

Town of Thompson
Ethics Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 7, 2015

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Jimmy Andrews Ray Dewey Kathleen Herbert Gary Hopkins Al Landry		Jason Akana* * - Potential new member

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM

2. Approval of Minutes from December 10, 2014 meeting

Ray motioned, Al 2nd. Unanimous.

Ray brought up the section of the minutes that discussed withdrawing/recusing from a vote, however it was agreed that the minutes had enough clarification, Kathleen motioned to accept as is and the vote was unanimous.

3. Citizens' Comments

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4. Discussion of Draft Ethics Code to include

a. Discussion of definition of immediate family

Kathleen gathered the definition of immediate family from several sources. The group discussed the variations in depth, one by one. We also discussed the "why" of an Ethics Statement to try and focus the process.

We ultimately chose a formal, dictionary definition as the base and created a final, encompassing definition that used pieces of several formal and informal sources. The Ethics Statement includes review and appeal processes that compensate for the encompassing nature of the definition chosen. Our goal is not to eliminate the best and most qualified individual for the responsibility, no matter who that individual is or who they may be related to. Our goal is to mitigate and eliminate nepotism and cronyism.

As a consensus, we agreed; to use the term "household" versus "one roof" and the definition must include a reference to cohabitating partners with a point to clarify cohabitating.

We also discussed other areas of the town, such as the Fire Department and town sports. This discussion included FOIA requirements among other arbitrary points that are unrelated to our charge. Kathleen mentioned that town sports would not be covered by our Ethics Statement.

As an example of challenges to an Ethics Commission, Kathleen mentioned the recent Chris C. trip to a professional football game with allegedly all expenses paid for by a third party. The group discussed the scenario, including the perceptions created and the justification that was eventually used.

Ray then asked for a final clarification from the group to include in the revised draft Ethics Statement.

b. Discussion of presentation to Board of Selectmen

Due to a prior responsibility for the Board of Education, Kathleen cannot present to the Board of Selectmen on January 20, 2015 and has rescheduled for February 3, 2015. At that time, Kathleen will not be delivering the Board our working draft, however will review with them, at their behest, what we have included in our draft to date. Kathleen will also let the Board know there are no expected concerns with the established timeline largely due to the increase in our meeting schedule.

5. Committee Comments

Ray will be cleaning up the typos in the current draft and Kathleen will also keep an eye out when the next draft is released. Ray will also make edits based on Paul Baer's comments from the December 10, 2014 EAC meeting.

Ray also brought to our attention particular court filings related to the exempt status of some agencies within the town, such as the Department of Education. This clarifies any questions the group may have had with regards to these agencies.

There was a small discussion about Zoning and the Board of Ed along with a small discussion about gifts.

Kathleen reviewed the agenda of our next meeting which will be focused on gifts.

6. Citizen Comments

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7. Adjourn

Jimmy motioned to end the meeting, Gary 2nd.

The EAC adjourned at 8:13PM

Next Meeting:

January 21st 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jimmy Andrews

Secretary, Ethics Advisory Committee