

CITY OF STAMFORD
Board of Ethics
Stamford Government Center
(Meeting held virtually via Zoom)
May 17, 2023
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
Monica Smyth, Member
Christine Dzujna, Member
Laura Indellicati, Member
Benjamin Folkinshteyn, Member
Dennis Torres, Member
Kevin Quinn, Alternate

Other:

Stephen Conover, Counsel
Kimberly Hawreluk, Human Resources Processing Technician
Frances Lane, Trustee, Stamford Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board
Emily Gordon, Stamford Director of Housing and Community Development
Jody Bishop-Pullan, Stamford Director of Health and Human Services
Various members of the public

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lang at 7:02 p.m.

1. Chairman Lang introduced new Board of Ethics (the “BOE”) member, Dennis Torres, and invited him to share his background with the audience.
2. Chairman Lang presented the March 15, 2023, BOE Meeting Draft Minutes for review and approval. Mr. Folkinshteyn moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Smyth seconded, Mr. Torres and Ms. Indellicati abstained, all others in favor. The motion passed.

3. Chairman Lang introduced Frances Lane and asked her to share her request for an advisory opinion. Ms. Lane explained that since April 2021, she has served on the Stamford Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board as a public trustee with 5 other trustees, all volunteer positions. The board awards money to various construction companies for projects they are doing in the city. It recently came to Ms. Lane's attention that a project will soon come before the Trust seeking money for renovation work in the Charter Oak affordable housing development where she resides, though the work will be done in another building. Discussion ensued, questions were asked of Ms. Lane, and she was advised that the BOE would discuss her request and prepare an advisory opinion. Because the project would not affect her personal economic interests, the BOE agreed that no conflict of interest exists under the Code of Ethics ("Code"). Ms. Indelicati volunteered to draft the advisory opinion.
4. Chairman Lang introduced Bonnie Kim Campbell's request for an advisory opinion regarding her role on the Community Development Annual Allocation Plan and a potential conflict in connection with a community development block grant application submitted by New Neighborhoods. The project involves an elevator renovation in a building New Neighborhoods owns and manages and where Ms. Campbell resides. Ms. Campbell could not attend the meeting but sent a representative, Emily Gordon, Director of Housing and Community Development in Stamford, to appear and speak on her behalf. Ms. Campbell is seeking an exception from the HUD conflict of interest rules, one requirement of which is that she obtain an Advisory Opinion from the BOE that the manner in which she recused herself from discussions and votes on the project did not violate the Code. Discussion ensued, questions were asked of Ms. Gordon, and she was advised that the BOE would discuss Ms. Campbell's request and prepare an advisory opinion. Ms. Dzujna volunteered to draft the advisory opinion.
5. Chairman Lang introduced Jody Bishop-Pullan, Director of Health and Human Services, and asked her to share her request for an advisory opinion regarding an invitation from Inspirica's Executive Director that she serve on their advisory board. Inspirica is a not-for-profit organization that provides transitional and emergency housing as well as other services such as career counseling, community health services, etc. Ms. Bishop-Pullan stated her belief that Inspirica likely receives funding from the City through the Board of Representatives, but not through her department. Although she is not clear on what the full scope of her role will be, as an advisor, she would simply offer guidance, but Inspirica's board of directors would make the final decisions on any questions and projects that came before them. Ms. Smyth volunteered to draft the advisory opinion.
6. Chairman Lang noted that he received an anonymous email from a claimed former member of the Board of Representatives complaining about the actions of a current member of the Board of Representatives. The concerns addressed in the email were not submitted in the complaint form prescribed by the Code, therefore, the members of the BOE agreed that the BOE need not act until such time as a formal and proper complaint has been submitted.

7. Chairman Lang asked the chairs of two active investigating committees whether the BOE needed to consider a vote extending the time to complete their investigations. Both investigating chairs declined.

Chairman Lang adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Dzujna, Secretary