Board of Ethics
Minutes of Special Meeting, Meeting Room 1-2 City Hall
January 8, 2025 Meeting

PRESENT: Bruce Barton, John Bellemare, Bryant Lishness, Roger Chaisson, Byron Pierce, Kristen O'Donnell (Zoom)

1. Call to Order

   Chairman Roger Chaisson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

   MOTION: Made by John Bellemare seconded by Bruce Barton to accept the minutes from November 6, 2024 meeting as written. All in favor.

3. Annual Meeting Calendar

   Chairman Roger Chaisson proposed establishing regular meeting dates, acknowledging that scheduling may be challenging due to the complaint-driven nature of the meetings. He suggested setting recurring meetings on the first Wednesday of May and November of this year, with the understanding that meetings would be canceled if there are no pressing matters to address. For 2025, the proposed dates are May 7 and November 5. There was also a meeting set up for the first Wednesday of February which will be February 5, 2025 at 6pm to discuss the guidelines.

4. Discuss and Take Any Necessary Action on Request for Advisory Opinion

   Chairman Roger Chaisson called Dayvon, the person making the request, and invited him to the meeting but he was not present. The wife of the person requesting the opinion appeared and she was informed that the meeting will need to be continued since her husband was not here in person. She is on the ECD Board and her husband is receiving a grant from ECD so they are concerned about a potential conflict and wanted advice on how to proceed. She stated she would recuse herself. It was suggested that Dayvon be called or appear on zoom. He then joined via phone call to discuss his request. He discussed his business and that he is the sole owner of Urban Studios which is an LLC. He states that he is the sole member. His wife does not get a paycheck from him but she does help out with his business in terms of ideas. He stated she is a managing member. The amount of the loan is $20,000 which would be half forgiven via the grant from ECD. Chairman Roger Chaisson said they will go into an executive session to discuss and get back to them with the decision. Prior to going into executive session, Kristen O'Donnell pointed out an error in the minutes that she wanted rectified in which the minutes stated that the *Complainant did NOT provide the source of the information* but it should be changed to read that she "*DID*."

5. Discuss Rules for Hearings

   Chairman Roger Chaisson addressed the City and Corporation Counsel's recommendation that the board establish formal rules for conducting contested meetings. He shared an example from the Town of Greenwich and requested that board members review the document, identify points of agreement or disagreement, and propose rules and procedures for adoption. Currently, no formal guidelines exist for how these meetings should be conducted.

   Chairman Roger Chaisson proposed holding a meeting in February to discuss and vote on the proposed procedures. He also suggested that a hearing officer be designated from within the ethics board. During the discussion, another member inquired about the possibility of providing training to ensure members are equipped to conduct meetings appropriately. This suggestion prompted further deliberation. Ultimately, the board agreed to schedule a meeting in February to finalize the procedures.

   MOTION: to go into Executive Session by Bryant Lishness seconded by Byron Pierce. All in favor. A member of the public asked what the Executive Session was about and Chairman Roger Chaisson clarified that they would be discussing the Request for Advisory Opinion. And thus, the zoom call was ended and all public parties exited the room.

   Vote to End Executive Session by John Bellemare and seconded by Bryant Lishness. All in favor.

   The Zoom call was resumed.

   The source of information was identified as Emily Gomes and someone else whose name could not be heard due to overlapping voices.

   MOTION: to Approve the minutes with the change By Bruce Barton and seconded by John Bellemare. All in favor.

   The advisory opinion was then discussed and Bryant Lishness made a **MOTION** that the board does not see an issue with this as it stands as long as they follow appropriate protocols which was then seconded by Bruce Barton. All in favor.

6. Adjournment

   All in favor to adjourn at 6:44 p.m.

Maria Theam
Recording Secretary