

Town of Thompson  
Ethics Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 4, 2015

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Jimmy Andrews Al Landry Ray Dewey Jason Akana	Kathleen Herbert Gary Hopkins	

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2015 meeting**

Al motioned, Jimmy 2<sup>nd</sup>, approved unanimously.

Ray requested a correction to Section 4(b) of the minutes.

“Al also brought up the term ‘disruptive’ as it is mentioned in Section J the definitions mentioning that it doesn’t sit well, along with the term ‘personal opinion.’ “

**3. Citizens’ Comments**

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**4. Discussion of Draft Ethics Code to include**

Ray passed out some questions to address at tonight’s meeting.

Reviewing the definitions:

It was discussed and agreed we should change the term “working day” to “business day.”

Ray moved on to “declaratory ruling.” Al felt that it was more of a declaration than a declaratory ruling. Ray wondered if perhaps it was more of a declaratory finding. Al agreed that declaratory finding does seem to fit better, the group didn’t disagree. The term “probable” is still a sticking point. It will be put on the agenda for our next meeting.

For “elector,” it was agreed that we should remove the word “natural.”

a. **review of revised sections of Code from February 18, 2015 meeting to include Use of Influence (Section 4(F)) and Social Media (Section 4(J)), and**

b. **review other issues beginning at Section 6(C)4 still needing discussion.**

We started off with the discussion of section 4(E) to include a line to address business to business meals which are not part of official Town business. Those interactions fall outside the scope of this Ethics Code.

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The group discussed Section 4(F) and felt that it should go back on the agenda for the next meeting.

Section 4(H) was discussed, letting Ray know that we had already addressed this in a previous meeting, where 4(H) will ultimately be removed and replaced with specific scenarios regarding conflict of interest as it relates to the Board of Finance and situations where a conflict is to occur. Ray referenced 4(B[5]) offering it as a potential way to cover that conflict. Al felt that it didn't go far enough. The group discussed the topic further leaning towards what was decided in a previous meeting.

With section 4(J), the group liked Lopatcong's social media solution and it was proposed that our definition of inappropriate comments be merged with Lopatcong's writeup.

Al took the lead into section 4(N) and the group discussed. It was decided that the term "knowing" should be moved to a different part of the sentence. "A public official or employee **knowingly** aiding, abetting, or assisting another public official or employee in the ~~knowing~~ violation of this Code shall itself be a violation."

Al asked Ray to include "file with the Town clerk" to section 5(D).

There was a spirited discussion surrounding the appointment of the Ethics Commission, specifically surrounding whether or not it is a unanimous appointment or a majority appointment. A particular topic that Jason brought up was the selectmen explaining a "nay" vote in the appointment process. Points and counter-points were discussed and it was agreed that more discussion was needed on this topic.

Section 6(F) seems fine.

Section 7 looks good.

**5. Committee Comments**

Ray asked about any Zoning Board ethics and Al recommended getting the by-laws from the Town office.

**6. Citizens' Comments**

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**7. Adjourn**

Ray motioned to adjourn the meeting, Jimmy 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meeting was adjourned at 9:06PM.

Next Meeting:

March 18<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jimmy Andrews

Secretary, Ethics Advisory Committee