



SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

SERVING NWI SINCE 2005

SEAC - July 16, 2025 - Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting Attendees

	Member Community	Commissioner	Attended?
1	Burns Harbor	Neil Stout	Y
2	Cedar Lake	Sheryl Corey	Y
3	Crown Point	Julie Wendorf	Y
4	Dyer	Julie McElmurry	Y
5	East Chicago	NO COMMISSIONER	N
6	Gary	Dr Vanessa Allen-McCloud	N
7	Hebron	Thomas Chihocki	N
8	Highland	NO COMMISSIONER	N
9	Hobart	Dale Combs	N
10	Lake County	Cecile LaCombe Petro	Y
11	Lake Station	NO COMMISSIONER	N
12	LaPorte County	Angie Carr	N
13	Lowell	Cyndi Hughes	N
14	Merrillville	Richard Hardaway	Y
15	Munster	Michael McIntyre	Y
16	Ogden Dunes	Todd Larkin	Y
17	Portage	NO COMMISSIONER	Y
18	Porter County	Courtney Smith	Y
19	Schererville	Sandra Davis	Y
20	St John	NO COMMISSIONER	N
21	Valparaiso	John Seibert	Y
22	Whiting	Tim Wajvoda	Y
**	President Emeritus, At Large	Cal Bellamy	Y
**	Advisor, At Large	Michael Suggs	N
**	Advisor, At Large	Karen Marben	Y
**	Advisor, At Large	Tom DeGiulio	N
**	GUEST - Portage	Karen Anderson	Y

Summary: The Commission reviewed the organization's membership, financial situation, and upcoming expenses, with updates on upcoming ethics training sessions, communications efforts, and plans for the Summit and 20th anniversary commemoration.

Next steps

- Membership
 - Richard Hardaway to reach out to Rick Long in Lake Station to help get a commissioner appointed.



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- Courtney to reach out to Portage Chief of Staff Leann to get a commissioner appointed and JBOD meetings added to the mayor's calendar.
- Summit:
 - Cal: Follow up with Mayor Angie's assistant regarding summit panel participation, then reach out to Mayor Bonta and Mayor Melton for summit panel participation.
 - Julie W: Contact Avalon to confirm October 30th date for the summit.
- Training Committee:
 - Cecile to call Richard to confirm November 7th availability for "How to Train" event at Dean and Barbara White facility.
 - Tim to work with Whiting leaders to identify additional ethics trainers for Whiting municipality to have 3-4 trainers' total.
 - Training Committee members to assist Cecile with organizing the "How to Train" session for late Summer.
- Communications Committee:
 - Julie Mc to design thank you card/email template for thanking municipality employees and celebrating SEAC's 20th anniversary.
 - Julie Mc to create a communications plan for the 20th anniversary to be reviewed at the next meeting.
 - Julie Mc to send talking points/email for Commissioners to share with their community leaders.

The meeting was called to order at 8:31am with the reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Courtney then moved on to discuss the May 2025 meeting minutes, which were approved unanimously (motion by Mike McIntyre, seconded by Richard Hardaway). All SEAC meeting minutes are available on the website at sharedethics.com.

Membership Update: The group welcomed Tim Wajoda, the new Commissioner from Whiting replacing Ken Zubeck. The group then discussed the challenges in appointing Commissioners to several member communities, with East Chicago, Highland, Lake Station, Portage, and St. John being particularly difficult. Richard Hardaway offered to contact Rick Long in Lake Station to help appoint a commissioner, while the group discussed the need to reach out to Portage's administration regarding their outstanding Commissioner appointment.

Financial Update: The group reviewed financial reports, with Julie Mc presenting updated budget allocations and explaining various expenses including website costs and training programs. The group discussed a \$70,000 CD rollover that was approved by the Joint Board of Delegates, with final approval scheduled for September.

Summit Update: Julie W. reported on the summit planning, noting that while Governor Holcomb declined to speak, they are proceeding with a panel of mayors as presenters, though they still need confirmation of the October 30th date from Avalon and are waiting on responses from potential mayor participants.

The group discussed plans for SEAC's 20th anniversary summit and celebration. Julie W. outlined efforts to honor founding members, though concerns were raised about including all three original members due to potential withdrawals. The team decided to hold off on major announcements until the summit program is finalized, with a focus on ensuring panel diversity to avoid previous feedback issues. Karen M. suggested creating thank-you cards for employees, with Julie Mc agreeing to design them, while Karen M. proposed sending digital cards via email as an alternative to physical distribution.



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Training Committee Update: The Training Committee, led by Cecile, reviewed the recent Board and Commissioner training held on May 29th, which was well-received but had some feedback about too many case studies and high no-show rates. The group agreed to implement better communication with registrants for future events, including mentioning the cost per plate, to reduce no-shows. Julie Mc highlighted the challenge of engaging new presenters and attendees, suggesting that personal invitations from local officials, such as town managers or employees, could improve attendance. Karen M. shared the example of successful attendance for Crown Point, attributing it to a city planner's personal invitations.

Cecile also mentioned plans for a "How to Train" event focused on improving training techniques, which is expected to take place in the fall. The group discussed alternative venues for that upcoming breakfast event, deciding to explore the Dean and Barbara White facility in Maryville as a cost-effective option instead of the Avalon. Richard confirmed the facility would provide necessary equipment and have a list of approved caterers. The event, planned for 8:30-11:30 AM, would feature presentations by two IUN professors, with November 7th being the preferred date after September 12th was ruled out due to a conflict with the AIM conference.

Cecile discussed the need for units of government to contact her for train-the-trainer sessions, noting that while summer activity is slow, Fall typically sees increased demand. She requested that communities pick up existing ethics guides, code handouts, and posters from the NIRPC office in Portage.

Communications Committee Update: Julie McElmurry reported on the communications committee's activities, including website updates and the 20th anniversary communications plan, and mentioned she would send talking points to the group.

New Business: Julie Mc reiterated the JBOD meeting decisions including the approval of the updated budget and agreement to roll-over the \$70,000 CD (final agreement by email once interest rates are known). No other new business.

Upcoming meetings and events are reviewed, including the "How to Train" Training to be scheduled sometime in late Fall and the Ethics Summit sometime in October. The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for September 17th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30am via unanimous approval of a motion by Mike McIntyre and second by Neil Stout.