's calculation of when the answer is due, he seeks an extension of more than seven weeks. In reality, an extension of time to May 28 is a five week extension of time. As justification for his request for such a long extension of time, Respondent states that he needs some additional time due to the volume of documents he needs to review and because he plans to be out of state for eight days on a pre-planned vacation.

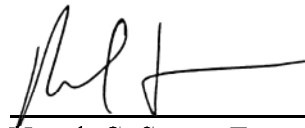
¹ Special Disciplinary Counsel has not yet received the green card reflecting this delivery, but her office has spoken to the local Post Office.

Special Disciplinary Counsel consents to a two week extension of time to accommodate Respondent's stated needs, but opposed any additional extension. Due to delays in the mail, Respondent has already had a copy of the Petition for two extra weeks, meaning a two week extension to May 6 will provide a total of four additional weeks beyond the twenty days set forth in Rule 11.D.3. Special Disciplinary counsel opposes any additional extension of time because the Motion does not set forth the facts necessary to justify a further delay in this matter. The investigation in this matter was previously delayed by Attorney Watts' pre-pandemic travel schedule and his delays in providing documents as part of the investigation, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. Any additional delay is not justified at this time.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, Special Disciplinary Counsel asks the Hearing Panel to grant a two week extension to May 6, 2021.

Dated: Burlington, Vermont
April 7, 2021



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