



Special Code of Ethics Revision Committee – Board of Representatives

Benjamin Lee, Chair

J.R. McMullen, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Code of Ethics Revision Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lee, Vice Chair McMullen and Committee Member Reps. Curtis, Fedeli, Miller, Morson, Sherwood, Stella and Zelinsky. Also present was Rep. de la Cruz.

Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Invitee(s) or Designees
1. COE30.005	ORDINANCE for publication; Amending Chapter 19 of the Code of Ordinances, Code of Ethics 08/05/20 – Submitted by Rep. Lee 09/01/20 – Held by Committee, as amended, 9-0-0 09/23/20 – Held by Committee, as amended, 9-0-0 10/27/20 – Held by Committee, as amended, 8-0-0 12/21/20 – Held by Committee, as amended, 9-0-0 02/04/21 – Held by Committee, as amended, 9-0-0	Held, as amended, 9-0-0

Committee members discussed the format of the conflict of interest section, which refers back to definitions, or whether they wanted to shift to the format used in the San Antonio ordinance, which contains a list of conflicts rather than referring back to the definitions. The suggestion was made to confirm with Corporation Counsel as to whether state law restricts the form of the ordinance to be used.

A motion to amend Section 19-14.A.2 as follows was made and seconded:

All Board members and alternate Board members shall be resident electors of the City of Stamford. They shall be appointed by the Mayor and approved by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board of Representatives present and voting. All nominees shall provide documentation they have completed the State of Connecticut Office of State Ethics' online ethics training, "Ethics 101" or the equivalent state course, prior to an interview by the Board of Representatives Appointments Committee. Failure to complete such training shall exclude a nominee from consideration. No nominee for appointment by the Mayor to be a Board member or alternate Board member shall have been an officer in a political party, a candidate for any office within the City of Stamford, or a chair of a campaign of a candidate for any office within the City of Stamford, for the period of one (1) year prior to such nomination. Upon appointment by the Mayor, all Board members and alternate Board members shall continue to refrain from such activity throughout their terms on the Board.

Rep. McMullen stated that the current training took him approximately 35-40 minutes.

The motion was approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. Lee, McMullen, Curtis, Fedeli, Miller, Morson, Sherwood, Stella and Zelinsky in favor).

Rep. Stella noted issued he would like to discuss in future meetings based on the New Haven ordinance, including:

1. Changing probable cause to reasonable cause (as in the New Haven ordinance). It was noted that the term “probable cause” mirrors the state statute. Corporation Counsel should be asked whether proceeding to a public hearing after a finding of “reasonable cause” would violate state statute.
2. The complaint should require a penalty for a false statement.
3. People may “plea bargain” in order to avoid the cost of defending themselves
4. The Ethics Board should be held liable for a determination that is made without cause.

Members were encouraged to read the Seton Hall Law Review article.

A motion to hold Item No. 1, as amended, was made, seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Benjamin Lee, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).