Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance
The Board of Ethics meeting was called to order by Chairman John Bashar at 7:04 PM in Room 104 at Shelton City Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance
John Bashar, Chairman
Paul Bueker
Walter Drozeck

Also Attending:
Cyndee Burke, Clerk
Ethan Fry, Valley Independent Sentinel

Public Portion:
No one from the public spoke.

Agenda Items

1. Accept Minutes of May 2, 2013
   Mr. Drozeck moved to accept the minutes of the Organizational Meeting of May 2, 2013. Mr. Bueker seconded. Passed unanimously.

2. State Code of Ethics
   Chairman Bashar passed out a copy of the new Public Act #13-244 of the General Assembly. The State of CT revised the State Code of Ethics and made
some changes and tweaks to the language. It’s 20 pages long and is for informational purposes. I think it is more detailed than what we would be looking for. For example, I am a manager and I have to file a financial statement every year. I don’t think that is what we would be looking for here, but there might be some things we can take out of it. Even some definitional issues might help.

Mr. Drozeck said then we should read this for the next meeting so we can have a discussion on any ideas that would come out of here. The Board agreed. Chairman Bashar said Cyndee has sent out the old draft of the Code of Ethics and also the Ordinance. We should look at all three of those items and compare things and have that for discussion for next meeting.

3. Training Aspects of Ethics for City Officials & Employees

Mr. Bueker said there is a State ethics on-line training module, which I started to go through to get a feel on how it was put together and there is an on-line acknowledgement. You have to do the acknowledgement once a year. To me, training and acknowledgement go together. I read through our ordinance and kind of outlined that and looked at the specifics of what it tries to get across and then put together a little outline of training. If I were going to do this, it would be a fairly simple half hour Power Point with a discussion of what the Code of Ethics is, why it’s there, why we need it, what’s covered by it (framework), what are their responsibilities as employees or elected officials, which includes disclosure, compliance, recusing themselves in certain situations, reporting and annual training - 5 things. Then, what do they do if there is an issue? What is the Board of Ethics and what does it do? That gives them the framework of responsibilities, their role, what the structure is, what the recourse is. That is really all you have to give them. Then they could do the acknowledgement right there. I would recommend if you are on board with that, I would call the office at the State responsible and find out the availability of using on-line resources and that kind of thing.

Chairman Bashar stated he had no problem with that. Mr. Drozeck asked would it have to be a series of trainings? Mr. Bueker replied that my experience with developing training, which is a lot of years, the first time through you do it on paper, do a conference room walk thru, and take those questions, if you think that flow is the right flow. I would put together some pages on that we can all review for next time and then what you would do is bring in a pilot group and walk them through it and then look to automate.
Chairman Bashar asked when was the last time Byron Peterson did a training session? Mr. Bueker replied in 2008. Chairman Bashar said it may be time to update. You may have new elected officials and new employees. Mr. Drozeck said I would do everybody and then go with new hires. Mr. Bueker added that I would still have a once-a-year acknowledgement. It doesn't have to be as detailed as you see here and answer every question like they are being interrogated. You want them to say they re-read it and understand it and are in compliance.

Mr. Bueker said depending what the on-line resources are, the online module is pretty good and we may not be that far off from the State. May be we can use some of what they've got. Mr. Bueker said I will pursue for the next meeting.

4. Annual Ethics Acknowledgement for City Officials & Employees

Mr. Bueker said I thought the acknowledgement was very interesting in that it did not just say I read it and I acknowledge it; it asks specific questions that they had to answer. I thought that was more powerful. While a little cumbersome, it is almost training in and of itself. Do all town officials actually sign this? Chairman Bashar said that is a proposed ethics ordinance and was drafted by the last Board of Ethics, submitted to the Aldermen, and no action was ever taken on it. What is in effect is the Ordinance #304 and what everyone is abiding by as of today.

