

SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Communities Committed to the Shared Code of Ethics and Values
City of Crown Point
Town of Highland
Town of Munster
Town of Schererville
City of Whiting

April 5, 2010

To: Our Member Communities:

Enclosed in this binder is the 2009 Annual Report of the Shared Ethics Commission.

We had an eventful year sponsoring various training activities and also the Employee Ethics Survey. During 2010, we hope to greatly expand training opportunities for employees of our member communities.

In the next few weeks, we will be calling for an appointment so that we can discuss future plans in person.

Respectfully Submitted,


Lloyd Rowe
Shared Ethics Officer


Calvin Bellamy
President

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March 25, 2010

Report of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission for 2009

In accordance with Article 6 C of the interlocal agreement that established the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC), this report is submitted on the activities of the SEAC for 2009. Current municipal members of the SEAC are Crown Point, Highland, Munster, Schererville and Whiting.

The principal activities of the SEAC during 2009 were as follows:

1. Reauthorization of the SEAC

All of the member municipalities of the SEAC took action to extend the duration of the commission from December 30, 2008 as provided in the Second Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for the SEAC (the authorizing document) by adopting a Third Amendment which set forth a new duration date of December 31, 2012. Also, the Third Amendment provided that the Agreement would be renewed automatically thereafter but that a member could withdraw from the Agreement. (See Articles 1, 11.) In addition, the Third Amendment provided that the SEAC would consist of one member appointed by each member municipal government and not less than three at - large members selected by the commission but not to exceed the number of members appointed by member municipal governments. (See Article 5.) Previously, the Second Amendment after the initial appointments gave all appointing authority to the SEAC.

2. New commission members for the SEAC

The Reverend Paul Vale representative of Whiting and Dr. Thomas J. Dykiel, Director of Business Services and Planning, Lake Central School System, representative of Schererville were welcomed to membership on the SEAC.

3. Ethics Training

Ethics training continues as the core activity of the SEAC and several actions were taken to strengthen the capacity of the commission to accomplish this. These were as follows:

a. Training for the SEAC

Commission member Dean Anna Rominger conducted a training session for the SEAC to increase their knowledge of established core concepts that may be useful in analyzing ethics issues. The presentation focused on duty-based, ends-based and virtue-based approaches to ethics issues. She repeated this presentation at a training session for local trainers. (See below.)

b. Local Trainers

Thirteen local staff members from member municipalities were asked to serve as local ethics trainers. Most of these had attended a training session for trainers led by Martha Perego of the International City County Management Association in November of 2008. It is the intention of the SEAC to invite others to serve in this capacity as well.

c. Training Curriculum

A new training curriculum - a script with slides - for use by local ethics trainers was developed from materials prepared by the International City County Management Association, Dean Anna Rominger, and Tom DeGiulio, Town Manager of Munster, and were organized by Ashley Porta, assistant to Tom DeGiulio. The Shared Code of Ethics and Values of the SEAC is an integral component of the new curriculum. Several of the local trainers have attended orientation sessions on the ethics curriculum and two have made practice presentations to the SEAC.

4. Ethics Awareness Program

The SEAC initiated an Ethics Awareness Program to publicize the importance of ethics within its member local governments and communities and throughout Northwest Indiana as well. The program includes several actions by the SEAC and recommended actions for member municipal governments as follows:

- a. The development of brief articles (500 words) by the SEAC for publication by the commission on its training and other activities in member municipalities' community newsletters or other appropriate outlets under the general heading of "Promoting Ethics by Acting Together." Member municipalities can, of course, develop their own articles as well under this heading. To date, the SEAC has submitted two articles to member communities for use under this heading, one which discusses the mission of the SEAC and identifies SEAC members and one which focuses on ethics training.
- b. The development of brief articles (500 words) by the SEAC for publication in member municipality employee newsletters or other appropriate outlets under the general heading of "An Ethics Conversation for Local Government." Local staff are encouraged to join in the conversation by submitting their own articles for publication under this heading. To date, the SEAC has also submitted two articles under this heading, one like the community-oriented piece mentioned above, which describes the mission of the commission, and one which offers a definition of ethics.

- c. The posting of the SEAC Code of Ethics and Values on the on each member community's web sites.
 - d. The promotion of ethics awareness month (March) by each member community with a resolution and a public statement at their March council meeting.
 - e. Preparation of periodic articles for the local press on local government ethics and its importance to area local governments and the future of Northwest Indiana. As an example, in the March 15, 2009 edition of the *THE TIMES*, Ashley Porta, assistant to Munster Town Manager Tom DeGiulio, and who frequently contributes to the work of the SEAC, published, "Ethics Commission Works to Train Those in Public Service."
 - f. Periodic presentations by commission members on local government ethics to area civic organizations. Calvin Bellamy, President of the SEAC, has frequently made such public service presentations.
 - g. Media interviews to report the activities of the SEAC. As examples, President Bellamy had an interview with Channel 56 on the ethics survey and he also appeared with Tom DeGiulio and Lloyd Rowe on Dan Lowery's weekly Channel 56 program to discuss the ethics survey.
5. Ethics Survey of Member Communities Officials, Staff and Employees

The SEAC member communities distributed 957 ethics survey questionnaires prepared by the SEAC to officials, staff and employees of the SEAC member communities. The SEAC received back 307 completed questionnaires. The results were tabulated by Professor Richard Hug of Indiana University Northwest and a report containing these tabulations, our conclusions and recommendations was distributed to member communities, the local media and any interested party requesting a copy.

A major finding of the survey was that the responses of those who reported they had received ethics training tended to be different than those who had not attended such training. While the differences were not all statistically significant, those who had received ethics training tended to be more aware of the ethics code, more aware of how to report questionable behavior, more likely to ask some one in authority for advice, more likely to believe that action would be taken and more likely to feel the process would be fair. (See 2009 Municipal Employee Survey: Results and Recommendations, Master Edition, February 15, 2010, Tab 2 prepared by the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission of Crown Point, Highland, Munster, Schererville and Whiting.)