



2021 Annual Report

listening law Values courteous
transparency
justice Ethics respect
integrity Employees civility
fairness understanding citizens consensus
accountability diverse scrutiny
trust courage
responsibility Public dignity
professional service tolerance

Bringing Ethics Awareness and Training to our Communities

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2021 Annual Report

January 19, 2022

Dear SEAC Member Community Leader,

Thank you for your membership and commitment in the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC).

As a reminder, SEAC represents you, the local government entities of Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties who have voluntarily committed themselves to the Code of Shared Ethics and Values and who work together to achieve the Commission's primary goals of:

- Heightening awareness of ethical issues within municipal government.
- Assisting municipal employees with the practical tools to make ethical decisions.

We accomplish this mission through regular training sessions, training materials, advocacy articles and an ongoing collaborative effort to enhance ethical behavior within participating governments.

As required by Article 6(c) of our governing Interlocal Agreement, SEAC hereby submits this annual report to our member communities to share more details about our actions during 2021. I have organized the report into the following sections:

1. Structure and organization
2. Membership
3. Funding
4. Ethics Summit
5. Training
6. Candidate Ethics Pledge
7. Outreach and Media Coverage
8. 2021 and 2022 SEAC Goals

Thank you again for your membership and support of SEAC. Please feel free to reach out to me or your SEAC Commissioner with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Klein".

Daniel Klein, President SEAC
president@sharedethics.com
219-746-1445

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1. Structure and Organization

SEAC is working effectively and efficiently with the current committee structure established in 2019 including the Executive Committee, Training Committee, Communications Committee and Summit. These committees along with regular Commission and Executive Committee meetings have proven valuable in ensuring SEAC stays on track toward meeting our goals, while also discussing possible future projects and activities.

SEAC also continues to utilize NIRPC for administrative assistance and meeting location (2021 meetings were a combination of meetings held in person and virtually via ZOOM due to COVID19).

2021 SEAC Committee Structure

Executive Committee (Chair: President, Dan Klein)

- Members include:
 - Vice President (Rich Weigel)
 - Training Committee (Jamie Ward, Paula Carey)
 - Communications Committee (Julie McElmurry)
 - President Emeritus (Cal Bellamy)
- Focus on overall Commission management
- Strategic Planning

Training Committee (Chairs: Jamie Ward, Paula Carey)

- Focused on Train the Trainer, Trainer Refresh, Board and Commissions and Department Head training
- Conducts Employee Survey every few years
- Updates training as needed

Communications Committee (Chair: Julie McElmurry)

- Manages the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge process
- Drafts and manages distribution of Annual Report
- Manages website contractor
- Ensures all key documents are current
- Provides commissioners with communication schedule and materials

Summit (Chair: Rich Weigel)

- Plan and host the Summit
- All Commissioners assist with Summit work

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2. Membership

During 2021 we saw several changes to our Commissioners and Board of Delegates. Our member communities appointed six new Commissioners with three Commissioners resigning, and two new “At Large” Commissioners joined the group. Also, nine new Board of Delegates members were appointed with three members resigning.

Below is the most up-to-date list of member communities and their appointed Commissioners and Delegates. We currently have five communities in the process of finding new Commissioners and one community in the process of finding a new Board of Delegate member.

SEAC Commissioners and Joint Board of Delegates - Nov 11, 2021		
Community	SEAC Commissioner	Joint Board of Delegates Member
Burns Harbor	Howard Morgan	Jane Jordan
Cedar Lake	Bill Kuhn	Randy Niemeyer
Chesterton	Todd Elliott	James Ton
Crown Point		Andrew Kyres
Dyer	Julie McElmurry	Alan Brooks
East Chicago	Dick Morrisroe	Gilda Orange
Gary	Burgess Peoples	Cozey Weatherspoon
Hebron	Merlin Foresman	Don Ensign
Highland	Tim Huizenga	Michael Griffin
Hobart	Rich Weigel, Vice President	Deborah Longer
Lake County	Dan Klein, President	Jerry Tippy
Lake Station		Bill Carroll
LaPorte County		Joie Winski
Lowell	Manny Frausto	John Yelkich
Merrillville	Art Russell	Richard Hardaway
Munster	Michael McIntyre	Wendy Mis
Ogden Dunes	Kathy Kniola	Steve Grandfield
Portage	Releisa Parker	Sue Lynch, Vice President
Porter County	Courtney Smith	Laura Shur Blaney
Schererville	Lynn Volkmann	Janice Malinowski, President
St John		
Valparaiso	John Bowker	Peter Anderson
Westville		Lori Mercer
Whiting	Brian Lowry	Steve Spebar
President Emeritus, At Large	Cal Bellamy	--
At Large	Jamie Ward	--
At Large	Paula Carey	--
At Large	Michael Suggs	--
Advisor	Karen Marben	--
Advisor	Tom DeGiulio	--

