January 30, 2012

To: Town Council
From: Betty Wassmundt

RE: proposed code of ethics

Now, I want you to think about this. You, the council, are going to vote to enact an ordinance designed to establish the standard of conduct for you. You threw away the code the Board of Ethics proposed; this code is directed by you. The statement of purpose says, "The trust of the public is essential …". Isn't this the ultimate conflict of interest for you to devise a code and, to vote on a code which applies to you? Ethical conduct should prohibit you from participating in any vote where there is even the semblance of impropriety. I submit to you that you must all recuse yourselves from voting on this code.

I urge you to return to the code submitted by the Board of Ethics and to review it only for legalities. Then you may vote on it. That code is the standard of conduct for you and for town employees which the people of Mansfield wanted. The Board of Ethics proposed code is the one that the public should trust.

I submit to you that you are in violation of the current Code of Ethics if you vote on this proposed code; specifically, you are in violation of section 25-4 C1. You have a "personal interest" in the conditions in this code. I've listened, at Personnel meetings, to all the reasons why Councilors Moran, Kochenburger and former councilor Haddad did not want a financial disclosure clause. You have a "personal interest" in the code to be presented this evening. You, any one of you, may not vote on it. Thank you.