

SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2011 Annual Report

Report to the Communities of

Crown Point, Highland, Munster, Schererville and Whiting

SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2011 Annual Report

We are pleased to submit this report to our member communities pursuant to Article 6 (c) of the Interlocal Agreement that established the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (Commission). The Commission's principal activities during the calendar year 2011 are summarized in the following paragraphs of this report.

Commission Membership and Organization

During 2011, the Commission welcomed our new Shared Ethics Officer Joe Pellicciotti and also two new Commissioners -- Reverend Mark Wilkins representing Crown Point and Reverend David Trexler representing Highland. The Commission met six times during the year, hosted three public events, and appeared before various governmental bodies on numerous occasions.

In addition, our first professionally printed brochure was prepared and distributed at presentations and events where Commission members appeared. Our written materials were enhanced by creation of a PowerPoint presentation. Also the Commission's website was designed and ready for release in early 2012.

2011 Employee Training

During 2011, employee training continued to be conducted in each community, using their own trainers or sharing local trainers from other member communities. The previous year, the Commission had concluded that the most practical way to achieve our goal of bringing training opportunities to all member community employees was to take the training to the employees -- to their office or work site.

We continue to ask our trainers to base their presentations on one of our four training programs, developed by volunteer local ethicists Leslie Rittenmeyer and Jill Miller, the latter of whom conducted an abbreviated training presentation for the Board of Delegates, the Commission's fiscal agent. To supplement our training programs, the Commission purchased several copies of a 12 minute interactive video that can also be used by our trainers.

We are pleased to note that by mid-2011 every member community reported that they had made ethics training available to all their employees. This is the first time complete coverage has been achieved. We encourage our communities to continue providing ethics training to new employees shortly after hiring and to all employees on some sort of a regular schedule, such as every other year.

An open issue that the Commission needs to address involves training for the many boards and commissions that serve each community. We have asked for input and have discussed several options. By year end, this matter was still under consideration.

New Community Recruitment

During 2011, an active effort was made to recruit additional members. The Interlocal Agreement was modified permitting communities in Porter and LaPorte Counties to join the Commission. A presentation was made to the Valparaiso Ethics Commission but at least for now they have decided to proceed on their own.

Meanwhile, discussions have been had with several additional Lake County entities, including Cedar Lake, Dyer, East Chicago, Gary, Hobart, the Solid Waste Management District and Lake County itself. At year end, none had yet committed to join, though Lake County seemed close.

On May 25th and again on September 26th, Shared Ethics Officer Pellicciotti and President Bellamy described the work of the Commission to Board Members of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. To enhance our presentation, a PowerPoint presentation was developed by Shared Ethics Officer Pellicciotti to supplement our written handout materials.

Community Outreach

In partnership with two other community organizations, the Lake County Advancement Committee and the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council, the Commission hosted three major public events to foster the development of an Ethics Culture in Northwest Indiana. The first event, held on March 11th, was a breakfast meeting to mark **Ethics in Local Government Month**. Nearly 300 community, government and business leaders as well as interested citizens attended this event which featured Andy Shaw, Executive Director of the Better

Government Association of Chicago, as the keynote speaker, followed by a distinguished panel consisting of Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller, US Attorney David Capp, State Senator Jim Arnold, Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas and Munster Town Manager Tom DeGiulio. The Commission wishes to thank our four sponsors -- BP, NIPSCO, the TIMES and the White Family Foundation -- for their generous support of this event.

On October 14th, the three organizations again sponsored an event, this time a luncheon meeting featuring former Indiana **Governor Joe Kernan**, drawing on his past experience as Mayor of South Bend. Business, government and community leaders attended this event.

The final co-hosted event was on October 18th, an evening meeting at Merrillville High School, to discuss **public access laws** featuring Indiana's Public Access Counselor Joe Hoage, Hoosier Press Association representative Bill Nangle and municipal law attorney Dave Hollenbeck. The purpose of this meeting was to help the general public learn how to access public records and also to encourage the formation of Watch Dog groups to monitor local government proceedings. Quality of Life Council Director Jim Flannery is following up with those expressing interest in participating in the Watch Dog process.

