

# TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH BOARD OF ETHICS

TOWN HALL, 225 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE, RENSSELAER, NY 12144

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## BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING MINUTES January 30, 2018

### Call to Order/Determination of Quorum

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Luria at 7:10 PM

Board Members:

Kathleen Luria	Present	
Mary Boisvert	Present	
Roger Johnson	Present	
Jessica Lansing	Present	
Cheryl Vallee	Absent	
Attorney for the Ethics Board, Joe Slater		Present

### Pledge of Allegiance

### New Board Member/Alternate

Chairperson Luria welcomed new board member Mary Boisvert.

### Reading of Minutes

Mary Boisvert made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes. Ms. Lansing seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

### Old Business

Chairperson Luria discussed Ethics training. Scott Fein will be presenting the board with a brief outline for training for comments and discussion. *Postponed until February 6<sup>th</sup>.*

### New Business

- Financial Disclosure Statements

Ms. Luria discussed Financial Disclosure distribution for 2018 and will contact the Town Supervisor for update.

- Addition to the BOE Internal Rules and Regulations

Mr. Slater explained that there had been confusion on the alternate member's role on the BOE and developed language to add to the board's internal rules and regulations (see attached). Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept this language and add to internal rules and regulations. Ms. Boisvert seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

## **Board of Ethics Officer Nominations**

Chairperson Luria nominated Mary Boisvert for BOE secretary. Ms. Lansing seconded nomination. All members voted in favor. Ms. Lansing nominated Ms. Luria to remain Chairperson. Ms. Boisvert seconded. All members voted in favor.

## **Responding to BOE Correspondence**

Chairperson Luria discussed the need for all questions and concerns to the BOE other than complaints to go to the BOE town email [boardofethics@eastgreenbush.org](mailto:boardofethics@eastgreenbush.org). She stated that this will lead to less confusion and multiple answers and will also keep a record of communication. Discussion on this subject with all members agreed that this was the best way to communicate.

## **Annual Report**

Chairperson Luria asked if there were any additional comments from the BOE that needed to be added to report for 2017. Ms. Lansing added that there were 2 advisory opinions for 2017. Ms. Luria asked Mr. Slater if these reports needed to be copied to the Town Board. Mr. Slater explained that the forms should be sent to the Town Board with annual report, but in redacted form to not disclose confidential information.

## **Board Comments**

- Mr. Johnson stated that there had been communication to the BOE via email from an alternate member and he felt that there was still confusion with some of the responses given. He asked if the BOE minutes were required to have a certain format. Chairperson Luria stated they do not. Mr. Slater agreed. Mr. Johnson stated that the reply to the email in regard to the Webpage BOE homepage was that the person did not have time and asked if that was correct. Ms. Lansing responded that this was not the reply and added that the webpage has been updated other than the two joint meeting minutes. He also stated the alternate was willing to work on the format of the BOE's webpage. Ms. Lansing explained only two town hall staff have permission to access the website. It is not permissible for the public to have access to change the town's website. Mr. Johnson asked who was doing what in regard to training. Chairperson Luria explained that the meeting with Mr. Fein on 2/6 should define more of this and the role that the Board of Ethics will play.
- Ms. Lansing announced that the employee handbook was updated and passed by the Town Board in December 2017 and that each section now refers to sections of the Ethics Law as needed. Discussion followed among members and Mr. Johnson asked if BOE could get copy. Ms. Lansing stated she would have the HR department email to BOE.
- More discussion on training followed. Board members agreed that it is difficult to know much right now before speaking with Mr. Fein. Mr. Slater stated that the BOE should make reference to section #10 of internal rules and regulations regarding BOE's role in training. Mr. Johnson asked if it was possible to give the Town Board an executive briefing and not the entire training. Ms. Lansing stated that Town Board members attend all other training sessions so this would most likely be considered the same. Chairperson Luria stated that we all need to attend training. Discussion followed about the format of the meeting with Mr. Fein. Chairperson Luria called the 2/6 meeting as an executive session meeting to discuss training in the event that confidential matters need to be discussed and also to develop internal training. All members agreed that this was the best format.

## **Public Comments**

- Mr. Cookson clarified his concerns that Mr. Johnson brought to the BOE's attention. He stated that the homepage for the BOE was missing information he feels is necessary. He stated that he has years of experience and would like to develop the material for the page. He stated he has a list of items that should be there, but could not recall what is on his list. He stated that the shading and format of the webpage should be changed as well. Mr. Cookson also stated that he would like to see a more professional look to the minutes of the BOE's meetings. Chairperson Luria suggested he send his list to the BOE's email address.
- Ms. Matters congratulated Chairperson Luria for the unanimous vote for Chairperson and stated that she is an excellent Chairperson. She stated that she agreed with the fact that all BOE members should have a copy of employee handbook. Ms. Matters suggested taping the meetings for minutes and that the timeframe is two weeks for posting.
- Mr. Slater suggested using BOE designated funds for nameplates and a recorder.
- Ms. Boisvert made a motion to expend BOE funds for nameplates and recorder. Mr. Johnson seconded and all board members voted in favor. Chairperson Luria stated she will contact Supervisor on this matter.
- Councilperson Warner congratulated Ms. Luria and Ms. Boisvert on their newly appointed positions. He stated that the minutes missing from the joint meetings were the Town Clerk's. He stated that the Town Clerk does a fantastic job and that there have been some issues relating to the delay and he would speak with her to assist in getting them posted. Councilperson Warner stated that as the liaison to the BOE he could be the communication between BOE and the Board and to just ask him in the future if there are needs. Councilperson Warner asked if the BOE felt comfortable with him calling in to meetings if he could not attend. All board members were comfortable with this. Ms. Lansing suggested if he wanted to speak or ask questions that it is not a call in so that the hearing impaired would not be at a disadvantage. Councilperson Warner agreed. Councilperson Warner asked that the BOE share emails with him that are not of a confidential matter.
- Councilperson Warner then brought to the BOE's attention a conversation that he had with Town Board member Tierney. Councilperson Tierney was contacted by a constituent with the following concerns:
  - 1.) Role of the Alternate- Alternates are members of the audience but if there is a recusal, but still have a quorum does the alternate come in? Mr. Slater stated no, it is not necessary.
  - 2.) What is the role of the Liaison? Councilperson Warner stated that this discussion is beyond the BOE and needs to be a Town Board discussion on liaison roles for all town boards.
  - 3.) Was there a contract with Mr. Fein with a timeline?- Mr. Slater stated that Mr. Fein is working pro bono and will not likely sign into a contract. Chairperson Luria stated that a timeline is something that will be discussed in the meeting with Mr. Fein.
  - 4.) What is the role of the BOE and the Town board regarding monitoring and implementation of training? Defining who is doing what.
  - 5.) Website
  - 6.) How does the BOE communicate to the Town Board after meetings? Councilperson Warner offered to take this on as part of his liaison role.
- Mr. Cookson stated that if Councilperson Warner called in to a meeting and had a question or comment and someone repeated it to him he would be comfortable with that as a hearing impaired constituent.

## **Call to Adjourn**

Chairperson Luria made a motion to adjourn meeting. Ms. Boisvert seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM