

Town of Thompson
Ethics Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 21, 2015

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Jimmy Andrews Kathleen Herbert Al Landry	Ray Dewey Gary Hopkins	Jason Akana* * - Waiting to be sworn in.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

2. Approval of Minutes from January 7, 2015 meeting

Kathleen entertained a motion for approval, Al called the motion, Jimmy 2nd, approved unanimous.

3. Citizens' Comments

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4. Discussion of Draft Ethics Code to include

a. Review of Immediate Family discussion from prior meeting

Just a quick review of the changes Ray had made to the latest draft in which there are still changes to be made based on recommendations from the January 7th EAC meeting.

b. Discussion of gifts

Much of the subsequent discussion is based around Section 4, Sub-Section E of the latest version to date of the Draft Proposed Code of Ethics. Numbered references are sub-sections of Sub-Section E.

Most of the discussion was specific to various scenarios; abstract, practical and historical, to help guide the direction of the groups' thought process. We discussed what we liked and disliked about various outcomes of other historical references, and what potential outcomes could be with theoretical abstract scenarios. The group is in general agreement about much of the spirit of the draft as written with dissenting ideas grouped more around method versus spirit.

One of the ideas that is different from many of the Code of Ethics from other districts is the accepting of larger gifts on behalf of the Town. Understanding the cultural significance of gifts in general, it has not escaped the EAC that there are times when it is acceptable, or even necessary, to be a gracious recipient of a gift. In these instances, we feel that the gift would be given to the Town and then offered to the residents of the Town in a manner contingent upon the gift itself. For example, a plate of cookies accepted and then offered to the Town in a publically traversed, commonly accessed, area. Another example may be a pair of professional sports tickets, accepted on behalf of the Town and offered to the Town in the form of a raffle. There are countless instances where this could come up. Al had also mentioned that the Ethics Commission

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could also work with the Town's organization for quick turnover of a gift that would be suited for their organization and develop a formal plan on how to submit a gift to the town. Jimmy brought up the question of various 'sponsorships' of gifts, such as a car donated by a large soft drink distributor and then that car having ads plastered all over it. The group addressed this by stating that the discretion of the Commission would likely not allow that to happen. This is specific to how "Gift" is outlined in Section 4, Sub-Section E of the latest version to date of the Draft Proposed Code of Ethics. Gifts from the general public were also discussed and it was felt we need to spend a little more time discussing the finer details of that scenario.

The group felt that sub-section 11 could use a small edit to clarify when a meal is not a gift. Al floated the scenario of a key note speaker being asked to stay for the meal. The group discussed, Kathleen proposed no 'business' meals and Al also liked that idea.

Sub-section 13 is also in need of an edit, it is confusing as written and seems overly restrictive.

The group also reviewed sub-sections 1-13 individually and discussed each.

c. Discussion of presentation to Board of Selectmen scheduled for February 3, 2015

Kathleen discussed the outline of the presentation to the Board of Selectmen. Al would like to discuss the Selectmen's feedback at our next meeting. Kathleen then discussed our next meeting agenda.

5. Committee Comments

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6. Citizen Comments

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7. Adjourn

The EAC adjourned at 7:59PM

Next Meeting:

February 4th 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jimmy Andrews

Secretary, Ethics Advisory Committee