



SEAC - Jan 21, 2026 - 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	N
4	Dyer	Julie McElmurry	N
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	Y
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	NO COMMISSIONER	N
21	Whiting	Tim Wajvoda	Y
**	President Emeritus, At Large	Cal Bellamy	Y
**	Advisor, At Large	Michael Suggs	N
**	Advisor, At Large	Karen Marben	N
**	Advisor, At Large	Tom DeGiulio	N
**	GUEST - Portage	Karen Anderson	N
**	JBOD President	Janice Malinowski	N

Summary: The January 2026 Shared Ethics Meeting focused on reviewing the organization's financial status, approving the Nov 2025 meeting minutes, the 2025 annual report, 2026 leaders, 2026 goals, and discussing upcoming events. The financial update revealed 2025 revenue of just under \$32,000 and expenses of just over \$30,000. Cecile provided updates on training activities and plans for additional sessions, while the Communications Committee discussed preparations for the primary election and media outreach efforts. The conversation ended with a discussion of missing commissioners and delegates from various municipalities.

Next steps

- Cecile: Start scheduling ethics training sessions for member communities in February; contact members if their community has employees needing training.
- Sheryl: Coordinate with Cecile about scheduling a new trainer from Cedar Lake to attend ethics training with other communities.
- Courtney: Reach out to Chesterton to discuss getting new trainers and possibly a new commissioner and encourage more engagement.



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- Cecile: Monitor inventory of ethics guides, handouts, and code posters; assess mid-year if new materials need to be printed with updated logo and content and aim to complete before the summit if possible.
- Cecile: Upon return from Florida, begin working on arranging the town manager and department head training for spring, including identifying and contacting a potential speaker.
- Cecile: Send information to members to contact their communities about interest in a possible additional "train the trainer" or advanced training session; proceed with planning if sufficient interest.
- Cal/Julie/interested committee member: Set a meeting with the Times editor to discuss media outreach (follow up on previous attempts).
- Committee members: Volunteer to assist Julie with sending out the candidate Ethics Pledge for the primary election; notify Julie if able to help.
- Committee members: Reach out to municipality contacts and government leaders soon with a SEAC update, using the draft email and talking points to be provided by Julie.
- Committee members: Encourage their communities to apply for open commissioner/delegate positions, especially in East Chicago, Hobart, Lake Station, Lowell, Portage, St. John, and Valparaiso.
- Executive Committee: Discuss and clarify voting eligibility for municipal employee representatives (e.g., Tim from Whiting, Karen Anderson) at next executive committee meeting.

The meeting was called to order after 8:30am to ensure that there was a quorum. Courtney kicked off the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and then the Nov 2025 meeting minutes were approved unanimously (motion by Mike, seconded by Neil). All SEAC meeting minutes are available on the website at sharedethics.com.

SEAC then approved the 2025 annual report unanimously (motion by Sandra, seconded by Mike). Goals for 2026 were outlined, including hosting the Ethics Summit and manager training sessions, soliciting ethics pledges from candidates, and increasing awareness in LaPorte County. These 2026 goals were approved unanimously (motion by Sandra, seconded by Mike). The 2025 annual report and the 2026 goals are available to the public on the website at sharedethics.com.

Next SEAC discussed leadership positions (President and Vice President), with no new candidates stepping forward. Courtney Smith, President and Julie Wendorf, Vice President were unanimously approved (motion by Cal, seconded by Neil).

Financial Update: The financial update revealed that in 2025 the organization had received just under \$32,000 in revenue, spent slightly over \$30,000, and had approximately \$93,000 in total assets.

Summit Update: The group discussed potential speakers for the Summit. Cal indicated that he thinks we should not do a panel this year and potentially try to engage either past Governor Holcomb or Judge Tavitias of the Indiana Court of Appeals as the keynote speaker.

Training Committee Update: Cecile shared that she will be available starting in February to provide "Train the Trainer" training. Cheryl asked how to sign up one person from Cedar Lake for this training and Cecile agreed to keep her posted on when the next session was scheduled. Courtney discussed that she's wanting Chesterton to do training and will work with Courtney Udvardi to see how to make that happen.

Manager / Department Head training will hopefully be in the Spring, and Cecile discussed a potential additional training session for the current trainers (like last year) but agreed that there would need to be a lot more attendees and if we have the same speakers, the prior attendees will not need to attend.



Cecile will do an inventory on the Ethics guides, code handouts, and code posters to determine if any need to be printed and to ensure that any new ones are updated with the new logo ideally before the Summit

Communications Committee Update: Courtney updated the group in Julie's absence. The Ethics Pledge process will be beginning soon for the 2026 Primary Election. Anyone interested in assisting Julie can contact her directly.

Membership Update: The board reviewed the open Commissioner and Board of Delegate positions and agreed on actions to fill empty spots. The Executive Committee will discuss and clarify voting eligibility for municipal employee representatives (e.g., Tim from Whiting, Karen Anderson) at next executive committee meeting.

Next meetings and adjournment: The next meeting is scheduled for March 18th. The meeting was adjourned around 9:13am via unanimous approval (motion by Mike and seconded by Neil).