

## **ETHICS BOARD**

### Meeting Minutes

*August 14 2012*

*Present:* Walton Zelley, Bill Gregory, Melissa Hermans, Leonard Barham, Linda Gabaccia (TB member)

*Next meeting:* September 11 2012, 7:00pm Town Hall Conference Room

Chair Walt Zelley called the meeting to order and set the Agenda for the evening with the following items to be considered:

1. Call to order and registering of attendance
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Welcome to new members
4. Assignments
5. Setting of meeting times
6. Citizens' complaints
  - How inform public of how to submit them
  - Clarification of appropriate subjects of these complaints
  - If Board of Ethics takes action to whom should its recommendations be directed?
7. Workshop on the Code of Ethics for Town office holders and employees?
8. Membership roster – additions and corrections
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

Minutes of last meeting were unavailable so reading was deferred until next meeting.

Chair welcomed new members Leonard Barham, Melissa Hermans, and Philip Wellner (who was not present). Contact information, including email addresses, was exchanged.

Melissa Hermans volunteered to keep minutes.

Meeting times were discussed. It was agreed to meet at 7pm on the second Tuesday of every month. However, the Code of Ethics says that committee will meet the third Thursday of every month. This must be corrected, either through revision of code or change of meeting day. In the meantime, it was agreed to meet next on Tuesday, September 11 at 7pm.

A discussion of citizens' complaints followed. Protocol was explained to new members, including:

- the type of complaint that the ethics board reviews according to Town ethics code,
- what we are able to do for the citizen,
- how we communicate to the citizen that the complaint has been received,
- how we notify the citizen of outcome,
- how we inform the Town board members of our recommendations,
- how we ensure that the Town board addresses our recommendation according to Town policy

A possible plan was discussed for educating new members in the current code. Linda Gabaccia encouraged the board to begin a review and possible revision of the current ethics code as advised by the New York State Attorney General for every municipality. Bill noted that the Columbia County ethics code could be a resource. Linda noted that the Massachusetts State ethics code is a good model. It was decided that we should begin the process as mandated by the state and come to the Town board with our suggestions for revision of the code as it gels with the Town policy manual, which is also in the process of revision and review.

It was suggested that the following steps could be followed as future business:

- Educate new ethics board members – they will start by studying the code
- Revising code
- Introducing revisions to Town board
- Training future Town office holders and employees in revised code

The membership roster was revised and Len Barham noted that the roster should be updated on the Town of Copake website.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, seconded and unanimously passed.

**ADDENDUM:** As per later conversation with Linda, Walt Zellely can't make it to the September 11 meeting because of a previous engagement so we may reschedule or we may meet without Walt that time.