

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY ETHICS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: October 16, 2024
LOCATION: Room 331, Gerace Office Building,
3 North Erie Street
Mayville, New York 14757

TIME: 1:06 p.m. – 2:43 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Hamels
John Marengo
Darlene Nygren

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Diane Hannum
Stephanie Stevens

OTHERS PRESENT: Amanda Gallagher from the County Attorney's Office
Kristen Wright from the County Attorney's Office

CALL TO ORDER & PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:

John M. called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

Amanda confirmed proper public notification was completed as the notice of today's meeting was posted on the county website on October 2, 2024 and sent out to the local media on October 7, 2024. It also appeared in the Observer's "Community Notebook" section on October 9, 2024 and in the Post-Journal's "Briefly" section on October 16, 2024.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

John H. motioned to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2024 meeting, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor.

REVIEW CORRESPONDENCE:

John H. stated that a complaint was received in the Board's P.O. Box, which has been assigned Case No. 2024-21. Due to the recusal of the Board Chair and the Ethics Board Liaison on this matter, he has forwarded the complaint to Lauren Ryan in the County Executive's Office who will provide assistance. Due to the lack of quorum to further discuss this matter, he will work with Lauren to prepare a letter acknowledging that the complaint was received and sign it as Secretary. This case will be discussed at the next board meeting.

The Board reviewed its open cases and new Case No. 2024-22.

John H. motioned to enter into executive session to discuss matters leading to the potential discipline of a particular person, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor. Executive session entered at 1:14 p.m.

John H. motioned to leave executive session, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor. Executive session left at 1:21 p.m.

John H. motioned to close Case No. 2024-18, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor.

John H. motioned to close Case No. 2024-19, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor.

John H. motioned to enter into executive session to discuss matters leading to the potential discipline of a particular person, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor. Executive session entered at 1:35 p.m.

John H. motioned to leave executive session, which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor. Executive session left at 1:57 p.m.

REVIEW CHANGES TO ETHICS BOARD PROCEDURES:

The Board reviewed potential changes to “Ethics Board Procedure EB 2021-01 – Financial Disclosure Statements and Ethics Board Training.” Changes included:

- Amending language to reflect that employees and board members who are required to complete the ethics training or Statement of Financial Disclosure who are out on authorized leave must complete the training or disclosure within 30 **calendar** days of their return to work (as opposed to 30 business days) and updating the Extension Request Form accordingly.
- Updating initial notification language of the disclosure statement to reflect forms being sent electronically to filers through signNow by removing the reference of the disclosure form being attached in the notification email.
- Not adding proposed new sections about hearings and orders, and confidentiality.
- Having two letter templates for disclosure forms that need to be corrected – one template for paper form submissions and another for those submitted electronically through signNow.
- Having 2 separate important notices from the County Executive and the Chairman of the Legislature for employees and board members depending if the form is for

an employee or board member and if the filer's form will be submitted through a hard copy/paper submission or electronically through signNow. Important notices for those completing the form electronically will no longer have the "Tips for Completion of the Form" while those completing a paper form will have these tips still included on their important notice.

- Having 2 separate attachments for the reminder emails to department heads depending if the employee is filing electronically or submitting a paper form.
- Updating the Extension Request Form to allow for the form to be completed electronically through signNow by removing the requirement that the completed form be mailed or hand delivered with an original department head signature to the Ethics Board in care of the County Executive's Office.
- Other minor formatting changes and corrections to the letter templates attached to the procedure.

Darlene motioned to approve the procedures as amended, which was seconded by John H. All in favor.

REVIEW DRAFT QUESTION AND ANSWER ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS:

Amanda left the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

Amanda returned at 2:18 p.m. with Kristen Wright.

The Board discussed the draft question and answer about the Code of Ethics.

Kristen left the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

STATUS OF ANNUAL CODE OF ETHICS TRAINING FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES:

Amanda provided an update on the 2024 Code of Ethics Training. One of the four employees who were still out on medical leave is no longer a county employee and is no longer required to complete the ethics training. In addition, 1 employee has returned and still needs to complete the training and extension request form, and 2 employees are still out on leave.

STATUS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORMS:

Amanda reported that so far for 2024, a total of 353 forms have been reviewed and approved by the Board as of October 15, 2024. There are 5 forms with upcoming due dates.

DISCUSS 2024 ANNUAL REPORT:

Amanda will send Stephanie the paperwork so that she can be re-appointed to the Board.

John M. and Amanda will work on preparing the 2024 Annual Report for the Board's review in 2025.

The Board also set the following meeting dates:

- April 9, 2025 at 1 p.m.
- May 14, 2025 at 1 p.m.
- September 10, 2025 at 1 p.m.
- October 15, 2025 at 1 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Ethics Board is scheduled for April 9, 2025 at 1 p.m. in Room 331 of the Gerace Office Building, 3 N. Erie St. in Mayville, N.Y.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

John H. motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:43 p.m., which was seconded by Darlene. All in favor.

Minutes prepared by Amanda Gallagher and respectfully submitted to John Hamels.