

Raymond Ethics Committee Minutes
June 24, 2003

- I. The Ethics Committee meeting was called to order at 6:30pm, June 24, 2003, at the Raymond Town Hall by Co-chairman, Sandra Ellis.

Committee members present were:

Sandy Ellis
Gretchen Gott
Emery Landis
Marilyn Semple

Co-chair Pat Larney was excused.

Guests present were:

Rick Bates, Raymond Town Manager
Scott Ives, Dunbarton Ethic Committee
Jackie Kennedy, Dunbarton Ethics Committee

There were no members of the public or other public servants present. The meeting was televised by the Raymond Cable Committee.

- II. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Proof of posting was reviewed.
- III. Old Business:
- A. Rick Bates was introduced and the following items were discussed with him.

1. Secretarial help: The committee feels that it is too difficult for a member to keep accurate minutes and also participate in the business of the committee. Rick stated that since there was no budget for the committee this year, that he is not able to provide secretarial coverage. He feels that it would not be possible to squeeze an additional 5-6 hours per meeting necessary to complete the minutes, from an employee's current schedule. However, he stated that if there were in fact a case, i.e. a complaint, then he would provide secretarial help for the duration of the hearing process in order to do verbatim minutes. He suggested that Ann Sharpe or Bette Patterson might be available for hearing minutes if necessary. Scott Ives stated that there might not be a need for verbatim minutes. No decision was made regarding that issue. There was general conversation regarding the need to build money into next year's budget for the committee functions including copying and secretarial assistance.
2. Budget: Rick stated that he will be preparing the budget in August. He stated the committee will need to prepare and submit a budget and then be prepared to support that request. There was discussion about some potential expenses including, in addition to secretarial and copying costs,

payment for speakers, refreshments to serve during training sessions, legal expenses and other expenses not yet determined. Emery Landis volunteered to prepare a budget for the next meeting for review by the committee. Rick stated that he would be able to cover printing costs for this year from the current budget.

3. Education and Training: The committee discussed the training for those covered by the code and the public. Scott Ives discussed the Dunbarton experience, saying that the Ethics Committee had invited members from the various boards and committees to attend specific training sessions. He said that they had also done outreach to the community by going to local organizations. Marilyn asked about the idea of having committee members going to each board or committee meeting. Gretchen stated that the process had been successful for the drafting committee in preparation of the code, in order to hear the thoughts of the members. Rick suggested that the training program be kept active and in front of the public servants and the public. He suggested a combination of annual meetings and other means, such as regular discussions of hypothetical ethical issues. Gretchen suggested that the Ethics Committee publish a case study of the month to give to public servants and the public. Scott Ives suggested that the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) has old case studies. He gave the name of Tom Dunn as a contact person.
4. Legal Support - Sandy asked if independent counsel is available? Rick suggested that NHMA can give general advice on something such as a form but if talking about a specific case, then our town counsel should be contacted. He stated that committee members should not contact legal counsel without going through him. He stated that he feels that it is "easier and cheaper to ask questions of legal counsel up front, than make a mistake."
5. Communication with the public: Sandy asked Rick for an extension with voice mail in order for the public to contact the committee. Rick stated that someone has to be willing to check the voice mail regularly. There was discussion about having the voice mail message give the information that the voice mail would be checked in an increment such as every 3 days. The committee has established an email site (raymondnhethicscommittee@yahoo.com). Rick says that he will make a link on the town web site to our email. He again cautioned the committee about regular checks of the email. Marilyn has offered to check the snail mailbox at the town hall for messages to the committee.
6. Posting Procedures and Minutes: Rick stated that the meeting postings should be forwarded to Bette, who also makes the room reservation at the town hall for the Ethics Committee meetings. The forms for room reservation are available on-line. In addition, the minutes should be forwarded to Bette so that she can post them according to the Right To Know law. There was discussion regarding how detailed the minutes need to be. Rick stated that the law only requires the date, time and any actions taken during the meeting. The draft minutes must be posted

within 144 hours of the meeting. He stated that the hand written notes taken during the meeting could serve as the minutes. There was also a discussion of audio and VCR tapes and whether they can be a legal record of a meeting. Rick stated that he felt that once the meeting minutes were written and approved, then the VCR tape could be destroyed. He stated that there is no case law regarding the use of tapes as the legal record of a meeting.

7. List of public servants covered by the Ethics Code: Rick will provide a list of those covered. The list will need to be updated at least after each election. The secretary will keep the list on file. Reference was made to the fact that the Town Report has a listing of many of the public servants, but that it may not be entirely up to date.
8. Access to code for public servants: Emery stated that everyone, general public and public servants, should have access to the ethics code. Scott stated that when public servants are sworn in, they could be given a copy of the code. There was discussion, but no decision on whether it was sufficient to have people sign a cover sheet saying that they had received the document or whether the signature should indicate that the person had actually read the document. Rick stated that it was probably possible to have employees attest that they had read the document, but he was not sure that volunteers could be required to read the document.

At this point, Rick Bates, Scott Ives and Jackie Kennedy left the meeting.

- B. The committee discussed the forms and made changes to the form (please see attached form) as follows:
 - a. Marilyn suggested that the form have a definition of inquiry and complaint.
 - b. The committee agreed that the forms for inquiry and complaints should be separate sheets with additional lines for writing and a space at the bottom of the sheet for the person making the inquiry to print their name and sign their name. In addition, the email address should be at the bottom of the page.
 - c. Inquiries: the definition developed with the consensus of the committee is as follows: An inquiry is a means for a person to obtain advice and counsel from the Ethics Committee. These inquiries should be general in nature. Please refer to Section IV.C of the Ethic Code.
 - d. Complaints: the definition developed with the consensus of the committee is as follows: A complaint is a process whereby a person can give specific information to the Ethics Committee for their review and finding. Please refer to Code of Ethics Section IV.D.
- C. Gifts: Emery stated that he feels that the upper limit for allowed gifts should be no more than the average promotional item such as a tee shirt or hat. He suggested \$15.00 as the upper limit. The committee will consider this and make a decision at the net meeting.

- D. Pamphlet containing the Code: Sandy offered to prepare a pamphlet for the committee's review. This would include the code and the forms and would be a handy guide for people to use.
 - E. Open for Business: There was a discussion about the fact that the committee is "open for business", however, still working on getting organized.
- IV. New business: there was no new business.
- V. Next meeting: The next meetings will be Tuesday, July 8 and July 22 at 6:30pm. RCTV volunteers have indicated that the 6:30pm is tight for their schedules, but that they will be able to cover the meetings.
- VI. A motion was made by Marilyn and seconded by Gretchen to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Gott