*Peach highlighted rows are members currently with no Commissioners or Board of Delegate members

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We encourage those communities to fill their vacancies quickly. Below we have included information regarding the duties of these roles for reference.



Commissioners

Qualifications:

1. Not an employee of the appointing entity.
2. "... persons who live, work in or hold property in Lake, Porter or LaPorte Counties, Indiana." *
3. "These members should be persons of good character" *
4. Past and current members have included private citizens active in their community, such as retired officials or judges, lawyers, educators, and clergy.

Appointment:

Cities

Nominated by Mayor
Approved by City Council

Town

Nominated and approved by Town Council

Duties:

1. Faithfully attend regular Commission meetings (every other month) and also special meetings and Commission events as needed.
2. Actively participate in the discussion, planning and execution of the Commission's work.
 - Ethics Summit
 - Training activities
 - Ethics Pledge
 - Communication activities
3. Regularly update and maintain contact with community leadership and trainers serving your community.
4. Advocate and promote ethics in local government.
5. Committed to setting a strong example of integrity and high moral conduct.

*Interlocal Agreement



Board of Delegates Members

Qualifications: Preferably an elected official from the member community, but a senior staff member is acceptable.

Appointment:

Cities

Nominated by Mayor
Approved by City Council

Town

Nominated and approved by Town Council

Duties:

1. Faithfully attend Board of Delegate meetings (two to four meetings a year, called by the chairperson)
2. Elect a chairperson and determine which member community's clerk-treasurer will serve as fiscal administrator
3. Receive reports from the Commission on SEAC activities and programs
4. Review and set member community dues for the coming year
5. Review and approve SEAC's budget for the coming year
6. Advocate and promote ethics in local government.
7. Committed to setting a strong example of integrity and high moral conduct.

3. Funding

Member community dues continue to fund SEAC. During 2021 we were able to spend most of our budget with the major expenditures being our Board & Commission Training, the Summit, and a contract for new training videos. We expect 2022 to also be a full year!

Michael Griffin, Clerk-Treasurer of Highland, continues to support SEAC as the fiscal agent to manage fee invoices and issue all SEAC checks. We thank Michael for all of his service and advice.



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4. Ethics Summit

SEAC held its 10th Ethics Summit on October 29th. This free of charge event was open to the public and well attended with just over 115 attendees. It was sponsored by The Times and MonoSol. Our keynote speaker Violet Sistovaris, the prominent NIPSCO/NiSource executive, shared information about their ethics program and engaged in discussion about the similarities and differences between corporate and local government ethics training and management. Her presentation was well received. Attendees also participated in engaging conversation about various ethics dilemmas. Overall, a successful event! We expect the 2022 Ethics Summit to be held sometime in early Spring.

Shared Ethics
ADVISORY COMMISSION
BRINGING ETHICS AWARENESS AND TRAINING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

2021 Ethics Summit

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021 :: 8-11AM

AVALON MANOR :: 3555 US 30, MERRILLVILLE IN

Keynote Speaker

Violet Sistovaris

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER - NISOURCE

CELEBRATING
10 YEARS
of SEAC
SUMMITS

Sponsored by:

kuraray MonoSol

THE TIMES MEDIA COMPANY **nwi.com**

Visit us online at sharedethics.com

FREE EVENT
Open to the Public

RSVP:
by Friday, October 22
REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

Pre-Register Online at:
sharedethics.com

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5. Training

The Training Committee was very busy in 2021. First, an Employee Ethics Guide was created to be distributed along with copies of the reformatted Code of Shared Ethics and Values to all current member community employees along with elected officials and other appointed board and commission members. The new ethics guide can also serve as an introduction to the Code and SEAC for new employees. We expect the Guide to be distributed in early 2022.

