



## SEAC - Sept 17, 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	Y
7	Hebron	Thomas Chihocki	N
8	Hobart	NO COMMISSIONER	N
9	Lake County	Cecile LaCombe Petro	Y
10	Lake Station	NO COMMISSIONER	N
11	LaPorte County	Angie Carr	Y
12	Lowell	Cyndi Hughes	N
13	Merrillville	Richard Hardaway	Y
14	Munster	Michael McIntyre	Y
15	Ogden Dunes	Todd Larkin	Y
16	Portage	NO COMMISSIONER	N
17	Porter County	Courtney Smith	Y
18	Schererville	Sandra Davis	Y
19	St John	NO COMMISSIONER	N
20	Valparaiso	John Seibert	Y
21	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
**	JBOD President	Janice Malinowski	Y

**Summary:** The Commission approved the draft 2026 budget for JBOD consideration, 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

- Julie Mc: Submit the approved draft 2026 SEAC Budget to Janice for JBOD consideration at their November meeting.
- All members: Attend the upcoming Ethics Summit with over 130 people already registered.
- Julie Mc: Include materials at the Summit about joining SEAC including stronger pitch in the Summit slides and script.
- Cecile: Coordinate the trainer training event on Nov 7<sup>th</sup> at the Dean and Barbara White Center.
- Julie Mc: Make 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary thank you note available for member communities by Dec 1.
- Julie Mc to send talking points/email for Commissioners to share with their community leaders.



## SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

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The meeting was called to order at 8:31am with the reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Courtney then moved on to discuss the July 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](https://sharedethics.com).

**Financial Update and 2026 Budget Approval:** The discussion focused on reviewing the financial update and proposed budget for the upcoming year. Julie presented the current year-to-date financial status, including expenses and remaining budget, while noting that the board had approved a deposit for the summit and additional costs for updating the Traliant video. The group discussed the potential for overspending the current budget, but Julie clarified the expected spending for 2025. The Commissioners unanimously approved the proposed budget, which will be sent to the Joint Board of Delegates for consideration at their November meeting.

**Summit Update:** The discussion focused on finalizing plans for an upcoming summit celebrating its 20th year, featuring a mayor panel and case study discussions moderated by Dr. Marlon Mitchell. Julie Wendorf requested attendees to register for the summit and share the flyer with their municipalities, while also inviting them to assist with setup at 7 a.m. on the day of the event. Julie McElmurry reported 131 registrations so far, noting that more participants are needed, and she provided a link for easy online registration. Julie Mc also updated the group on the press release being sent to the media contacts, and the expectation for a summit ad being in the NWI Times starting the end of September. She continues to work on the slides for the summit and the logistics for questions using a QR code.

**Training Committee Update:** Cecile announced a Train the Trainer session scheduled for November 7th, focusing on improving training skills rather than ethics. The session will be led by two professors from IUN, Susan Zinner and Monica Solinas-Saunders, and is open to current trainers and those interested in becoming trainers within the 21 member communities. The training committee, consisting of Sheryl Corey, Cyndi Hughes, Todd Larkin, Courtney Smith, Sandra Davis, and John Siebert, will help recruit trainers from other communities, with each member committing to contact 2-3 additional communities. Todd Larkin will work with John Siebert on identifying trainers in Valparaiso, while Cecile will contact previously trained individuals and assign specific communities to each committee member for outreach.

The team discussed the status of a training flyer that cannot be distributed yet due to pending venue contract, which Richard will follow up on by Friday. Julie agreed to modify the flyer's colors to avoid confusion with the summit flyer, and team members were assigned to cover different municipalities: Julie for Dyer, Courtney for Chesterton, Julie Wendorf for Crown Point with Karen, and Angie for La Porte County with assistance from Courtney. The training is scheduled for November 7th at 7:45 AM at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center in Maryville, where the training committee is needed for setup and breakfast registration.

Finally, 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 progress on 20th anniversary initiatives, including a "20 Things About SEAC" document and a history-based document that will be used for summit displays and Times advertisements. She presented a thank you card design for member communities to use in celebrating SEAC's anniversary, which Karen Marben approved and requested to be ready by December 1st for employee appreciation events. Julie mentioned she would send out draft minutes and talking points the following week.

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**Membership Update:** The group discussed the need to find a new Ethics Commissioner for Hobart following Dale Comb's resignation due to health reasons. They explored potential candidates, including reaching out to Deb Longer at Hobart and considering bank executives in St. John, where the town manager reported difficulty finding volunteers for the ethics commission. The meeting also covered Highland's decision to leave SEAC and East Chicago's status as a dues-paying but non-participating member, with Julie noting that East Chicago had only one representative signed up for the upcoming summit.

### **Next meetings and adjournment**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup>. The Ethics Summit is scheduled for Oct 30 and the Training for Trainers is scheduled for Nov 7.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:30am via unanimous approval of a motion by Mike McIntyre and second by Sheryl Corey.

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