

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS
AUGUST 8, 2016

PRESENT:

James Morrissey, Non-Governmental Member (Chairman)
Bill Tedesco, Non-Governmental Member
Gail Seaman, Government Member
Chris Scoville, Alternate Non-Government Member
Edna Wells, Alternate Government Member

GUESTS:

Brian Reichenbach, Warren County Attorney
Claudia Braymer, City of Glens Falls, Ward 3 Supervisor
Peter McDevitt, City of Glens Falls, Ward 2 Supervisor
Rachel Seeber, Town of Queensbury Supervisor At Large
Frank Thomas, Warren County Budget Officer/Town of Stony Creek Supervisor
Amanda Allen, Clerk of the Board
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Mr. Morrissey called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Mr. Morrissey advised that copies of memorandums received from Brian Reichenbach, *Warren County Attorney*, which indicated his opinion on the matters that were discussed at the last meeting had been distributed to the Board members and he requested that Mr. Reichenbach provide a summary of such; *copies of which are on file with the minutes*.

In regards to the authority of the Warren County Ethics Board and the authority contained within the Local Law concerning the Warren County Ethics and Disclosure, as well as the General Municipal Law, Mr. Reichenbach opined that the Board had the authority to issue advisory opinions; however, he noted, they did not have the authority to act as a judiciary body, nor could they respond to complaints from the general public. He apprised if they so desired, he could conduct further research on the matter and/or address other points or issues pertaining to the memo.

Mr. Reichenbach apprised there were two items which required addressing, the first of which concerned a proposed opinion from the Board in response to a request from Rachel Seeber, *Town of Queensbury Supervisor At-Large*, to determine whether the perception that she was employed by SUNY (*State University of New York*) Adirondack was in conflict with the Code of Ethics of Warren County. He opined that there was no conflict present since Ms. Seeber was not employed by SUNY Adirondack but rather by SUNY Plattsburg. He pointed out this was his opinion only and was subject to the vote of the Board.

Next, Mr. Reichenbach stated, was his proposed opinion regarding a request from John Strough, *Town of Queensbury Supervisor*, concerning his membership on the Board of Directors for the Warren County SPCA, as well the SUNY Adirondack Board of Trustees and whether this resulted in a conflict with his duties as a Supervisor for Warren County. He said he concluded that neither of those memberships resulted in a conflict; however, he noted, the Board of Ethics would make the final determination on this opinion.

Ms. Seaman stated she was pleased that a letter from SUNY Adirondack confirming Ms. Seeber was never employed there was contained within the items distributed, as she believed that information addressed the issue there. In regards to Mr. Reichenbach's opinion concerning Mr. Strough, she said she concurred with him and had no issue moving forward with such.

Mr. Morrissey called for a motion to formally approve Mr. Reichenbach's conclusion concerning the fact that there was no conflict of interest present in the case of Ms. Seeber and SUNY Adirondack since she had never been employed there. The necessary motion was made by Mr. Tedesco,

seconded by Ms. Seaman and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Seaman, seconded by Mr. Tedesco and carried unanimously to formally approve Mr. Reichenbach's opinion stating Mr. Strough's membership on the Board of Director's for the Warren County SPCA and the SUNY Adirondack Board of Trustees did not conflict with his duties as a Supervisor for Warren County.

Mr. Scoville entered the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

Ms. Seeber introduced herself to the Board and applauded them for meeting publicly, as this provided transparency to the taxpayers of Warren County regarding the Board of Ethics. Ms. Seeber questioned whether the inquiry made was public information and Mr. Reichenbach replied that under the rules the inquiry the Board was responding to was from Ms. Seeber and she was free to share it with whomever she wished. She requested that a copy of the Board's response be forwarded to June Maxam, as she was the Warren County resident who had filed a complaint last year stating her opinion that there was a conflict since Ms. Seeber was the Chairman of the Community College Committee that had since merged with other Committees to form the Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. She noted she was Vice-Chairman of this Committee. She informed Ms. Maxam's perception was that SUNY Adirondack and SUNY Plattsburg were the same entity and therefore a conflict existed. Mr. Morrissey apprised they would notify Ms. Maxam of their opinion on the matter.

As there was no further business to come before the Warren County Board of Ethics, on motion by Ms. Seaman and seconded by Mr. Tedesco, Mr. Morrissey adjourned the meeting at 4:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board