CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ETHICS
APRIL 28, 2016

ATTENDANCE:	Michael Church, Chair; Kara Murphy, Haroldo Williams
STAFF:	None
ABSENT:	Mikolos Koleszar, Antoinette Williams

Call to Order

Mr. Church called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. and stated that the above members were in attendance and there was a quorum present.

Public Participation - none

Approve Minutes - Meeting of December 2, 2015

Mr. Church announced that the approval of the minutes would be tabled as there was not a quorum of those that were in attendance for the February meeting.

Old Business

Mr. Church introduced himself, provided an overview of his background and asked members in attendance to do the same. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Williams both gave an overview of their experience and background. He then spoke on how the meetings would be conducted, asked members to be mindful of time and to refrain from the use of cell phones during the meeting.

Mr. Church acknowledged former Chair, Ms. Elizabeth Broncati for her work on Board with her role and involvement on the Board, in particular for writing the Citizens Guide and education efforts in communication of the Board's role and purview.

New Business

There was discussion on the purview of the Board and the role of members. Mr. Church suggested that the next step would be for members to review the Code of ethics, come up with questions and recommendation for any changes to present to Corporation Council
There was discussion on interpretations and how constructive criticism should be established.

Mr. Church then provided a summary of the history of the Board of Ethics from its inception and how the Code of Ethics and Citizens Guide were developed and created.

Mr. Williams suggested there be identification of gaps in the code and where there needs to be greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Board. He highlighted the area of gifts as an example and explained that there is no time or frequency of the $50 limit and it should be clarified.

Mr. Church suggested a strategy and timing of April-May-June as the period to get acquainted with the code and to schedule a presentation in the fall to City Departments and elected officials. Mr. Williams added that he would like for all City Officials to be made aware of how they are bound by the code and to have a document that is signed that they have received the Code of Ethics.

Ms. Murphy stated that a statement of acknowledgement and receipt of the Code is customary and there should be an annual questionnaire system that updates members and officials. There was discussion on the practices with personnel and if there are packets created by Human Resources.

Mr. Church suggested hat the Board should have proactive approach to educate City personnel and elected officials on issues such as conflict of interest, recusal of votes, nepotism, etc. He further recommended an open dialogue be established to make them aware of the Board's role and to develop relationships for the Board not just wait around for complaints to react. He added that he will check if there is a data base of City employees and officials and what the acceptable uses are. He will see how the Board can utilize existing technology to send e-mails or communications.

There was further discussion on the confidentiality factor and that a 'cannot speak on that' response to questions in conjecture nature regarding claims or questions. Mr. Williams suggested that if an advisory opinion is requested by an employee it should be clear that the Board is not in the capacity to advise, as that can be implied as conjecture.

There was further discussion on ways to avoid Board member liability and to bring awareness to make people knowledgeable about the Code of Ethics

Mr. Church suggested to come back to the next meeting with notes and questions or suggested changes for a recommendation to Corporation Counsel. He added that he will prepare a draft of the Board expectations of an execution plan for the 2016-17 strategy and calendar of timelines for the tasks of communication and education.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,
Telesco Secretarial Services