



BOARD OF ETHICS

TOWN HALL • 225 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE • RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 13, 2022

The following individuals were present at the above-captioned meeting of the board of ethics (hereinafter, BOE”):

Mary Boisvert, member
Frank Coppa, member
Rick Matters, member
Sean O’Neill, member
Ellen Schwab, member
Joseph Slater, attorney to the board

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. and was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

The meeting proceeded following the acknowledgment of a quorum.

The BOE graciously welcomed Mr. Matters aboard as its newest member.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Ms. Boisvert moved, and Ms. Schwab seconded, the acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on December 9, 2021. Such motion, from the vote on which Mr. Matters abstained inasmuch as he was not present at the subject meeting, was otherwise carried unanimously.
- The BOE discussed the provision of a board secretary, a matter that it had previously discussed and on which former chairperson Johnson had followed up with Supervisor

Conway. Mr. Matters indicated that he would be amenable to handling such duty; however, the consensus of the BOE was to renew its request for such administrative support.

- The BOE reiterated from prior deliberation its recommendation to the town board that all current employees receive formal ethics training from an outside consultant; that, thereafter, all new employees, as part of their orientation, be scheduled for such training; and that such training be recurring for all employees at an appropriate interval (say, every 5 years).

NEW BUSINESS:

- Ms. Schwab moved, and Mr. O'Neill seconded, the designation of Mr. Matters as BOE chairperson for the calendar year 2022; such motion was carried unanimously.
- The BOE raised the issue that the posting of the minutes of its meetings on the town's website is not, in and of itself, sufficient as a formal repository for such official records. The BOE then suggested that the office of the town clerk may be the appropriate administrative venue for the BOE's meeting minutes, that the subsequent posting of such minutes on the town's website should certainly continue as an easy and transparent means of public access, and that Mr. Matters shall follow up with Councilor Fritz regarding this issue.
- The BOE discussed the filing of financial disclosure forms (by town officers and employees who are required to do so) for calendar year 2022, recalling that the town clerk has heretofore graciously and consistently distributed such forms to such individuals during the month of March in advance of the April 15th filing deadline. Ms. Schwab indicated that she would confirm this with the town clerk.
- The BOE discussed the preparation of its 2021 annual report and timely submission thereof to the town board. At the recommendation of Mr. Slater, the BOE proceeded to identify the substance of such report so that it may be submitted to the town board via Councilor Fritz for its review and acceptance at its regular meeting presently scheduled to be held on February 16, 2022. Mr. O'Neill then moved, and Ms. Boisvert seconded, the approval of the report content, with the understanding that a draft of such report will be circulated by Mr. Matters to all members and to Mr. Slater for review before it is finalized; such motion was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A summary of statements offered by members of the public is as follows:

Mr. Lee Cookson:

- The town's e-mail inbox for ethics-related subject matter should be checked regularly to ensure responsiveness to senders.
- The required ethics training should be regularly scheduled for all, not just some, employees.
- The BOE should be proactive in auditing other town employees for ethics-code compliance.

Mr. David Terpening:

- BOE members should be compensated.
- Inquired as to the scope of the BOE's authority.
- Recommended that the ethics-related section of the town's website clarify that (1) advisory opinions are rendered by the BOE at the request of town employees, only (i.e., not members of the general public) and (2) that ethics-related complaints submitted to the ethics board can be filed by anyone (i.e., town employees and/or members of the general public). Also inquired as to the procedural formalities that are followed relative to the processing of advisory-opinion requests and ethics complaints received by the BOE.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. O'Neill moved, and Ms. Boisvert seconded, the adjournment of the meeting at 8:30 p.m.; such motion was carried unanimously.

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The foregoing meeting minutes were approved by all members of the BOE.



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RICK MATTERS