



SEAC - Nov 19, 2025 - Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting Attendees

	Member Community	Commissioner	Attended?
1	Burns Harbor	Neil Stout	Y
2	Cedar Lake	Sheryl Corey	N
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	Hobart	NO COMMISSIONER	N
9	Lake County	Cecile LaCombe Petro	Y
10	Lake Station	NO COMMISSIONER	N
11	LaPorte County	Angie Carr	N
12	Lowell	Cyndi Hughes	N
13	Merrillville	Richard Hardaway	Y
14	Munster	Michael McIntyre	N
15	Ogden Dunes	Todd Larkin	N
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	N
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 Sept 2025 minutes, the 2026 meeting schedule, reviewed Summit and “Becoming a More Effective Trainer” Training results, and the financial situation including the final expenses to be paid in 2025. The group also reviewed the organization's membership and received an update on the JBOD meeting.

Next steps

- Janice: Contact Lake County Treasurer John Patelis to request payment of outstanding Lake County dues.
- Courtney: Send (or coordinate with Mary to send) an email from president@sharedethics.com to all Commissioners requesting updated email contact information for their community's trainers.
- Julie Mc: Work with Mary to set up access to president@sharedethics.com for Courtney (and/or Julie) and assist in drafting the trainer contact information request email.
- Cecile: Send Richard a list of concerns/issues experienced at the Dean and Barbara White Center venue.
- Richard: Address concerns about the Dean and Barbara White Center venue with Barb, based on the list of issues to be provided by Cecile.



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- Julie Mc: Send out the electronic thank you message to all the Commissioners to share with their community leaders for year-end distribution to employees.
- Cal: Send the article about Shared Ethics' successes and setbacks to the Times for publication after Thanksgiving.
- Julie Mc: Begin work on the annual report in late November/early December for approval at the January meeting.
- Julie Mc: Make a Facebook post about the summit and other relevant updates (e.g., article publication, year-end 20th anniversary).
- Julie Mc: Recruit a volunteer from the Communications Committee to help with the Candidate Ethics Pledge process for the 2026 election cycle.
- Cal: Follow up with Michigan City's mayor after the first of the year regarding joining Shared Ethics, to encourage progress.
- Janice: Talk to Schererville town manager about reappointment to the Joint Board of Delegates at the end of the year when council does appointments.
- Janice: Coordinate with Courtney Udvare (JBOD Treasurer) to roll over the CD investment when it comes due (end of March/beginning of April 2026), if the board decides to keep the same terms.
- All Commission members: Consider whether to run for president or vice president and notify Courtney if interested, so it can be added to the January meeting agenda.
- Julie Mc to send talking points/email for Commissioners to share with their community leaders.

The meeting was called to order at 8:35am with the reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Courtney then moved on to discuss the Sept 2025 meeting minutes, which were approved unanimously (motion by Neil Stout, seconded by Richard Hardaway). All SEAC meeting minutes are available on the website at sharedethics.com.

The group then reviewed the 2026 meeting schedule; it was approved unanimously (motion by Sandra Davis, seconded by Julie McElmurry). This 2026 meeting schedule will be sent to media contacts for sharing with the public; and added to the sharedethics.com website under the calendar tab.

Financial Update: Julie McElmurry reported that the total upcoming expenses were slightly over \$16,000, resulting in an underpayment of about \$4,800 compared to the 2025 budget. The group reviewed the rollover of a CD, which Janice confirmed was around \$75,000, with interest rolled over for 180 days. They also discussed next year's budget (which was approved by the JBOD on Nov 12th) which includes plans for manager training, a summit, ethics pledge activities, and potential add-on video licensing for ethics training. Janice mentioned that the Joint Board of Delegates decided to maintain the current 75% municipalities' contribution rate for next year. The group also addressed the issue of Lake County not paying their dues, with Janice planning to contact the Lake County Treasurer for assistance.

Summit Update: The team reviewed the evaluation analysis of the recent Ethics Summit held on Thursday, Oct 30th. The Summit was attended by 210 people out of 261 registrants, and had 15 walk-ins. The summit received high satisfaction ratings across all aspects, including the keynote presentation, case studies, and overall experience. Attendees appreciated the diversity of panelists and the use of QR codes for keynote mayor panel anonymous questions. The team discussed potential improvements for future summits, such as addressing the unplanned break and providing more time for table discussions after case study readings. They also considered reaching out to member communities for examples of ethics-related policies and procedures that can be shared.

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Training Committee Update: Cecile shared results of the evaluations from the “How to become an Effective Trainer” Training offered on Friday, Nov 7th. There were 43 attendees and all were engaged and enjoyed the material. The training was very well received! Cecile also discussed challenges with holding the event at the Merrillville community center location, including issues with catering and setup logistics. Cecile expressed gratitude for the support she received from Sheryl Corey, Sandra Davis, and others who helped during the event. The group discussed the logistics of future trainer events, noting that the Avalon venue might be too large for smaller attendance but could work for 40-50 people. Additionally, Cecile confirmed she was still available for individual community training sessions, and Courtney informed the group that ethics guides and brochures were stored at NIRPC for pickup

Communications Committee Update: Julie mentioned that she has completed an electronic year-end thank you for member municipal employees; she will send this to the commissioners to share with their community leaders. She also discussed that a press release about the recent Summit and 20th Anniversary commemoration was sent to the media and that Cal has an article scheduled for publication in early December, summarizing successes and setbacks, including the Highland membership issue, with an optimistic outlook for the future. Julie also noted that she would start working on the annual report by the end of the month, with a review and approval scheduled for the January meeting. The website has been updated with a 20-year poster, latest photos, and Summit recording. She has plans for Facebook posts between now and the end of the year.

Membership Update: The board also discussed membership efforts, with some progress in certain areas but challenges in others. Neil and Cal clarified the requirements for Commissioners, emphasizing that they must be private citizens and not employees of the municipality they represent.

JBOD Update: Janice provided updates on the Joint Board of Delegates, including the approval of the 2026 budget and the officers remaining the same.

Next meetings and adjournment: The next meeting is scheduled for January 21st. Upcoming meetings were reviewed, and Courtney encouraged anyone interested in running for president or vice president to email her by January. The meeting was adjourned around 9:45am via unanimous approval of a motion by Courtney and seconded by Julie Mc.