Ethics Guide for Public Employees



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Code of Shared Ethics and Values

Preamble

For government to operate with transparency and accountability, it is essential that public officials and employees conduct themselves in ways that uphold the public trust. The Code of Shared Ethics and Values provides guidance and support to public servants for the promotion and maintenance of the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. Because we wish to ensure the public confidence in the integrity of our government entities, it is proposed that all elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers and others who participate in government shall personally commit to being trained on the values and standards put forth in this document.

Public Service Values	
	<p>Honesty / Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To exercise the moral courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions. • To work within the law and in a way that will bear close public scrutiny. • To exhibit trustworthiness. • To employ decision making that promotes the public's best interests. • To avoid impropriety and refrain from misusing an official position to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for myself or others. • To make no private promises of any kind that may unduly influence my public duties. • To refrain from engaging in business that would be directly or indirectly inconsistent with the conscientious performance of public duties. • To accept the responsibility to expose corrupt and/or unethical behavior. • To protect the public trust by exercising honesty and ensuring transparency.
	<p>Respect / Civility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To treat every person with dignity and respect. • To accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position while respecting my role as a member of a team and the community at large. • To act in a professional, responsive, and courteous manner. • To reach decisions only after considering various points of view. • To work with others in a spirit of tolerance and understanding. • To work to build consensus and accommodate diverse opinions. • To utilize effective communication by listening, asking questions and responding in a way that adds value to the conversation. • To support the public's right to know the truth and encourage diverse and civil public debate in the decision-making process.
	<p>Accountability / Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To refrain from using official positions to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for myself or others. • To remove myself from every decision-making process in which I, my business, my associates or my family may benefit and upon removing myself from decisions, I will show self-restraint and not voice my opinion on the question. • To conduct my private affairs in a manner that minimizes the risk of real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. • To make full public disclosure of the nature of any conflict of interest prior to any considered action. • To respect the privacy of others by keeping confidential information that I acquire in the course of my professional duties protected unless a legitimate reason to disclose exists. • To refrain from taking advantage of information received in the course of my professional duties that is not available to the public. • To refrain from directly or indirectly using or allowing the use of government property for anything other than official activities. • To refrain from soliciting or accepting gifts or gratuities that may have a real or perceived influence on my objectivity in carrying out official responsibilities or placing me under obligation to the donor. • To refrain from competing with the community where I am employed or serve as an appointed or elected official.
	<p>Fairness / Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advocate and promote the most efficient, effective, and equitable way to deliver public services without prejudice or discrimination. • To publicly acknowledge that the function of government is to serve the best interests of all citizens. • To refrain from granting preferential treatment to family and friends when making staffing decisions or awarding contracts. • To refrain from retaliation or condoning retaliation against those who have exposed corrupt or unethical behaviors. • To assess the effects of inadequate resources on diverse groups within the service population and develop plans to remedy and implement such plans. • To behave consistently and with respect toward all citizens.

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Second, the Training Committee worked hard to pick a new vendor to provide updated, and relevant training videos to be incorporated into our municipal employee training curriculum. The vendor chosen is Traliant and the Committee is currently working to finalize the videos and curriculum updates. We hope to rollout the new curriculum to our member community trainers later in 2022.

And, third the Training Committee hosted Board and Commission Training on August 30th. There were over 40 attendees and David Limardi was well received as the presenter and facilitator of discussion.

A flyer for the 2021 Board and Commission Ethics Training. The header features the Shared Ethics logo and tagline. The main title is "2021 Board and Commission Ethics Training". Below it is the subtitle "The Pursuit of an Ethical Organizational Culture". A starburst graphic on the left says "No cost to SEAC Member Communities!". The speaker is listed as "Mr. David M. Limardi, Principal, Limardi Consulting, LLC". A table provides details: Date (Monday, August 30th), Time (Dinner begins at 6:15 pm), and Location (Avalon Manor, 3550 E Lincoln Hwy, Merrillville). The footer encourages registration online at www.sharedethics.com by 5:00pm on Friday, August 20th.

