

# City of Langley, Washington

## Ethics Training and Advisory Board

**Chairman**  
Bob Frause

**Members**  
Sharon Betcher  
Monica Guzman  
Fred Herzon

Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 8, 2017  
City Hall  
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

1. Meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm.  
Members present: Frause, French, Guzman, Herzon, Betcher
2. Minutes of April 10 2017 meeting were approved as presented.
3. The Board reviewed criteria for undertaking an ethics advisory. As spelled out on the Advisory Request Form as well as in the Code booklet itself, “the request must not only cite the activity in question, but specific provisions in the principles of conduct (Section 1.25.050), which are relevant to the ethical dilemma in question.” Further, as noted in Advisory Opinions 3 and 4 of 2017, it is important to recognize that, while the Code’s Preamble, Purpose and Value statements provide the foundational aspirations for the Code’s Principals of Conduct; and while those covered by the Code are encouraged to conduct themselves in the most professional manner possible, only actions specifically in opposition to the six principles of conduct (Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, Improper Influence, Misuse of Public Resources, Representation of Private Interests and Workplace Harassment and Discrimination) will be considered for ethical misconduct.

By reminding ourselves and the public of this criteria, the Board sets a threshold that must be met for an advisory request to be undertaken. The Board does not operate to sort out bad manners, ameliorate citizen disgruntlement or civic conflict. Further, we remind ourselves and our citizens that there is no universal ethics; rather, the Code of Ethics of the City of Langley operates as a minimum operational agreement in the midst of a political plurality of ethical options.

Herzon will draft a standard letter, the framework of which the Board may draw on to reply to matters presented to the Board that do not meet the

criteria spelled out. The board will also consider drafting an Op Ed for *The South Whidbey Record*, explaining the parameters of the work of the Ethics Board and the city's Ethics Code.

4. The Board received and considered an email directed to our attention from George Springer, owner and operator of Hellebore Glass (dated April 27, 2017). French will draft a reply, indicating that there is a formal process for the request of an Advisory Opinion, which Springer is invited to file; and b) the Board will redirect his concern to the Mayor, who has—with the Council—the authority to deal with the matter of his concern—namely, broadcasts of City Council meetings.
5. Somewhere between a handful and a dozen individuals on our boards and commissions have not completed the requisite ethics training session. Guzman will check with Darlene to see how many individuals remain to be trained, then work with Debbie Mahler to schedule a final training session. This final session will be scheduled for an evening with the intent of holding this training session open to interested members of the public.
6. The Board began a self-review, asking “Where are we now?” and “How have things gone?” In the past two years the Board has completed, per then Mayor Mc Carthy’s request, the revision of the Ethics Code and an initial training cycle. Now that the initial intensity of our work has been completed, it was proposed to move—effective July 2017—to a once per month meeting cycle (May and June 2017 will continue to be twice per month meetings as we complete a) our new case studies for the training manual; b) proposed op-ed and c) self-review).
7. The board opened, but left unfinished the question, “How far do we go in our research/discovery when preparing an Ethics Advisory?” In terms of discovery, we have relied on personal statements from persons involved, press reports, social media;
8. The board opened, but left unfinished the review of our process of preparing an advisory—namely, how do we share information arising during discovery/research and drafting of an advisory.
9. Bob French, a member of the Ethics Board and a planner for Nichols Brothers, has recused himself from any work-related activities for Nichols Brothers that would involve him directly dealing with Langley’s City Planner for the duration of his appointment to the Ethics Board.

Meeting concluded at 6:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Betcher