Press Coverage

The work of the Commission has received widespread coverage. Thanks are owed to the local media for their strong support of our efforts to promote ethical decision making. Media coverage included:

- January 11, 2011 - TIMES news story concerning East Chicago consideration of Shared Ethics Advisory Commission membership
- March 1, 2011 - TIMES Guest Editorial by Dennis Rittenmeyer, discussing the Ethics in Government event
- March 12, 2011 - Post Tribune news story on the March Ethics in Government event

- March 12, 2011 - TIMES news story and picture on the March Ethics in Government event
- March 20, 2011 - TIMES Morton Marcus column discussing the March Ethics in Government event with reference to the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- March 20, 2011 - TIMES news story mentioning the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission in connection with East Chicago's consideration of an ethics ordinance.
- March 28, 2011 - TIMES editorial quoting Indiana Attorney General urging East Chicago to join the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- April 3, 2011 - TIMES news story about presentation by President Bellamy and Shared Ethics Officer Pellicciotti to the East Chicago Council Ethics Committee
- June 2011 - Shore Magazine – article by BGA's Andy Shaw on the work of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- June 21, 2011 - TIMES Guest Commentary by President Bellamy about the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission's mission
- July 3, 2011 - TIMES news story about the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission's work and plans
- July 21, 2011 - TIMES editorial urging Porter County to join the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- August 10, 2011 - Post Tribune news story about President Bellamy's presentation to the Valparaiso Ethics Commission
- August 16, 2011 - TIMES news story about President Bellamy's presentation to the Valparaiso Ethics Commission
- September 23, 2011 - TIMES editorial urging widespread membership in the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission

- October 15, 2011 - TIMES news story about Governor Kernan's ethics presentation
- October 15, 2011 - Post Tribune news story on Governor Kernan's ethics presentation
- October 18, 2011 - TIMES column by Doug Ross discussing the Public Access event
- October 19, 2011 - TIMES news story and picture reporting on the Public Access event
- October 19, 2011 - Post-Tribune news story reporting on the Public Access event
- October 30, 2011 - TIMES Guest Commentary by Quality of Life Council Executive Director about the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission's role
- November 3, 2011 - TIMES picture and news story about the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission's 6th Anniversary
- November 4, 2011 - TIMES Editorial – urging Lake County to join the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- November 27, 2011 - TIMES news story quoting President Bellamy on use of the county cafeteria to prepare food for a political event.
- December 4, 2011 - TIMES Editorial again urging the county to join the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- December 9, 2011 - TIMES Editorial -- urging communities to join the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission
- December 20, 2011 - TIMES news story about the Town of Dyer's decision to delay joining Shared Ethics Advisory Commission

In addition, President Bellamy and Commissioner Rittenmeyer were interviewed on local radio on December 10th.

Looking Forward

For 2012, the Commission established the following goals to advance ethics in local government:

- Monitor member community activity (1) to achieve the continuing goal of offering training to 100 percent of member community employees and (2) to expand training to include Boards and Commissions.
- Conduct a vigorous program of community outreach events and press coverage.
- Continue to recruit new member communities.
- Prepare and distribute break room posters displaying Shared Ethics Code.
- Finalize a website for the Commission.
- Poll employees in member communities on ethics issues.

Conclusion

The Commission invites input and comments on this report and our role. Comments from member communities and the general public are always welcome, as are suggestions about what additional activities we might address within our limited mandate of presenting ethics training to municipal employees. As a reminder, the Commission has no adjudicatory authority. This responsibility remains with each member community.

Dated this 24th day of January, 2012

SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

By _____
Calvin Bellamy
Commission President

Joseph Pellicciotti
Shared Ethics Officer