



Town of Shelburne, Vermont

CHARTERED 1763

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Shelburne Ethics Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2016

Attendance: Committee Members Lee Suskin, Tom Little, Michael Ashoosh, Bill Deming, Gwen Webster;
Alternate Pete Gadue
Also present: Josh Dein, Selectboard member

- 1) Call to Order. Lee Suskin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:14 am.
- 2) Review of Agenda. The Committee reviewed the proposed Agenda and made no changes to it. A copy of the Agenda is attached to these Minutes.
- 3) Public Comment. Josh Rein introduced himself and said he was attending meetings of all Town boards and committees to familiarize himself with them in his role as a new member of the Selectboard.
- 4) Review of Minutes of August 11, 2015 Meeting. The Committee reviewed the draft Minutes of its most recent meeting, August 11, 2015, and deferred action on them until its next meeting.
- 5) Discussion of Committee Member Biographic Statements and Photographs. The members introduced themselves to Josh Dein and described their prior public service. They agreed to submit bios to the Chair for posting on the Committee's Web page.
- 6) Discussion of Planning the Upcoming Training of Public Officials on the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Ordinance. The Chair shared his recent discussions on this topic with Town Manager Joe Colangelo. Nothing has been planned yet; the Chair will continue his discussions with the Town Manager and the Selectboard about who will take the lead in planning and putting on the training. A concern was raised about whether Ethics Committee involvement could impair its independence or objectivity in the event of an actual case, depending on the nature and extent of the Committee's involvement in the training (e.g., answering questions about actual or hypothetical scenarios). The Chair will take this into consideration in his discussions with the Town Manager. It was noted that the Town has new Town Attorneys, who might have a fresh perspective on the training. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns also have training resources available.

The consensus was that the training should be in the fall.

- 7) Discussion of Whether the Committee Should Recommend Any Revisions to the Ordinance. Bill Deming asked whether we are a "watchdog" committee, i.e., should the Committee be proactively reviewing actions of Town commissions, boards, and committees for problems that could lead to potential ethics and conflict of interest concerns. The Ordinance could be revised to add that role. Tom

Little said that the Ordinance does not set the Committee up to function in that capacity; the Committee needs to retain its objectivity as a fact-finder and quasi-judicial body.

The Chair asked whether under the Open Meeting Law, a member of a public body can have a series of telephone conversations, without there being a quorum on any call, for the purpose of achieving a consensus on a pending issue. He will put this on the Agenda for the next meeting, and in the meantime check with the VLCT for resources on the issue. Also on the Agenda will be Tom's question about whether a meeting must be warned if a quorum of members happen to be attending a different public meeting or event at the same time.

8) Discussion of Any Other Matters Raised by Committee Members Related to Ethics and Conflicts of Interest of Town Public Officials.

9) Next Meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 6, at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Little
Clerk *Pro Tempore*

Shelburne Ethics Committee
Special Meeting
April 7, 2016
8:00 AM
Shelburne Town Offices
Meeting Room 2

Agenda

- Planning the upcoming training of public officials on the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Ordinance
- A discussion of whether the Committee should recommend any revisions to the Ordinance
- A discussion of any other matters raised by Committee members related to Ethics and Conflicts of Interest of Town Public Officials
- A discussion of any other matters raised by the public related to Ethics and Conflicts of Interest of Town Public Officials.