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6. Candidates Ethics Pledge

SEAC had a break in the Candidate Ethics Pledge process in 2021 as it was an off year for local elections. Local elections will occur again in 2022, so we will once again invite candidates for all county, city, town, and township offices in Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties to sign the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge for both the primary election in May and the general election in November. As a reminder, the Pledge asks candidates to commit to providing ethics training for all employees whom they are responsible, to support a comprehensive ethics policy with vigorous enforcement, and to support whistleblower protection for employees filing ethics complaints.

7. Outreach & Media Coverage

The work of the Commission received widespread media coverage in 2021. Thanks are owed to local media for their strong support of our efforts to promote ethical decision making. Articles in print and other citations of media coverage are listed below. Please note that the print articles and the same articles from the Internet, where links are provided, may have slightly different titles, and some online articles may only be provided for a limited period.

SEAC Media Coverage in 2021	
January 31, 2021	NWI TIMES article by Cal Bellamy titled, “GUEST COMMENTARY: Ethics in government: Work in progress” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-ethics-in-government-work-in-progress/article_57841911-7b5a-5f02-ae7dd31ec8880582.html
January 31, 2021	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article by Cal Bellamy titled, “Ethics in Government: Work in Progress” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
July 15, 2021	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article by Cal Bellamy, titled, “Ethics in Local Government: An Update” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
August 15, 2021	NWI TIMES article by Cal Bellamy titled, “GUEST COMMENTARY: Ethics in local government: An update” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-ethics-in-local-government-an-update/article_7bc9c87e-bf18-5c2e-83e1-165cffb0cda4.html
October 7, 2021	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article, “SEAC Hosts Ethics Summit on 10/29”. (LaPorte County newspapers available thorough Kiel Media).
October 30, 2021	NWI TIMES article by Doug Ross titled, “WATCH NOW: Ethical dilemmas addressed at regional Summit” https://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/watch-now-ethical-dilemmas-addressed-at-regional-summit/article_df4814a0-364b-5a50-b8cd-e0deecbd0efd.html
November 28, 2021	NWI TIMES article by Richard Weigel titled, “Ethics issues tackled at 2021 summit” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/ethics-issues-tackled-at-2021-summit/article_a5a0d7f7-6cbe-5afb-a89e-5b7ec6a800c7.html

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8. 2021 and 2022 SEAC Goals

SEAC is happy to share that we were able to complete most of our 2021 goals, especially given that most of our interactions during the first half of the year were virtual. We were excited about once again being able to provide training to the board and commission members of our communities and the public via our annual Summit. Great progress has also been made in our training curriculum area with the development of the Employee Ethics Guide and ongoing work to update our training videos and curriculum. Finally, SEAC has fewer vacancies in its Commissioner and Board of Delegate ranks which took hard work and cooperation from our member communities.

SEAC – 2021 Goals

1. Host Ethics Summit - *COMPLETED*
2. Provide regular updates via the media on Commission activities and goals - *ONGOING*
3. Host Board & Commission Training - *COMPLETED*
4. Refresh our municipal employee ethics training curriculum. - *ONGOING*
5. Initiate actions to reenergize our member community trainers and host Train the Trainer training as needed. - *MOVED TO 2022*
6. Reconnect with member communities to encourage participation - *ONGOING*
7. Focus on filling Commission vacancies and expanding Commission membership to municipalities who have yet to join, especially in LaPorte County - *ONGOING*

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SEAC approved the 2022 Goals as listed below at our January 2022 meeting. While continuing our hosting of the Summit and training, in 2022 we will be asking candidates to sign the Candidate Ethics Pledge and expect to complete the refresh and rollout of our improved municipal employee ethics training.

SEAC – 2022 Goals

1. Host Ethics Summit
2. Host Manager Training
3. Solicit signatures of the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge from primary and general election candidates and publicize the results
4. Finalize the refresh of the municipal employee ethics training curriculum and rollout to member community trainers
5. Provide regular updates via the media on Commission activities and goals
6. Continue the focus on filling Commission vacancies and expanding Commission membership to municipalities who have yet to join, especially in LaPorte County