

City of Valparaiso Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes **Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 5:30-6:30pm, Valparaiso City Hall**

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

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 September 15, 2015 were approved, and well as the proposed agenda for the current meeting.

The first order of business was an update regarding the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC). Dorothy Bass shared planning for the March 2 SEAC annual "Ethics Summit" meeting to be held at Avalon, in Hobart/Merrillville. The speaker will be Federal Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer. Judge Pallmeyer is currently U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, and has background in ethics through degrees from University of Minnesota and Valparaiso University. The next SEAC meeting is November 18, at 8:30am, in Portage.

Bill Oeding reported that training for City employees has been completed thanks to "train the trainers" Tom Zimmerman, Terry Morgan, and Steve Antonetti. The dilemma for the future is continuing with internally developed ethics training vs. utilizing training from SEAC (or perhaps a combination of both). Next steps are to offer training annually for any new City employees, to consider training for members of City Boards/Commissions, and to get a copy of the Ethics Ordinance sent to newly elected officials (accompanied by letter from Analisa and Bill).

Administering an ethics survey to City employees was discussed. Administering electronically would seem to be the preferred option e.g. the ability to efficiently compile/assess results, yet there are drawbacks. Not all City employees have email accounts through the City, and there needs to be an authentication method to ensure confidentiality. Bill will consult with administrators involved with Human Resources and IT to see what is possible as a best option.

As has been periodically considered in the past, the Ethics Commission had a discussion about how members, who serve voluntarily, because they (and sometimes spouses) are often quite involved in the community in multiple ways, can avoid perceptions of conflicts of interest. Recusal on certain issues is an option. It is also helpful to have members serve for multiple years so the Commission has continuity and develops historical knowledge that benefits new members. Two current members who have the most Archival info regarding the Commission are Bill and Tim. Analisa and Bill will work with Jon Schmaltz to determine membership terms and status for all members for 2016 year (some terms end in 2015 and some in 2016).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30pm. The next meeting of the Commission will be on Tuesday, January 12, at City Hall, with executive session at 5:30 (if needed), and regular session at 5:35. Minutes submitted by Tim Sutherland.