

Raymond Ethics Committee
May 31, 2005
Final Minutes

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Marilyn Semple called to order a meeting of the Raymond Ethics Committee on May 31st, 2005, at 6:30pm, in the High School Media Center.

Committee members also present:

Frank Bourque
Sandra Ellis
Pam Turcotte

Committee members not present:

Pat Larney

Members of the Public present:

Peter Buckingham

The meeting was televised by RCTV. The cameramen were Ron Edgar and Joe Lucafo.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Semple led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Proof of Posting

The Proof of Posting was confirmed by Ms. Semple for today's meeting.

IV. Public Forum

Although there was a Member of the Public present, he did not plan to contribute to the Public Forum, so the Committee moved on to *Agenda Item V, Approval of Minutes*.

V. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Bourque had been unable to open the minutes from the previous meeting, and as such was not cognizant with them. As a result, the minutes were not discussed nor approved and this item was tabled until the next meeting.

VI. Old Business

A. Ethics Committee Training Sessions

The Ethics Committee has performed training at the following boards:

Board of Selectmen (Mr. Bourque & Mr. Larney - May 9th)
Conservation Commission/Capital Improvement Committee (Ms. Ellis & Ms. Semple - May 4th)
Planning Board (Ms. Ellis & Ms. Turcotte - May 19th?)

The following Boards have yet to be trained, but dates are scheduled:

Budget Committee (Ms. Ellis - end of meeting, June 7th)
Zoning Board (Mr. Larney & Mr. Bourque - ~7:30pm, June 8th)

The following Boards have yet to be trained, and no dates are scheduled:

Cable Commission (meets on 4th Wednesday of each month. Mr. Bourque will contact Kevin Wood to get on next meeting agenda, which should be June 22nd.)
Historic District Committee
Recreation Advisory Board
Supervisors of the Checklist
Town Moderators
Trustees of Library
Trustees of Trust Fund
Solid Waste Committee
Town Employees (2 daytime sessions)
4th of July Committee

Mr. Larney has the attendance sheet from the Board of Selectmen training session, and will provide that to Ms. Ellis, who will hold all of the attendance sheets.

As far as the already-held training sessions are concerned, there have been some questions. It was suggested that an additional slide be added to the end of the presentation with some sample questions on it.

Mr. Bourque suggested that the Committee hold one generic open group training session to which any stragglers or non-regularly-meeting board members could be invited. Other suggestions are to determine when the other boards meet and either invite the members to the Ethics Committee meeting, or to crash theirs. Sharon Walls will be providing a schedule of all committee meetings to Ms. Semple. Another option is to post a list of all upcoming training sessions so that people who missed theirs could attend another. Mr. Bourque suggested that this list could be mailed to the homes of people who have yet to be trained, either by snail-mail or e-mail.

Incidentally, the Raymond School Board is not subject to the Ethics Policy, although this is not true statewide.

VII. New Business

A. Previous Election Discussion

Member of the Public Peter Buckingham was present in order to have a discussion with the Committee about something that was published earlier this year in *On The Common*, with the hope that the situation wouldn't happen again. He was not filing a formal inquiry or a complaint. The Committee reminded him to keep the discussion as general as possible and not to name names or give specifics.

Per Mr. Buckingham, the Code of Ethics, section II-7-C states, "No public servant shall...misuse his or her official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election...". However, the On The Common (a taxpayer funded publication) had printed a document from a town board exhorting citizens to

vote no on some particular warrant articles. This problem was compounded when a letter was sent to the Board of Selectmen by the same board apologizing for the mistake made by printing the previous exhortation, but at the same time urging the Selectmen to deny the request for a special town meeting and a revote.

Much of the discussion centered around whose responsibility it was to prevent this sort of thing from happening, and to clarify that although it is not unethical to have an opinion about a subject, taxpayer funds should not have been used to publish that opinion. The Town Leadership has addressed the situation and has come up with a safeguard to prevent it happening again, which is a resolution satisfactory to Mr. Buckingham and he does not plan to pursue it further, but he was interested in hearing the board's suggestions as to what he, or any other towns person, could have or should have done.

On another matter, Mr. Buckingham asked what the procedure would be to have the School Board come under the umbrella of the Town of Raymond Ethics Policy, and wondered why the Ethics Committee hadn't already placed a warrant article to suggest this to the town. He felt that a warrant article from the Ethics Committee would carry more weight than one submitted by a private citizen. The Committee responded that this is only their third year of existence and as such they have been working on fulfilling their charter, and putting procedures in place, and not working on expanding their scope of reference.

B. Code of Ethics Document

Planning Board member Craig Wheeler has generously offered to rewrite some portions of the Code of Ethics in which he has particular experience (small cities program, bidding policy, etc.) and the rewritten sections will be placed on the next ballot.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting date will be Tuesday, June 28, 2005.

Ms. Ellis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm; Mr. Bourque seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra H. Doda