

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYEE AND OFFICIAL CONDUCT & ETHICS
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 20, 2020

The Ad Hoc Committee on Employee and Official Conduct & Ethics of the Broome County Legislature met on Thursday, February 20, 2020 in the Legislative Conference Room, Sixth Floor, Edwin L. Crawford County Office Building, Binghamton, New York.

Members Present: S. Flagg (Chair), C. O'Brien, K. Myers, S. Ryan, Legislature; K. McManus, County Exec's Office; R. Behnke, County Attorney's Office; T. Behan, Personnel Dept.

Others Present: D.J. Reynolds, M. Whalen, M. Pasquale, K. Wildoner, A. Martin, J. Bertoni, Legislature

The Ad Hoc Committee on Employee and Official Conduct & Ethics meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:05 PM. Ms. O'Brien made a motion to open the meeting for discussion, seconded by Ms. Myers.

Mr. Flagg stated that the Ad Hoc Committee was formed to review the County's current conduct and ethics policies for employees and officials, which were last updated in 2013. He further stated that it may be appropriate for the Personnel Officer to conduct a review of the policies of peer counties so that a gap analysis may be conducted to see where Broome's policies may be strong and where action may need to be taken.

The County Attorney stated that the County's current Ethics Policy does not address behavioral conduct such as bullying, sexual harassment, inappropriate technological misconduct, etc. Rather, the Code of Ethics, pursuant to the provisions of §806 of the General Municipal Law, set the general rules, principals and guidelines for ethical conduct of public officers and employees. Mr. Behnke and Mr. Behan further stated that the County has many additional policies and procedures that cover other topics, such as sexual harassment, workplace violence, employee rules and personnel procedures.

The Committee agreed that it is in the best interest of Broome County Government to review the more comprehensive policies of other large employers such as Binghamton University, Dick's Sporting Goods, BAE, UHS, etc. Ms. O'Brien stated that she would like to see more employee education and sexual harassment training for County employees. Ms. Myers further stated that the guidelines should apply to all persons elected or employed by the County and said persons in a managerial position taking advantage of subordinate employees can be a particular concern in large agencies, such as Broome County.

Mr. Reynolds also mentioned that the Committee should examine workplace bullying.

Following further discussion, the Personnel Officer agreed to perform research in conjunction with the County Attorney and legislative staff on peer county policies as well as provide copies of already existing policies outside of those topics covered in the County's Ethics policy. Committee Members agreed to research and review the policies and procedures of large employers in the area to better understand how to proceed as far as Broome County Government is concerned. The Committee would meet again to discuss research/findings.

There being no further business to come before the Ad Hoc Committee at this time, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. McManus and seconded by Ms. Myers. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.