



The Town of Simsbury, Connecticut



Town of Simsbury Board of Ethics

Minutes of Special Meeting, September 14, 2021

Board Members:

Present: Rick Jones (Chairman), Gary Kevorkian, Charles ("Chip") Houlihan,
Lynn Raccio, Robert ("Bert") Helfand (Vice Chairman), Robert M. Mulé

Also Present: Chief of Police Nicholas J. Boulter

The Special Meeting of the Simsbury Board of Ethics, noticed for September 14, 2021, was called to Order at 5:05 p.m., a quorum having been determined by the Chairman.

1) The Chair invited Chief Boulter to explain his request for an advisory opinion. Chief Boulter explained that senior police officers are often asked by other police departments to participate in the process of hiring or promoting those departments' officers. The Chief has personally done so for many years. For about the last fifteen years, most departments have used independent consultants to advise them on hiring and promotion. One such consultant, BadgeQuest, has asked Chief Boulter to assist it on occasion, on a *per diem* basis, in its work for Connecticut police and fire departments. Chief Boulter asked the Board of Ethics for an advisory opinion about the propriety of such an arrangement.

In response to questions from the Chair and from Bert Helfand, Chief Boulter further explained that BadgeQuest was formed at least ten years ago and is managed by a former Connecticut police chief. The Simsbury Police Department had previously used a different consulting firm, called National Police Testing. But in 2020, when the department was considering a potential promotion, National Police Testing had gone out of business. The department conducted a search for a new consultant and ultimately hired BadgeQuest, in part because it was the only option with Connecticut expertise. The department has used BadgeQuest for its last two promotions. It does not use a consulting firm in connection with new hires.

In response to a question from Chip Houlihan, Chief Boulter stated that he personally made the decision to hire BadgeQuest in 2020, after receiving recommendations that he do so from several other chiefs of police. In response to a question from the Chair, the Chief added that BadgeQuest also differs from its competitors by using high-level officers to formulate its recommendations.

The Chair then observed that the proposal could create a conflict of interest, or at least the appearance of a conflict, insofar as Chief Boulter would be responsible for selecting and engaging an organization from which he receives compensation. The Chair emphasized that he was not suggesting that the Chief would actually be swayed in his decisions by financial considerations.

Gary Kevorkian stated that he believed the potential conflict would be resolved so long as the Chief was not the sole decision-maker with respect to any future hiring of

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Helfand, Vice-Chairman