

## **City of Valparaiso Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes Tuesday, September 15, 2015, 5:30-6:30pm, Valparaiso City Hall**

Attending: Analisa Warring (Chair), Bill Oeding (City Ethics Officer/Ex Officio), John Bowker (SEAC Exec. Board), James Old (member), Mike Porter (member), Rob Walsh (member), Jon Schmaltz (Advising Attorney/Ex Officio), and Tim Sutherland (Secretary).

At 5:35 Chair Analisa Warring called the Commission meeting to order, with a quorum present (a 5:30 Executive Session was not needed). The prior meeting minutes from July 21, 2015 were approved, and well as the proposed agenda for the current meeting.

It was noted that Dorothy (Bass), John, and Tim attended the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC) dinner and training session for Board and Commission members on August 31. There was discussion with suggestions to take to the SEAC for how training could be improved in the future, utilizing better cases, scenarios, and examples. In the past the Valpo Commission developed PowerPoint slides, and identified videos for training which can be used again in the future. Upcoming SEAC Board meetings are on September 16 and November 18. Bill updated the group concerning Valpo's train the trainer program for City employees with Steve Antonetti (Parks), Tom Zimmerman (Police), and Terry Morgan (Fire) leading these efforts. Issues that have received discussion at these sessions so far include handling hostile work environments, how to avoid retaliation should someone complain, maintaining confidentiality, how to report an ethical problem with a supervisor, etc.

Jon described how the Valparaiso Ethics Ordinance outlines a formal process for a making a complaint. Confidentiality is included in the nature and scope of the process. The ordinance can apply to both city employees and elected non employees. Written complaints can be sent to Bill (City Ethics Officer) and should be notarized to authenticate the witness (a person cannot be anonymous). Jon went into further detail about when complaints might come directly to the Commission, the role of the City's Employee Handbook, when complaints would be discussed in an Executive Session vs. regular Commission meeting, determining "probable cause", subpoenas, conducting an investigation, when to make results public, maintaining process integrity, etc. Flow charts to help understand the complaint process have been developed in the past and are at <https://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/index.aspx?NID=116>. Overall goals are to prevent problems, but also to not sweep problems under the rug, and as a whole to benefit the City and its employees in all that is done.

The group briefly discussed the "Community Civility Counts" initiative in Lake County <http://www.garychamber.com/uncategorized/community-civility-counts> led by the Gary Chamber of Commerce and the Times of Northwest Indiana. John pointed out that the City Council of Valparaiso also has a recently approved resolution <https://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/3422> that accentuates the positive civility expectations for the Council and citizens in public meetings and local decisionmaking.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20pm. The next meeting of the Commission will be on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at City Hall, with executive session at 5:30 (if needed), and regular session at 5:35. Minutes submitted by Tim Sutherland.