

CITY OF STAMFORD
Board of Ethics
Stamford Government Center
January 15, 2020

Minutes

Present

Allan Lang, Chair

Fred Springer, Alternate

Myrna Sessa, Member

Monica Smyth, Member

Christine Dzujna, Member

Thomas Hynes, Member

Kevin Quinn, Alternate

Steve Conover, Board of Ethics Counsel

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lang at 7:09 p.m.

1. Subject to a suggested edit, Ms. Smyth made a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting, second by Mr. Hynes, unanimously passed.
2. The Draft Advisory Opinion for Jonathan Winkel was approved subject to a suggested edit that the opinion should only be relied on in this matter and is not intended to set precedent for any future advisory opinion requests or complaint. A motion was made to approve the minutes by Mr. Lang, second by Ms. Smyth, unanimously passed.
3. A motion to modify the agenda was made by Ms. Sessa to move for an extension of time in the Figueroa matter, second by Ms. Smyth, passed unanimously.

Ms. Sessa explained that, in light of extraordinary circumstances that resulted in significant delays and prevented the commencement of public hearings within the 30-day period proscribed by the Ethics Code, it was necessary to retroactively extend the time period to commence the public hearings on the complaint filed by Lindsey Miller against Anabel Figueroa dated June 28, 2019, to January 15, 2020. Ms. Smyth moved to approve the extension of time, second by Mr. Lang, unanimously passed.

4. Mr. Lang noted that it would be helpful for all Board members, especially incoming members, to have a compiled set of guidelines regarding procedures for filing Board meeting minutes, public notices, and conducting other Board administrative duties. It was agreed that Administrative Assistant, Kimberly Hawreluk, will confirm with the City & Town Clerk the procedures that are to be followed, and she and Ms. Dzujna will then coordinate on preparing appropriate guidelines.
5. Discussion regarding Code of Ethics section 19-14C(1)(d) on the formalizing or posting of oral advisory opinions by the board: a discussion ensued about whether it's sufficient to have oral opinions exist solely within Board meeting minutes. It was agreed that the Board's longstanding policy to issue oral opinions when requested by anyone seeking an advisory opinion from the Board is appropriate, as is the practice of reflecting the oral opinion in the minutes of the meeting where the opinion was given. In such cases, the

minutes will reflect that the Board “reconfirms its policy of issuing an oral opinion when a requestor requests an oral opinion.” It was also agreed that Mr. Lang will discuss the Board’s policy regarding the issuance of oral opinions with the City & Town Clerk and report back at our next meeting.

6. A motion to modify the agenda was made by Mr. Lang to address the invitation extended to Mr. Conover to attend the Legislative & Rules Committee of the Board of Representatives meeting on January 21st to discuss and/or answer questions about the Committee’s proposed revisions to the Code of Ethics. Ms. Dzujna seconded, passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued about the purpose of the invitation and Mr. Conover’s expected role at the meeting. It was agreed that Mr. Conover will seek clarification from City Counsel as to whether he is expected to attend as a municipal code of ethics subject matter expert, or as counsel to the Board of Ethics. If his role is expected to be the latter, he will decline the invitation. It was also agreed that if Mr. Conover does attend the meeting, he may convey to the Committee that the Board would like the opportunity to provide input on the proposed Code revisions but that, in any case, the Board is prepared to carry out its duties with respect to any revisions that are ultimately adopted.

7. At 8:10 p.m. adjournment was moved by Ms. Smyth, second by Mr. Springer, unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted.

Christine Dzujna, secretary