

Town of East Greenbush Board of Ethics
Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2016

Board members present – Kathleen Luria, Jessica Lansing, Judy Ehrlich, Cheryl Vallee, Guy Warner

The meeting opened with Pledge of Allegiance.

A review of old business included a complaint which the BOE forward with their recommendation to the Town Board. There is still one outstanding complaint which was discussed and resolved during the Executive Session.

The BOE welcomed new board member, Guy Warner, who was appointed to the board by the Town Board on January 4, 2016. Jack Conway, new Town of East Greenbush Supervisor, asked to address the BOE. Mr. Conway indicated he is very steadfast in his desire for East Greenbush to have a strong Code of Ethics. So much so, he provided a memo outlining his 2016 Ethics Agenda. (Copy attached). Mr. Conway informed the BOE that the Town Board has provided a \$5,000 budget for the BOE; \$2,500 to be appropriated for an attorney to provide legal counsel to the BOE. Mr. Conway introduced, Joe Slater, Esq, who has been appointed as BOE attorney. The remaining \$2,500 will be used to provide training for all town employees, including police officers; provide training for BOE members and various other expenses such as copying and postage. Mr. Conway is committed to making sure all employees get a copy and provide a signature of receipt of the Code of Ethics. Also, all employees who are required by the current Code to complete and file a financial disclosure form will do so by April 15, 2016. It was discussed and agreed that the financial disclosure form be revised before it is provided to these employees for submission by the deadline. It was also agreed upon that if the forms are not complete they would be returned to the employee for completion.

Mr. Conway continued with a brief history, the initial writing of the Code of Ethics and his tenure as chair of the original BOE. Additionally, Mr. Conway, listed in the memo his vision for amendments to strengthen the existing Code. His goal is for East Greenbush to have the best and strongest Code of Ethics.

Mr. Conway and the board exchanged thoughts, ideas, concerns such as criteria to appoint and remove BOE members, consequences for Ethics violations, board members conflicting opinions and updating the current code. Mr. Conway suggested he could draft ideas to share with BOE and the Town Board. Jessica Lansing voiced her concern about Mr. Conway drafting a code to provide to us for review. He is no longer a member of the BOE and/or the general public and it would not be appropriate for him because he would, as supervisor, be subject to the code. Mr. Conway concurred. He and the BOE agreed that the BOE would research codes of ethics of other NY towns with the areas that Mr. Conway wants to address in mind. The BOE will come back with their findings in the next meeting where these will be discussed and a set of public workshops will be held to discuss changes to the code.

In other business, the BOE unanimously elected Kathleen Luria to return as Chair for the year 2016.

The next BOE meeting will be held February 3, 2016 at 7:00pm.

A motion was made by Guy Warner to conclude the meeting, seconded by Judy Ehrlich.

BOE then met for executive session to discuss outstanding complaint.



The Town of East Greenbush

SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

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To: Board of Ethics
From: Jack Conway, Supervisor
RE: Supervisor's 2016 Ethics Agenda
Date: January 6, 2016

Board of Ethics Meeting January 6, 2016

A Code of Ethics functions to ensure that business conducted by Town officials is conducted solely in the public interest and not for the benefit of individuals, family members, business associates, political cronies or any other entity. The current Code of Ethics is narrowly conceived and must be expanded to effectively protect the public interest. A Board of Ethics must have the tools to function as an independent entity. The whole system of monitoring ethics begins with a commitment to ethical conduct on the part of elected officials, a commitment that has previously been lacking.

Board of Ethics

Provide a budget for the Board.

Provide an attorney for the Board on an as-needed basis.

Arrange training of Town employees.

Send members to outside training.

Make sure employees have a copy and have signed for the Code of Ethics.

Monitor financial disclosure.

Code of Ethics

Amend the Code of Ethics to:

Expand the definition of the term ~~Relatives~~;

Broaden financial disclosure requirements;

Include reasonable nepotism and post-employment limitations;

Expand prohibitions on political activity among Town officials;

Specify criteria for appointment to and removal from Board of Ethics;

Other?

Process for Amending the Code:

Dual approach: Board of Ethics and Town Board independently address the issue.

Cc: Tom Grant
Tina Tierney
Mary Ann Matters
Debbi DiMartino
Joseph Slater