

## Ethics Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 03, 2011

The meeting began at 7 pm in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Members attending: Richard Rubenstein, Laurie Noonan, Robert Garofalo, Ira Forman

Non-voting member/Ethics Board Counsel attending: Jeannette Koster

### 1. Regular Business:

- a. The minutes of the February 17, 2011 minutes were distributed.
- b. Attendance was noted.

### 2. President's Comments:

- a. Richard made revisions to the Disclosure Form based on discussions from the previous Committee meeting. The newly revised form was again distributed to the Committee for review.
- b. Richard indicated that he will present the revised form and Draft Amendments to the Town Ethics Code at the upcoming Town Board Work session on March 22, 2011.

### 3. New Business:

- a. The current revision of the Disclosure Form was reviewed by the Committee.
- b. Members reviewed all comments received from Town and Planning Board members and made additional amendments to the draft Disclosure Form to help make the form easier to complete. Typographical corrections to the form were also made.
  - i. Jeannette suggested that the types of interests and obligations need to be included on the form.
  - ii. The Committee unanimously voted to include seasonal employees on the revised form.
  - iii. Further refinements to the definition of "Family Member" were made to the Form.
- c. The Committee members agreed that a Mission Statement should be prepared, but presented as a separate document from the Disclosure Form.
- d. Recommended changes to the Draft Amendments to the Town Ethics Code were reviewed.
- e. Examples of Ethics Code language from other municipalities were reviewed, including the Ethics Code from Kennebunkport, Maine were reviewed. It was agreed that recommendations for further refinements to the language of the Code would be tabled until the current revisions are approved for the 2011 year.
- f. The list of Town employees and Approval Board members who are required to complete the Disclosure Form was reviewed. The Ethics Committee agreed that the members of the Board of Assessment Review should be included on the list. In addition, the heads of all Advisory Boards and all members of policy-making boards, including members of the Ethics Committee, should be required to complete the Disclosure Form.
- g. The Committee members agreed that the definition of "Approval Board" should be included in the Town Ethics Code.
- h. It was agreed that the Committee will recommend to the Town Board that the Town Clerk hold all completed Disclosure Forms. The forms will be sealed and only made available for the required annual review or if there is an inquiry. The Committee members agreed that:
  - i. The Forms will be housed with the Town Clerk.
  - ii. The Forms will be kept confidential
  - iii. Disclosure Form language will be included in the Town Ethics Code.

- i. Jeannette informed the Committee that if there is a FOIL request to review a form, then the Town has a ten day window to respond.
- j. Richard read Bob Astorino's letter to the County regarding a New York State review of the Ethics Code of thirty municipalities in the State. Westchester County's Ethics Code was included in the review. The findings of the review were provided in a Global Report. Some of the highlights of the letter included:
  - i. The report provided minimum standards for all municipalities.
  - ii. All governments are required to establish an Ethics Code &/or Standards.
  - iii. A Code of Ethics should be adopted with the intent to disclose interests and holding of investments.
  - iv. All officials and employees should receive a copy of the Ethics Code.
  - v. All governments should offer training on the provisions and requirements of the Ethics Code.
  - vi. Whistle blower provisions should be included in the Code.
  - vii. The Board of Ethics should review all Disclosure Forms completed.
- k. The County Ethics Code definitions of official, employee and relative were reviewed by the Committee.

4. Next Steps:

- a. Richard again agreed to work on the above mentioned revisions to the form to present to the Town Board.
- b. Jeannette agreed to draft the suggested amendment language before the Town Work session on March 22, 2011.
- c. The Committee decided to review the Mission Statement drafted by Joan Landzberg at the next scheduled meeting since Joan was not available at this session.
- d. The Committee members agreed to schedule the next meeting after the upcoming Town Board Work session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.