

## NORWICH ETHICS COMMISSION

### JOHN BILDA STATEMENT

Case Number 2016-6

January 19, 2017

Question: State your name and position.

Answer: My name is John Bilda and I serve as General Manager of Norwich Public Utilities ("NPU") and a Director of the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative ("CMEEEC"). I have worked for Norwich Utilities in several capacities since 1988.

Question: Describe CMEEEC.

Answer: CMEEEC is a joint action agency established pursuant to Connecticut general statutes. NPU is one of six Connecticut municipal utilities that own CMEEEC. CMEEEC provides for essentially all of NPU's whole sale electric energy and transmission services.

Question: Describe the trip.

Answer: As a CMEEEC Director I was invited by CMEEEC to participate in a Board retreat in Louisville, Kentucky. The event took place in May of 2016.

Question: Why did you decide to attend the event?

Answer: I thought it was important to attend because of my role as a Board Director and the past trips had proven to be valuable in fostering better Board of Director and CMEEEC staff relationships. I also had some concern that if I did not attend the event that NPU's views regarding CMEEEC issues might not be represented.

Question: Who planned the trip and what was its intended purpose?

Answer: Drew Rankin planned the trip. My understanding is that the prime purpose of the trip was to serve as a strategic retreat and to foster better relationships among CMEEEC directors. Until I saw the press accounts of the event, I did not know what the event cost, either in total or per person.

Question: Did you discuss CMEEEC and NPU business during the trip?

Answer: During the trip I had specific conversations with the Groton and Bozrah leaders about mutual aid for storm restoration, level of ownership participation in upcoming electric generation projects, and extending fiber

optic communication lines to NPU water treatment facilities. I also had conversations with the Norwalk Third Taxing District system leader about electric substation maintenance best practices.

Aside from these specific conversations, I also got to know Ron Gaudet from Groton much better. Given Groton's large ownership share in CMEEC, improving the relationship between NPU and Groton is important in terms of CMEEC's future direction. I also got to know CMEEC staff better.

Question: Why did CMEEC invite spouses to participate?

Answer: I most likely would not have attended if my wife was not invited to come along at CMEEC expense.

Question: What is your perspective on the trip now?

Answer: At the time the event struck me as simply another CMEEC Board event. In retrospect, having observed the damage it has done to NPU and to CMEEC in the eyes of our customers and city officials, I now understand that it was a bad idea. The CMEEC Board has already taken steps to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again.