

MINUTES

Muncie Ethics Advisory Committee
Thursday, May 9, 2024
7:30pm
Maring-Hunt Library
2005 S. High Street
Muncie, IN

Roll Call

Members present: Concepcion, Edgell, McCauliff, Shipman, Taylor
Members absent: Black, Craig, Gibson, Whitaker

Approval of minutes of May meeting

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Input

- Members of the public in attendance offered comments or questions about the draft standards.

Terry Tolle asked if “partner” could or should be included in the list of relationships covered by conflict of interest rules.

Jeff Hansard made the committee aware that the municipal judge and court employees are covered by state judicial rules.

Jeff Hansard suggested that the proposed Ethics Commission could play a role in public education efforts about ethics in government and possibly other local government issues.

Linda Hanson pointed out that the League of Women Voters has a citizen education handbook available at their website LWVIN.org.

New business

- Discussion of public feedback on draft ethics standards

The committee discussed the public feedback it received regarding the draft ethics standards. This feedback will be considered as the committee continues its work

Old business

- Review of schedule through September

Chip Taylor will schedule meetings for July-September when the library system opens up scheduling for the last half of the year.

- Discussion of ethics commission responsibilities, including monitoring and enforcement.

The committee discussed the memo about monitoring and enforcement issues that was prepared by Dan Gibson. Chip Taylor will pass along the following feedback to Dan Gibson:

- Jurisdiction: the committee observed that the ethics committee resolution mentions also regulating behavior of those with a business relationship with the city.
 - Authority: would be better if commission had subpoena authority delegated to it in the ordinance; commission should have authority to hire outside counsel in the event that neither the city attorney nor city council attorney are unable or unwilling to assist.
 - Public records and public access: Dan should go ahead and contact the Public Access Counselor about the issues in the memo. It was the sense of the committee that it would be best if every complaint could be initially discussed in executive session for consistency.
 - Complaint procedure: it was the sense of the committee that the ordinance should spell out the complaint procedure generally, but let the commission work out the details.
 - Violations: it was the sense of the committee that we didn't wish to develop a schedule of specific fines (option 1), but would rather see a blend of the other two options. There could be the possibility of a fine if a violation ends up in city court, but public findings would also provide incentive for compliance with the standards.
- Review of revised draft language regarding ethics commission composition, appointment, etc.
 - The committee reviewed revised language clarifying commission member terms and the counting of partial terms.
 - The committee reviewed revised language clarifying requirements for the political affiliation requirements of commission appointees.
 - The committee reviewed draft language regarding a City Transparency Portal to be overseen by the commission.
 - The committee reviewed draft language regarding training requirements for elected officials, appointed officials, officers, and employees. The committee discussed the need to have different trainings appropriate for people in different roles (appointed officials and other key decision makers vs. rank and file employees). Chip Taylor will revise and bring back to the committee.

Other business

- Public engagement efforts
- Next meeting: June 20, 2024 – DIFFERENT LOCATION – Kennedy Library
- Will schedule meeting for July and beyond in June
- June City Council meeting – June 3

Adjournment