

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY OFFICE OF ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY
BOARD OF ETHICS**

Board Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2019

Present: Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Chair (teleconference)
Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference)
Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer
LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel (teleconference)
Lamont Judd, Investigator
Jasmine Carter, Compliance Analyst
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide

Next meeting: October 11, 2019 at 5:00 pm
9201 Basil Court, Suite 155
Largo, Maryland 20774

OPEN SESSION

I. OPENING OF MEETING

The Board Chair, Cassandra Burckhalter, opened the meeting at approximately 5:02 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There was a quorum present with three (3) Board Members. The meeting was held at the Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) located at 9201 Basil Court, Suite 155, Largo, Maryland.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The three (3) Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance approved the June 27, 2019 Meeting Minutes and June 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes with edits noted by a of vote 3-0.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

None to report.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board of OEA's collection efforts for Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) for calendar year 2018 with meetings held with County agencies. The Board was informed of OEA's Financial Disclosure Statements audits of

Schedules A, E, and H for selected County employees. Five (5) County board members requested waivers of late fees for submitting their FDS late. The requests were denied by OEA and the designated filers have requested appeals to the Board.

The Executive Director provided the Board information regarding OEA's training efforts that included conducting two (2) New Employees Orientation Program trainings and one (1) monthly Ethics Training (PGCEthics). The new Ethics Training compliance period will be January 2020 through June 2020. In addition, forty-nine (49) lobbyists have registered for calendar 2019.

The Board was provided the ethics advice table for June, July, and August, which summarized the informal ethics advice, information requests and legal advice provided by the Office of Ethics and Accountability.

The Board was updated on the status of legislative amendments that are pending before the County Council required pursuant to State Ethics Law changes.

V. Reading of Written Statement for Closing Meeting Under the Open Meeting Act

At 5:18 pm, a motion was made by Board Chair Cassandra Burckhalter and seconded by Board Member Sharon Theodore-Lewis to close the open portion of the meeting to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosure about a particular proceeding or matter and to consult with legal counsel. The statement was read by the Board Chair Cassandra Burckhalter. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0. The reason for closing the meeting, and the topics discussed with legal counsel involved among other matters, investigations in accordance with the State Government Article, §10-508(a). Those in attendance were as follows:

Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Chair (teleconference)

Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference)

Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director

Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer

LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel (teleconference)

Lamont Judd, Investigator

Jasmine Carter, Compliance Analyst

Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide

CLOSED SESSION

Investigation 20-0109e

The Board was informed of the referral from the State Ethics Commission to review a newly established workgroup. The Board voted 3-0 to approve resolution that the Workgroup on Alcohol Outlet Density Zones in Prince George's County established pursuant to House Bill 1157 during the 2019 Legislative Session is not a County Board or Commission, and therefore its members are exempt from the authority of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics and its associated Financial Disclosure Statement filing requirements.

Investigation 19-0157e

The Board was provided an update on an investigation involving allegations of Misuse of Prestige of Office, Disclosure of Confidential Information and Conflicts of Interest by two County employees using their position to share information. The Board previously voted to reserve taking further action to allow the affected agencies to respond to the identified ethics violations. The matter was referred back to the Office of Law, which has completed its investigation and is pursuing personnel actions.

Investigation 19-0083e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Confidential Information by a County employee. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint

Investigation 19-0103e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Use of County Resources by a County employee abusing County time and usage vehicles. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Investigation 19-0112e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Prestige of Office by County employees hiring friend and family members. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Investigation 19-0134e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Confidential Information by a County employee against other County employees. The

Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Investigation 19-0180e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Conflicts of Interest/Nepotism by a County employee hiring family members. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Investigation 19-0236e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Prestige of Office by a County employee hiring unqualified employees. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Investigation 19-0331e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving an allegation of Use of County Resources by a County employee providing leave to another County employee. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

Financial Disclosure Statement Waiver Request

The Board was provided appeals of fee waiver requests from five (5) board members serving on a County board. The requests were to waive late fees for submitting their Financial Disclosure Statements late. The Board voted 3-0 to deny the waivers.

Budget Proposal Request

The Board was provided an FY2021 Budget Proposal letter to enhance OEA's budget, the Board approved (3-0) with noted corrections.

The Board was provided updates on pending cases.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:07 pm.