

CITY OF STAMFORD
Board of Ethics
Stamford Government Center
(Meeting held virtually via Zoom)
October 19, 2022
Draft Minutes

This Meeting was recorded, and the audio recording is available from the Board of Ethics and the City of Stamford. Such audio recording is intended to be the official public record of the Meeting and not these minutes, and such recording is incorporated into these minutes by reference and made a part hereof. These minutes summarize the proceedings and are not intended as verbatim notes.

Present Members:

Allan Lang, Chair
Myrna Sessa, Member
Monica Smyth, Member
Christine Dzujna, Member
Benjamin Folkinshteyn, Member
Kevin Quinn, Alternate

Other:

Stephen Conover, Counsel
Kimberly Hawreluk, Human Resources Processing Technician
Fritz G. Chery, Member of the Board of Education
Various members of the public

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lang at 7:03 p.m.

1. Chairman Lang presented the September 21, 2022, Board of Ethics (“BOE”) Meeting Draft Minutes for review and approval. Ms. Smyth moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Sessa seconded, all others in favor. The motion passed.
2. Ms. Sessa reported that, upon an earlier recommendation made by the BOE, the City’s Law Department invited all public officials and city employees to attend training on Freedom of Information rules and the City Code of Ethics. The training took place in early September and various city officials (including the mayor) and employees attended.

3. Chairman Lang invited Board of Education member Fritz Chery to share the issue for which he is seeking an advisory opinion: with several partners, Mr. Chery created a company in January of this year that trains students 18 and older on HVAC and plumbing skills. In addition to other general marketing efforts, Mr. Chery reached out via email to guidance counselors in all schools in Fairfield County informing them of the new business so that they might share it with their students. A concern was raised to the Board of Education Chair about a potential Code of Ethics violation.

Questioning of Mr. Chery and discussion among the BOE members ensued. After Chairman Lang conducted a straw poll of the board members to assess their views of the issue, Ms. Sessa moved that the BOE issue an advisory opinion, seconded by Ms. Smyth. After further discussion, the BOE concluded that, because Mr. Chery has been promoting an educational business and he is a member of the Board of Education, there is a concern under section 19-8A of the Code that his marketing efforts may unduly influence employees in the City of Stamford's educational system. The BOE members agreed to take this opportunity to guide Mr. Chery on how he might avoid such undue influence in the future. Therefore, the motion to issue an advisory opinion was unanimously approved, and it was decided that Ms. Dzujna and Chairman Lang will work together to draft the opinion.

Chairman Lang adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Dzujna, Secretary