

East Greenbush
Board of Ethics
October 17, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Present:

Board Members: Kathleen Luria, Jessica Lansing, Cheryl Vallee, Judy Ehrlich, Guy Warner
BOE attorney – Joe Slater
Town Board Liaison – Mary Ann Matters

Pledge of allegiance.

Guy Warner made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes from the July 29 2016 meeting. Judy Ehrlich seconded the motion.

Old Business

Kathleen Luria informed the board that the Town Board would be voting on the new ethics code Wednesday, October 19th. Joe Slater asked Mary Ann Matters if there had been any changes to the code since the public hearing. Mary Ann said there were changes to:

Sections:

16(c) No town officer or employee ay engage in **any** activity in any political party while engaged in official town business.

16(d) No town officer or employee may engage in any activity in any political party while engaged in town business.

The words “or organization” were deleted by the Town Board.

Mary Ann said Supervisor Conway does not want another public hearing for these changes and consulted the town attorney at the town board pre meting if it was necessary, which the attorney indicated he “did not think so.” Mary Ann consulted with the Association of Towns general counsel who thought the changes seem substantial enough for another public hearing. The BOE discussed the code and we still have issue with the words “or organization” taken out of the code. Additionally, the BOE would have appreciated being notified of the new changes made by the TB.

New Business

The board then discussed the necessity of training on the new code. Guy Warner said he would be willing to do training. Training needs to be scripted, structured and consistent. Maybe do one session with a group which could be video recorded and would then be available for other groups and new hires to watch. They could then email to ask questions. Jessica indicated there is a new website being developed for the town. Possibly, we could do a link to which could be accessed. Once the law is passed we will ask to meet with the TB regarding training.

Two other issues were discussed. One was attaining a secure location for BOE's confidential documents. The other was the ending of Judy Erlich's term on the BOE and the filling of the alternate positions. Word needs to get to the public that we need people to fill these vacancies. These two issues need to be discussed with the Town Board.

Public Comments

Mary Ann Matters requested we put the following statement on record:

"As liaison to the BOE, I commend you for maintaining your integrity as a wholly independent board. The unfortunate part of the party/organization disagreement is that the town would be best served if the Code focused entirely on what is restricted (i.e. political activities and solicitations) at work and less on who is restricted. At the end of the day, all that matters is that we are all town officers and/or employees and, as such, we are all restricted from engaging in political activities at work. The references to "political party-related" activities is nothing but a distraction. Since the A thru M subsections in Section 16 are so many varied, all eyes will be on all of us for the duration of our employment with the town, the BOE will be OPEN FOR BUSINESS."