When evaluating a code of ethics in journalism, its key purpose is to guide people into an ethical approach when gathering and reporting information. Journalism requires thoughtful thinking and reporting that minimizes harm in the community. Journalism also requires a free press based on rights in the First Amendment. Without it, journalists would be restricted in their reporting. W

While a code of ethics is critical in maintaining structure and guidance within the field, enforcing it would open the doors to enforcement at a greater level. While enforcement may not be practical in the field, journalists are encouraged to follow a code of ethics to maintain and build trust within the community through their thoughtful reporting.

But there is “food-for-thought” as referenced by Rushworth Kidder in “How Good People Make Tough Choices” when discussing Moulton’s distinctions. “When ethics collapses, the law rushes in to fill the void.”

It is imperative that we continue to encourage and demand a high standard in ethical reporting in journalism.