

Raymond Ethics Committee
November 8, 2005
Final Minutes

I. 6:30pm Call to Order

Chairman Pat Larney called to order a meeting of the Raymond Ethics Committee on Tuesday, November 8th, 2005, at 6:30pm, in High School Room 101.

Committee members also present:

Frank Bourque
Sandra Ellis
Marilyn Semple
Pam Turcotte

The meeting was televised by RCTV. The cameramen was Joe Lucafo.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Larney led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Proof of Posting

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

IV. Public Forum

As there were no Members of the Public present, the Committee moved on to *Agenda Item V, Approval of Minutes.*

V. Approval of Minutes

October 25, 2005: Ms. Semple pointed out some changes to be made: in Agenda Item VI, letter D, it was decided **not** to approach former Planning Board member Lynn Booth to help with the revision to the Code of Ethics; and the deadline for petition filing is January 10th, not January 20th. Insofar as the Public Forum section (Agenda Item IV) is concerned, the Committee would like a little more detail in the minutes about comments the Committee made about the Inquiry discussion. The Recording Secretary should review her minutes and tape to put in more information and submit the minutes again for further perusal. Therefore, Ms. Turcotte moved that the Committee table any further discussion of these minutes until the next meeting. Mr. Bourque seconded; there was no further discussion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

VI. Training Session - If Necessary

As there were no Members of the Public present to be trained, the Committee moved on to *Agenda*

Item VII, Old Business.

VII. Old Business

A. Future Training Sessions

Chairman Larney sent a letter to Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Norm Weldy, mentioning that tonight's meeting (and the one on December 13th, if necessary) were scheduled to be open training sessions for any board or committee members that had yet to be trained. Chairman Weldy had the letter read into the selectmen's minutes. Chairman Larney will ask Chairman Weldy to mention the matter again at future Selectmen's meetings. He will also be providing a copy of Ms. Ellis's list of people who have not yet been trained to Town Manager Rick Bates, and Mr. Bates indicated that he would try to give everybody notice.

B. Code of Ethics/Raymond School District

Chairman Larney recently sent an email to Superintendent of Schools Dave Sandmann, asking for an update on the School Board's feelings about signing onto the Town's Code of Ethics. No response has been received as of yet, but Chairman Larney indicated that Mr. Sandmann is sure to respond as soon as he has the opportunity. The Committee would be happy to attend a School Board meeting to give them a presentation on the Code of Ethics. Chairman Larney believes that their next meeting is Wednesday, November 16th, 2005.

C. Revision's to the Code of Ethics

Chairman Larney has been in touch with Mr. Bates about the desired revisions to the Code of Ethics. Mr. Bates is aware of which sections the Committee wants the Town Attorney's to look at and offer suggestions. Mr. Bourque mentioned again that the Committee has money in the budget for legal services and this would be an entirely appropriate time to use some of it. Chairman Larney agreed.

D. Inquiry Process Discussion

Mrs. Joyce Wood provided a copy of the book from the Law Lecture on Ethics to Ms. Semple, who copied pertinent sections on Conflict of Interest for handout. She mentioned that the previous Ethics Committees had spent quite a bit of time working on Inquiry and Complaint forms, distinctions, and procedures, and that based on what transpired at the previous meeting, they appear to be going by the wayside.

Mr. Bourque asked if it was possible that the Inquiry Process formulated by the Ethics Committee was more stringent than what was originally envisioned by the Drafting Committee. Ms. Ellis pointed out that the Drafting Committee had decided to leave it up to the elected Ethics Committees to come up with processes and procedures. Mr. Bourque indicated that he felt the Inquiry form could perhaps be improved.

Chairman Larney asked if the Drafting Committee had originally expected that people coming in

with an Inquiries would receive an answer immediately, or would it be possible to hear an Inquiry, digest it over a short period of time, and then respond to the Inquirer in writing at a later time? Ms. Turcotte pointed out that the Code of Ethics indicates that inquiries should be *acknowledged* within 10 days, not necessarily *answered*. Some members of the Ethic Committee felt that Inquiries should be submitted in writing in order to allow for a paper trail; Mr. Bourque disagreed. Mr. Bourque was not in favor of this idea. He said that the Drafting Committee had originally envisioned the Inquiry process as a very informal path for people to get direction. He feels that Members of the Public should be able to just show up at an Ethics Committee meeting and broach their inquiry in the public forum.

A large part of the discussion centered around the need for an inquiry to be general rather than specific. Prior inquiries had always been submitted prior to anything actually taking place, more along the lines of 'what does the committee think about this hypothetical situation'. The inquiry posed at the last meeting referred to a situation that had already taken place, and would not have been considered general to anyone who had been present at or seen the referenced meeting. Ms. Semple does not think that the Ethics Committee should be expected to make a judgment call on whether or not to hear an Inquiry. The rule should simply be, if it's general, it's an inquiry; if it's specific, it's a complaint. Anyone who comes forward with a inquiry that is overly specific should be told to either make it general, or file it as a complaint and all pertinent complaint procedures will be followed. It is most important to protect people's reputations. Ms. Semple suggested that if someone comes to the meeting without their Inquiry in writing, perhaps the Committee and the Member of the Public could fill out the Inquiry Form jointly.

Ms. Ellis will be filing a copy of Mrs. Wood's original Inquiry along with the rulings that were made.

VII. New Business

A: Future Meeting Dates

Chairman Larney told the Selectmen that the Ethics Committee would meet on December 13th for the open training session. This meeting will be downstairs in Room 101 again. Ms. Semple will be bringing the Law Lecture book again for anyone to take home and read.

B: Correspondence

Apparently no correspondence was received.

Adjournment

Ms. Semple moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:27pm; Ms. Ellis seconded. There was no discussion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda