

Ethics Committee Meeting
Attending the Selectboard Meeting
May 22, 2018
Town Offices Meeting Room 1

Ethics Committee (EC) Attendees: Lee Suskin, Chair, Tom Little Vice Chair, Mike Ashooh, Bill Deming, Pete Gadue and Diana Vachon, Clerk

Selectboard (SB) members: Jerry Storey, Chair, Jaime Heins, Vice Chair, Josh Dein via phone, Mary Kehoe, and Colleen Parker

Public Members: Peter Frankenburg, Joan Lenes, Dean Pierce, Linda Riell, Chris Robinson, Doris Sage, Tom Tompkins, Sarah Tompkins, Cathy Townsend, Tom Zenaty, and Jane Zenaty

8:27 PM: SB Chair Storey welcomed the Ethics Committee to the meeting. Chair Suskin briefly reviewed his memo drafted 05/22/18 summarizing the major key points the Ethics Committee seeks guidance.

Ms. Kehoe commended the Ethics Committee for their many hard hours of work so far. She applauds everyone on the committee for their efforts and is grateful for their service.

SB Vice Chair Heins agreed and also applauded the outreach the Ethics Committee did to get the Vermont Legislative Research Services (VLRS) Report. The Report was great and thinks the content will help diffuse situations before they escalate to a complaint. He is looking forward to working with the Ethics Committee to narrow the issues to 2-3 before the Ethics Committee holds a public hearing to review the draft changes to the Ethics Ordinance. Mr. Dein will write down his questions for the Ethics Committee.

Ethics Committee Chair Suskin said the Ethics Committee has excellent members that have worked well together for many years. He thanks them all for their service. He also gave a special thank you to Mike Ashooh for coordinating the VLRS project. Mr. Suskin thanked the members of public who have attended our meetings for the last six months.

The general consensus from the Selectboard is to not include aspirational guidelines in the ordinance and instead include them as Town Policies. The Ordinance needs to be a traditional conflict of interest document focusing on financial concerns. They liked the VLRS report and the idea of education and creating a culture adhering to the aspirational guidelines and attitudes. It's a good idea to have aspirational guidelines. They suggested that they may wish to create a separate oath or pledge that our volunteers take stating the expected standard of behavior. The Board and Committee should revive the annual training on Conflict of Interest for all CBC's that would be open to the public. We can start a training following the adoption of the

revised ordinance. The Selectboard also liked the idea of an ombudsperson, advisor, and mediator assistant roles being developed.

Some Selectboard members feel the Ethics Committee should be self-sufficient. And some are troubled by the idea of a third party investigator, because the focus here is on volunteers.

The Selectboard is agreeable to

- increase the Ethics Committee membership to fill possible assistant roles, and these members would need to recuse themselves if the situation escalated to a hearing.
- the standard of proof using preponderance of the evidence (more likely than not).

The Selectboard does not have consensus on funding nor on the issue of recusals.

The Ethics Committee meeting with the Selectboard adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Diana Vachon, Clerk