

TOWN of SHELBURNE
ETHICS COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, December 14, 2016, 3:00 PM
SHELBURNE TOWN OFFICES
Minutes (draft)

1. Call to Order 3:30 PM. Members present: Suskin, Deming, Ashooh
2. Presentation of the Ethics Committee Budget Request to the Selectboard

The Chair made the following presentation to the Selectboard:

Thank you for the opportunity to present our budget request.

The other committee members with me today are Bill Deming and Michael Ashooh - and Yes, we did warn the meeting.

When we received the invitation from Joe, we did not know if we had a budget.

We met with Peter Frankenburg and learned that we do not have a budget, but the money could be made available from the Reserve Fund if we need it and if approved by the Town Manager.

We have not had to consider asking for funds to obtain an investigator or legal counsel to assist us in that no complaints have been filed with us.

That may change in that ethics and conflicts of interest issues have suddenly made it to the national stage. There are at least two articles in today's New York Times addressing real or potential conflicts involving our President-Elect and many of his cabinet appointees.

If complaints are filed against most town officials, the current system will probably work. We would ask the Town Manager for funds if needed.

But, the current system will raise issues of appearances of conflict of interest if the complaint involves the Town Manager or a Selectboard member.

We therefore request that \$2500 be made available to the committee without prior approval to pay an investigator or legal counsel if needed to hear and resolve a complaint against the Town Manager or a member of the Selectboard.

The members of the Selectboard discussed the proposal and asked a number of questions about the impact on the budget and the mechanism for making the change. The general consensus reached:

- The request is not a request to add money to the town budget; it is a request to change the method for accessing funds already in the town's reserve fund.
- The best way to proceed would be to separate the request from the budget process.
- The Ethics Committee would meet in January to decide whether to request the Selectboard to amend the Ordinance to enable the Committee to access reserve funds if needed to hear and resolve a complaint against the Town Manager or Selectboard without prior approval of the Town Manager.

3. Adjourned at 3:45 PM

Reasonable accommodations shall be provided upon request to ensure that this meeting is accessible to all individuals regardless of disability