ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Ritter called the Ethics Commission Regular Meeting of April 7, 2026 to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

3. **WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS.** John Scimone and James Wolfley were welcomed as new members of the Ethics Commission.

4. **ATTENDANCE AND SEATING ALTERNATES.** Betsy Ritter, Alan Messier, Paul Helvig, Cathy Patterson. Sara Mallari, John Scimone and James Wolfley.

   MOTION (1): **Ms. Patterson moved to seat alternates Paul Helvig and Sara Mallari. Seconded by Mr. Scimone. Mr. Helvig and Ms. Mallari abstained from voting (5-0-2) Motion carried.**

5. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2026.**

   MOTION (2): **Mr. Helvig moved to approve the January 6, 2026 Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Messier. Messrs. Scimone and Wolfley abstained from voting. (5-0-2) Motion carried.**

6. **CORRESPONDENCE.**
   1.Financial Reports were received.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT** Mary Childs, a member of the RTM Legislation and Administration Standing Subcommittee, discussed the procedures of the RTM and the Subcommittee.

8. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR.**

   a. Budget Update. Ms. Ritter reported the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance approved the Ethics Commission budget in the amount of $900. A Budget Hearing will be held on May 6.

Ms. Ritter informed the Commission she is unable to attend and asked that a member of this Commission attend to answer any questions they may have.

b. Update from RTM Legislation and Administration Standing Subcommittee. Ms. Ritter reported the current Ethics Commission ordinances will be a topic of discussion at the April meeting and she will advise this Commission of the date it will be discussed. Ms. Childs explained to the Ethics Commission the Standing Subcommittee consists of five members: Emily Franklin, Erica Casper, Paul Goldstein, Danielle Steward-Gelinas and herself. The public is welcome to attend their meetings. Ms. Patterson stated she is interested in how the RTM Legislation and Administration Standing Subcommittee works. Ms. Childs responded if the Ordinance is going to be rewritten, the Subcommittee would look at ordinances of other Connecticut towns. Much research is needed. Ms. Patterson asked how long is the process? Ms. Childs reported we assure that amendments are sound, and a Public Hearing is held. Ms. Mallari expressed concern our request for changes has been with the RTM since October 2024 and she hopes the Subcommittee is able to meet and address these issues. Ms. Patterson stated she realized that Ms. Childs' Subcommittee is backlogged. However, before this Commission has another complaint, she hopes the Town Attorney and RTM will review the issues. Ms. Childs stated she will bring back our recommendations to the RTM.

Ms. Ritter reported that following our January meeting Mr. Messier sent some language from the Old Lyme Ethics Commission regarding the issue of conflict of interest. She sent this language to the RTM Subcommittee. Further discussion concerned the role of the Commission in discussions with the RTM Subcommittee, the need to better define limits and scope of our ordinances, the role of the Commission in resolving disputes, and the rules concerning conflict of interest. Mr. Messier suggested that the problems this Commission is experiencing is at the RTM level. Our ruling should be to determine violations and not establish what should be the practice of who can vote. Commission members urged Ms. Childs to encourage the RTM to seek advice from the Town Attorney concerning conflicts of interest for its members as the budget sessions begin. Mr. Messier added it should be made clear of what they can or cannot vote on. The process itself as to who can vote is in the RTM's purview. We were called upon to settle a dispute. Mr. Helvig stated the RTM is discussing how we handle voting on the budget but still does not address the issue of wording around the idea of public impression of conflict of interest. Mr. Messier stated that is only in the Ordinance. Ms. Ritter added there is no rule on conflict of interest and we hope the RTM is able to add clarity. Mr. Messier reported our current Ordinance is at this time in full force and effect. Mr. Scimone stated there is language in our Ordinance. Ms. Ritter added it is a case-by-case basis.

9. DISCUSSION ON FORMALIZING RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE COMMISSION.

Ms. Ritter presented a draft compilation of actions, procedures and language the Commission has utilized but has not formally kept. She asked Commission members to review the draft and bring additional ideas and items for inclusion and discussion to our July meeting. There was general agreement on the need to compile internal procedures for the benefit of future commissions.

10. OLD BUSINESS. There was no discussion of old business.

11. NEW BUSINESS. There was no discussion of new business.

12. ADJOURNMENT.

MOTION (3): Mr. Wolfley moved to adjourn the Ethics Commission Regular Meeting of April 7, 2026 at 7:55 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Scimone. (7-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Ghersi, Recording Secretary