

**Wallingford Town Council
MINUTES of the SPECIAL MEETING
July 14, 2008 6:15 P.M.
Room #315 -- Town Hall
45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492**

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m. for the purpose stated in the agenda: To interview nominees to the Board of Ethics.

Councilors Farrell, Letourneau, Rascati, Parisi, Spiteri, and Brodinsky were present. Mayor William Dickinson was present. Rev. Warburton, Lynn Fiore, Sean Doherty, and Jon Paul Venoit attended also.

Chairman Brodinsky opened the meeting with a greeting, and a review of the procedural requirements: The Charter gives the Mayor the right to nominate members to the Board of Ethics and Council has the authority to approve or disapprove the nominations. The Special Meeting was requested by Mr. Spiteri to interview nominees and questions were intended to aid in the determination of whether to approve the nominees. Mr. Brodinsky briefly described the function of the Board and noted that the Charter and the Code of Ethics contained the substantive and procedural rules to follow. He reviewed some of them: compliance with FOIA; two-step hearing process; probable cause hearing in executive session; open hearing with investigation and evidence; findings and decision, based upon the ethics rules.

Chairman Brodinsky asked each about their current contact information and party affiliation and explained that "minority representation" rules made that inquiry relevant. The information given is in the schedule attached.

Mr. Spiteri asked each nominee whether they have resolved disputes in the past to give an example of how they handled it. Rev. Warburton said that the key is to hear both sides. Mr. Venoit said that he worked with about 150 employees and had experience in this area and that he knew there were usually two sides to a story. Ms. Fiore said that she does this in her work as an attorney (for the Dept of Consumer Protection). Sean Doherty agreed and stressed good communication.

Mr. Spiteri asked whether any ever had to make an unpopular decision. Rev. Warburton described a situation when an employee had obtained a position with falsified credentials and he had to terminate the individual who was popular with a substantial number of co-workers. He knew their view of him would probably change permanently, but he was compelled by the circumstances to take appropriate action. Other nominees indicated that they have and could make decisions, which might be unpopular.

Mr. Spiteri asked whether any of the nominees had had undertaken a self-assessment after a hard decision. Ms. Fiore said that she had learned to do it. Mr.

Venoit said that he had to lay off employees once, and it was a hard thing. He said that one must be willing to recognize mistakes one makes and learn from them. Mr. Warburton said that one must be able to absorb anger with grace.

Mr. Spiteri asked what each thought was an important characteristic for a member of the Board of Ethics. Mr. Doherty, Mr. Venoit, and Ms. Fiore said "values" and a moral compass. Mr. Warburton agreed and said that he would recuse himself if a member of his church were involved in a case before the Ethics Board.

Mr. Spiteri asked if any of the nominees had occasion to educate a co-worker. Rev. Warburton, Mr. Venoit, and Mr. Doherty said they had and gave a description.

Councilor Rascati asked how long each lived in Wallingford. They all said they followed Wallingford news, were familiar with many of the people in town, and Rev. Warburton said he live in Wallingford for 12 years; Ms. Fiore, 12; Mr. Venoit, 32; Mr. Doherty, 31 years.

Mr. Parisi warned members to beware of frivolous complaints and said that he had been the subject of one.

Mr. Spiteri asked if each could commit the time to serve and come to meetings, maybe to meet even if they did not have a case to resolve. All said they could.

Rev. Warburton asked whether resources could be available if needed to investigate and would anyone block the authorization for funds. He asked for assurance that if investigation was needed it would get done. The Mayor said that funds could be made available but that this had not been an issue in the past. He doubted this would be an issue in the future. Funding would have to be approved by him and the Council. The Mayor said they would have to do their own minutes. The Mayor said they might be called upon to give advisory opinions.

Mr. Brodinsky answered a question about and explained the anatomy of a hypothetical case. He said that decisions are a matter of public record and would be issues to all interested in the case; plus the Town Clerk for official filing, and the law department. He was asked, Who establishes the penalty? Mr. Brodinsky explained that it depended. The penalties for elected officials were a matter for the Council. Otherwise, the penalty would be determined, generally speaking, by the department heads.

Mr. Brodinsky explained that if anyone felt uncomfortable with the notion that a decision could have serious consequences, perhaps they should not accept the appointment. He also stressed the importance of objectivity and the need to take the personalities out of the decision-making process and base the determination on the evidence, regardless of the personalities involved. He said that one's personal views of ethics must take a back seat to what is written in the Code and Charter. He asked if they could do all of that. All said that they would.

Mr. Brodinsky said that to balance Mr. Parisi's comments, the Ethics Board is the community's last protection against unethical conduct or a breach of the Code. And, that a complaint should be taken seriously and objectively. All agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. by unanimous acclamation.

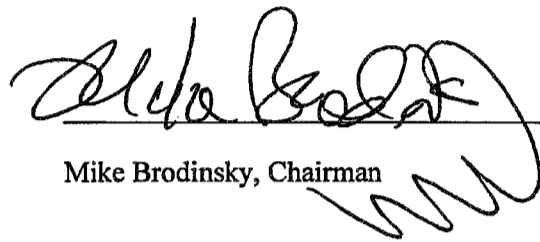
Mike Brodinsky, Chairman

These draft minutes were prepared by
Mike Brodinsky.

Mike Brodinsky
7/17/08

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|----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|--------|
| Dean | Warburton | 19 Broadmeadow Road | 269-8569 R | 3/1/11 |
| Sean | Doherty | 2 Windswept Hill Road | 269-4297 U | 3/1/11 |
| Lynn | Fiore | 33 Heritage Woods | 269-0731 R | 3/1/10 |
| Jon Paul | Venoit | 1646 Tuttle Ave. | 265-7828 R | 3/1/11 |

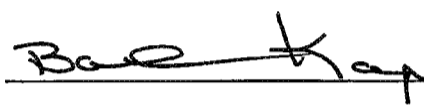
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Mike Brodinsky, Chairman

8/25/08

Date



Barbara Kapi, Town Clerk

8/25/08

Date