

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

Board Meeting Minutes

**September 14, 2018**

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

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director (teleconference)  
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer  
LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel

*Next meeting:* October 19, 2018 at 5:00 pm  
9201 Basil Court, Suite 155  
Largo, Maryland 20774

**OPEN SESSION**

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

The Board Chair, Covette Rooney, opened the meeting at approximately 5:04 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There was a quorum present with four (4) 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 on April 13, 2018, approved the Meeting Minutes with edits noted with a vote of 3-0.

The three (3) Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance on June 15, 2018, approved the Meeting Minutes with edits noted with a vote of 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 2017. All employees who were designated

filers for this filing period have submitted their FDS's. There are five (5) board and commission members that have not filed. Notification will be sent to the County Executive regarding the board and commission members who have not filed. Three (3) late fee waiver requests were received since the last Board meeting from board and commission members. Two (2) were granted and one (1) was denied. To date OEA has collected \$1,465 in late fees. Late fee collection efforts continues.

The Board was informed of the status of registered lobbyists. To date forty-five (45) lobbyists have registered for calendar year 2018.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the Office of Ethics and Accountability's training efforts that included Mandatory Ethics Training for new employees of Prince George's County Government through the New Employees Orientation Program, the regularly scheduled monthly ethics trainings (PGCEthics), and County agencies.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the status of the mandated updates to the County Code of Ethics. The changes were submitted to the State Ethics Commission for approval and based on their edits and request for changes, the updates need to be resubmitted to the Commission for approval. Once approved the updates will again go through the County's legislative process and to the County Council for adoption.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the referral from the State Ethics Commission to review four newly established entities. The Board voted 4-0 to approve resolutions that the Prince George's County Affordable Housing Commission established pursuant to House Bill 236, Prince George's County Environmental Justice Commission established pursuant to House Bill 183, Prince George's County School Construction Master Plan Workgroup established pursuant to Senate Bill 332, and the Task Force on the Use of Master Meters for Utility Services in Prince George's County established pursuant to House Bill 218, during the 2018 Legislative Session are not a County Board or Commission and therefore their members are exempt from the authority of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics and its associated Financial Disclosure Statement filing requirements.

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

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

At 5:33 pm, a motion was made by Board Chair Covette Rooney and seconded by Board Member Cassandra Burckhalter 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 Covette Rooney. The motion was approved by a vote of 4-0. The reason for closing the meeting, and the topics discussed with legal counsel involved among other matters, investigations and an advisory opinion in accordance with the State Government Article, §10-508(a). Those in attendance were as follows:

Covette Rooney, Board Chair (teleconference)

Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference)

Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Member (teleconference)

Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director (teleconference)

Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer

LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel

### **CLOSED SESSION**

#### **Board Referral 18-0226e**

The Board was provided an update on the investigation of a Conflict of Interest, Use of Prestige of Office and Honoraria by a County employee. The Board voted 3-0 [1 Board Member abstained from voting] that there is a reasonable basis to believe a violation has occurred and in lieu of conducting a hearing, the Board accepts the actions taken by the agency as appropriate to address the violation.

#### **Board Referral 18-250e**

The Board was provided a report on the investigation of the matter which was referred to the Office of Human Resources Management for investigation that determined the allegations were unfounded and without merit. The Board voted 4-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

#### **Board Referral 18-0255e**

The Board was provided a report on the investigation of the matter involving Abuse of Prestige of Office and Misuse of County Resources by County employees. The Board voted 4-0 that the individual(s) implicated in the investigation are not subject to the

authority of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics and therefore the matter falls outside the jurisdiction of the Board.

**Board Referral 18-0288e**

The Board was provided a report on a complaint involving the allegation of a Conflict of Interest by a County employee involved in a procurement matter. The Board voted 4-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

**Board Referral 18-0332e**

The Board was provided a report on a complaint involving the allegation of Misuse of County Resources by a County employee. The Board voted 4-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

**Board Referral 18-0358e**

The Board was provided a report on a complaint involving Misuse of Prestige of Office by County employees. The Board voted 4-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint.

The Board was provided updates on the following outstanding cases:

**Investigation 18-0353e**

Alleged Abuse of Prestige of Office by a County employee related to use of County software.

**Investigation 18-0360e**

Alleged receipt of prohibited Gifts by County employees.

**Investigation 18-0374e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office involving hiring practices.

**Investigation 18-0380e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office and kickback by County employee related to hiring County contractors.

**Investigation 18-0383e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office and bribes by County employees involving County property.

**Investigation 18-0400e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office by County employees related to hiring practices.

**Investigation 18-0415e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office and Conflict of Interest by a County employee related to contract oversight.

The Board was provided notification of the following cases:

**Investigation #18-0365e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office by County employee involving access to contracting opportunities with the County.

**Investigation #18-0429e**

Alleged Misuse of County Resources involving misuse of paid time off.

**Investigation #18-0434e**

Alleged Political Activity during work hours and Misuse of Prestige of Office involving solicitations for campaign contributions and assisting a private entity doing business with the County.

**Investigation #19-0033e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office related to a County employee's hiring of a relative.

**Investigation #19-0037e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office related to County employees and officials hiring practices involving the use of temporary employees.

**Investigation #19-0038e**

Alleged Misuse of Prestige of Office related to County employees and officials hiring practices for classified County positions.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:34 pm.