

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RTM
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CODE OF CONDUCT
FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

The RTM Special Committee on Code of Conduct met via Zoom on February 23, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. It was the second meeting of this Committee, which was appointed by RTM Moderator Velma Heller on January 5, 2021.

Code of Conduct Committee Members Present

Stephen Shackelford, Chair
Jessica Bram
Mark Friedman
Peter Gold
Noah Hammond
Kristin Mott
Lauren Soloff

Other RTM Members Present

Candace Banks
Brandi Briggs
Arlene Gertzoff
Kristin Hamlin
Dick Lowenstein
Lisa Newman

Members of the Public

Jay Walshon

The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting of the Special Committee on Code of Conduct. With a motion to approve by Peter Gold, and a second by Mark Friedman, the minutes were approved by a vote of 6 to 0 with one abstention.

The Chair began the meeting by stating that our initial goal should be to outline the topics the Committee thinks are most appropriate to include in a first working draft of a code of conduct. Peter Gold suggested walking through the City of Evans Colorado Code of Conduct as a starting point and note which sections appear to be most relevant to what the Committee is trying to accomplish. Peter Gold read through the City of Evans Colorado Code of Conduct and the Committee agreed on an expansive view of what specifically would and would not be included in order to create our first working draft document.

There was some general discussion with regard to whether any proposed Code of Conduct would provide concrete guidelines or be more conceptual in nature. Dr. Jay Walshon spoke about

members of the RTM being able to challenge employees of the town and other elected officials since RTM members represent the voice of the electorate.

The Committee, along with other members present, discussed the issues associated with regulating conduct outside of someone's capacity as an RTM member, particularly as it relates to social media. It was agreed that we would look at how other communities speak to the issue of social media and the behavior of elected officials. In this regard, several issues were raised, including whether there should be a certain standard applied to RTM members at all times, or whether any future guidelines should apply only to situations where RTM members are referring to issues related to Westport, or when holding themselves out specifically as members of the RTM.

Jessica Bram suggested that we take a look at Section 3 of the Green Bay, Wisconsin Code of Conduct, and Lauren Soloff suggested that we consider the Sunnyvale Model of Excellence bullet points outlined on its signature page. Mark Friedman discussed the use of mnemonic – **Respect/Teamwork/Manners**. Stephen Shackelford noted that he received an email from a constituent asking that the committee not “overdo it” with any potential code of conduct. There was also additional discussion about whether it is necessary to review the existing conflict of interest policy as part of the Committee's charge, and whether any enforcement and/or penalties should be incorporated as part of a future Code of Conduct.

Jay Walshon stated that there would be no practical use of a Code of Conduct without enforcement or accountability mechanisms in place. Several committee members stated that they preferred a “less is more” approach to any future Code of Conduct and that they would be against any type of enforcement mechanism. It was agreed that the topic of enforcement would be addressed at the next meeting.

It was agreed that Peter Gold would create a working document from the potentially applicable provisions of the City of Evans Colorado Code. Once committee members received the document they were to mark it up with their own comments and send back to Peter. A draft incorporating comments will be circulated among the committee before the next meeting.

Mr. Shackelford moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Gold seconded the motion, and the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by: Lauren Soloff

