

TOWN OF MANSFIELD

ETHICS BOARD

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mansfield Community Center Conference Room

7:00 P.M.

Minutes

Members Present: Nora Stevens, Win Smith, Mike Sikoski, David Ferrero, Eleanor Plank, Mayor Paterson (serving as chair until chair is selected amongst membership)

Staff Present: Matthew Hart, Town Manager, Maria Capriola, Assistant to Town Manager

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Paterson welcomed members of the committee, staff and presenters present. Members of the Committee introduced themselves to one another.

II. SELECTION OF RECORDER

Ms. Capriola agreed to serve as secretary for this meeting of the committee. The Committee will select a secretary from within the membership at a future meeting.

III. PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC SECTOR ETHICS

Ms. Carol Lewis, Ph.D. (Princeton University), professor of political science at the University of Connecticut, consultant and author in the field of public sector ethics, and long-time Mansfield resident provided a brief overview of public sector ethics in local government. Ms Lewis discussed approaches to public sector ethics,

principles behind conflict of interest, and the appearance of impropriety. Ms. Lewis noted that principles of conflict of interest often include: public stewardship; rejecting private gain; maintaining impartial and independent judgment; and upholding public confidence in government integrity. Ms. Lewis also discussed “three rules of thumb” to consider when drafting ethics policies, ordinances, etc: keep the rules as simple as possible to get the job done; tailor the rules to the management and legislative context of the community (no universal, one-size fits all code); and make work better for elected and appointed (volunteer) officials and employees – not impossible.

#### IV. ORIGINS OF THE COMMITTEE AND ETHICS ORDINANCE

Ms. Capriola and Ms. Stevens provided background on the Committee and the complaint procedure it developed in the late 1990’s. As an original member to the Committee, Ms. Stevens noted that the complaint procedure was only utilized once, and that it worked well. Ms. Stevens noted that once the procedures were established, the Committee did not meet, as it has not received any complaints as noted in the complaint procedure. The Committee decided to meet on October 23, 2008 to: review the complaint procedure and determine if any modifications are needed and review the ethics ordinance and determine if any changes should be recommended to Council. Mr. Sikoski, offered two samples of ethics codes to the group: Wilton, CT ethics code and the sample municipal ethics code as drafted by the State of Connecticut in 1995.

#### V. SELECTION OF CHAIR

The group decided to wait on selecting a member as the chair until they have had an opportunity to work with one another. This will be decided at a future meeting.

#### VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria E. Capriola

Assistant to Town Manager