Mr. Drozeck stated the questionnaire is pretty enlightening and you have to be able to answer yes or no. You have to read it carefully. Chairman Bashar said I wonder if the old Board took some of that language and some of the process from the State because that is what we have to do. We are emailed with the attachment of the Code, and we have to acknowledge that we received it, and those of us who are managers in a particular category, have to do the financial affidavit, which is a disclosure of all your assets. They ask questions if you do contracts with the State contractors and immediate family and that kind of thing. I haven't looked at the new changes on the definitions so I think the definitions are something we should concentrate on.

Chairman Bashar said for the next meeting I will go thru the existing ordinance, the old proposed ordinance, and the State Code and maybe I can come up with some ideas of proposals. Once we get all of those together, we can sit down and merge everything.
Mr. Drozeck said I think from the process standpoint, it changes the game a little bit, and we are more intrusive, but I certainly want to make people aware of their responsibilities, to not just be reactive to the problems. Chairman Bashar said I think a lot of times elected officials will always have the question in their mind, "am I voting on something where I know the person, or the property, or I know it may have some effect?" Even for the aldermen, and it's been revisited in the past, that you are passing the budget and you are getting money because you are an employee of the city or your spouse is an employee and is that a conflict? I think the answer we have generally taken is although you may have a direct effect that you are getting a benefit, because the budget is being passed, the fact of the matter is you are voting on the whole budget ... Mr. Drozeck interjected, that relationship with whomever is a small component of the overall budget.

Mr. Drozeck said you run the gamut of people who are aldermen who have spouses that work in the system. Mr. Bueker said I thought it was kind of interesting as I was reading that there were things I wouldn't have thought of. You immediately think of the conflict of interest where you have a financial interest, but it's the broad use of city space, equipment. Is it available to everybody or just a select few and that creates an issue.

Chairman Bashar said I was on the Charter Revision Commission that finally passed the Charter after about four tries, and one of the things this time we tried to emphasize is we wanted transparency. I think the changes we made in the Charter went a long way towards that. There was some discussion on the Charter Revision Commission (Chairman Bashar cites Section 9.7), and we may want to look at in this entire process. There was a lot of discussion on this. Some discussion was you don't have to worry about City Officials because they know what they are doing, but we said to them look at what happened in Oxford and Seymour and then the next thing you know it happens in Shelton. It is very general and kind of generic, but ties everything in so there is something in the Charter that covers it.

5. General Discussion

Mr. Bueker said I like the rhythm of regular meetings and it keeps our heads in the game, so to speak. If you only come together in a time of crisis, you are somewhat dysfunctional.
Mr. Drozeck said we should try to work on the Mayor to find more members. Mr. Bueker asked to recap who is in which party? Mr. Drozeck is a Republican, Chairman Bashar is a Democrat and Mr. Bueker is a Republican. Chairman Bashar said the Mayor needs another Democrat and an Independent.

Mr. Bueker commented it would be good to get a couple of women. Mr. Drozeck said that is fine, but I am just thinking about a “D” and an “I” only because of the fact that we are trying to move this stuff forward and don’t want them to be having to catch up and get overwhelmed. Chairman Bashar said that was another huge discussion relative to the Charter Revision because it was only a three member commission before, and we increased it to five for the exact purpose of having a transparent board so that it was balanced 2-2-1 so that neither party was going to take charge of it.

Mr. Bueker said he mentioned something to Mrs. Dunford. Chairman Bashar complimented her work on the Charter Revision Commission and noted she would make a great asset. Mr. Drozeck said at least we have three of us for quorums because the other way, it’s kind of tough with three people. Mr. Bueker said the first Thursday of a quarter works great for me and with our ability to use the phone. The only one quarter that I will be out of whack is the first quarter of the year, but I can call in.

Adjournment

Mr. Drozeck moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bueker seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Ethics adjourned at 7:24 pm.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Ethics will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyndee Burke, Clerk

One tape on file in C/T Clerk’s Office