ETHICS COMMISSION
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2023
7:00 P.M.
SPECIAL MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order
   – Chairman Bruce Gelston called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
   - Attendance: Bruce Gelston, Chairman; Valerie Almada; Paul Stuhlman; Kevin Staehly
   - No in-person audience attendance

2. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting of October 14, 2021
   - A copy of the draft minutes for the 10/14/2021 Special Meeting was circulated to the members for review.
   - **Paul Stuhlman motioned to accept the minutes of the 10/14/2021 Special Meeting without amendment**
   - **Valerie Almada seconded the motion.**
   - **Motion passed unanimously**

3. Unfinished Business
   - There was no unfinished business to address

4. New Business

   A. Commission Reappointment Discussion and Recommendation
      a. Valerie Almada confirmed to the Commission that she would like to serve another term.
         i. **Kevin Staehly made a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the reappointment of Ms. Valerie Almada for the 3-Year Term expiring 6/30/2025**
         ii. **Bruce Gelston seconded the motion**
         iii. **There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
      b. Chairman Gelston confirmed to the Commission that he would like to serve another term.
         i. **Ms. Almada made a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the reappointment of Mr. Bruce Gelston as Chairman of the Ethics Commission for the 3-Year Term expiring 6/30/2026**
         ii. **Mr. Stuhlman seconded the motion**
         iii. **There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
      c. Chairman Gelston advised the Commission of the vacancy of a 3-Year Term expiring 6/30/2023 which needed to be filled.
         i. He referred the commission members to the Volunteer Application submitted by Janie Pittendreigh on February 2, 2022.
         ii. It being over a year since its submission, the Commission discussed getting in touch with Ms. Pittendreigh before making any decisions on

the application.

iii. Mr. Stuhlman volunteered to contact Ms. Pittendreigh and report back to the Commission on whether she was still interested in serving, and if so, what dates she was available to meet with the Commission.

B. Other Discussion

a. Mr. Staehly mentioned to the Commission that he had been become a member of the Ray Board, a non-profit organization in town that oversees a private trust that is used to fund vocational education at Nathan Hale-Ray High School. He explained that, it being a private organization, he did not believe there was any conflict with serving on the Ethics Commission, but that he felt it was important to make this membership clear since the Ray Board and East Haddam Board of Education work collaboratively to create a budget for various programs at the High School.

b. Mr. Stuhlman asked a question about awareness of the Commission among Town employees and volunteers, as well as among the general citizenry of the town. The commission members took a few minutes to review the discussion from 10/14/21.

i. The Commission members each weighed in with some perspective regarding the current duties of the Commission as well as its general awareness in town.

ii. Mr. Stuhlman asked whether an announcement should be made to the general public, regarding the existence of the Commission. Mr. Staehly provided perspective that such an announcement should be paired with a solicitation for volunteers, so the optics of which did not seem to be implying there was a need for the Commission; that something *unethical* might be occurring.

iii. Ms. Almada expressed concern of the possibility that promoting awareness of the Commission may result in retaliatory submissions of grievances. Chairman Gelston, in response, highlighted the narrowness of the language used in the Code of Ethics and that there are very specific criteria for submitting a complaint.

iv. Ms. Almada volunteered to begin corresponding with Linda Zemienieski regarding working with the Board of Selectman to come up with a time that the Commission members could discuss with the Board the process of amending the process of how Town employees and volunteers both receive and acknowledge the Code of Ethics. The process would ideally serve as an educational component for not only bringing more awareness to the Code of Ethics, but also on how to report any suspected violation to the Commission.

C. Next Meeting Date (TBD)

a. A general discussion took place about the Commission members' schedules, room availability, and that a Special Meeting may be held as needed after Mr. Stuhlman has a chance to speak to Ms. Pittendreigh and Ms. Almada has a chance to speak with Ms. Zemienski regarding the aforementioned topics.

b. Mr. Staehly made a motion to hold the next Special Meeting on April 12th at 7 PM, or April 13th at the same time depending on room availability at

the Municipal Office Complex.

c. **Ms. Almada seconded the motion**
d. **There being no additional discussion, the motion passed unanimously**

5. Audience of Citizens

- There was no discussion or comments, there being no public present in the audience. No digital correspondence from the Livestream was received.

6. Adjournment

- Chairman Gelston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 pm.
- Valerie Almada seconded the motion.
- Unanimous Aye.

A video recording of this meeting is available digitally on YouTube at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf8hib7NZKc

You may also access the Town's YouTube Channel from the Town's website: www.easthaddam.org

Respectfully submitted, Kevin Staehly