

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

Board Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2017

Present: Covette Rooney, Board Chair (teleconference)
Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference – exited at 6:20 pm)
Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (in-person)
Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Member (teleconference – entered at 6:13 pm)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director
LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide

Barry Stanton, DCAO, CEX (in-person @ 5:15pm)
Jared McCarthy, County Attorney, CEX (in-person @ 5:15pm)

Next meeting: Friday, November 17, 2017 at 5:00 pm
9201 Basil Court, Suite 155
Largo, Maryland 20774

OPEN SESSION

I. OPENING OF MEETING

The Board of Ethics Chair, Covette Rooney, opened the meeting at 5:07 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There was a quorum present with three (3) Board Members, then one (1) member, Cassandra Burckhalter, entered the meeting via teleconference at 6:13 pm. 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 Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance approved the September 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes with a vote of 3-0.

The Executive Director requested to post the minutes from April 14, 2017 and May 12, 2017 on OEA's website with disclaimer that the minutes have not yet been approved.

The motion passed 3-0. The April 14, 2017 minutes were later approved with a vote of 3:0 after Ms. Burckhalter was available to vote. The May 12th minutes will require the vote of Mr. Eugene for approval and were reserved until the next meeting.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

None to report.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board that OEA has completed the collection efforts for the 2016 calendar year. Still outstanding are ten (10) Board and Commissions members Financial Disclosure Statements. Notification will be sent to the County Executive regarding the delinquent board and commission members. OEA processed forty (40) late fee waiver requests, thirty-eight (38) were granted. One (1) employee negotiated a settlement agreement to pay the late fees and one (1) request is pending.

The notification letters for the 2017 calendar year Financial Disclosure Statements will be mailed in December 2017. A vote to send all notifications electronically to County employees and Board and Commission members for the collection of 2018 calendar year Financial Disclosure Statements passed 3-0. Filers will receive written notice of the change during the 2017 collection period.

The Executive Director informed the Board that specialized Ethics Training was provided to the Women's Commission, Committee on Aging, Veterans Commission, and the entire agency of the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM). OEA conducted Mandatory Ethics Training for new employees of Prince George's County Government with the attendance of forty-three (43) employees and for six (6) employees via the regularly scheduled monthly ethics trainings.

The Board was provided an update on the number of registered lobbyists, which is currently fifty (51) for 2017 and the number of ethics advice and information requests received by OEA for the months of September.

The Executive Director informed the Board that the State Ethics Commission is requiring the County to update its Code of Ethics to reflect the changes required under House Bill 879, enacted during the 2017 Legislative Session.

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

At 5:17pm a motion was made by Board Chair Covette Rooney and seconded by Board Member Curtis Eugene to close the open portion of the meeting to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures 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 3-0. The reason for closing the meeting, and the topics discussed with legal counsel involved among other matters, investigations, an advisory opinion request and a complaint that was referred to the Board for a possible ethics violation 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 – exited at 6:20 pm)

Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (in-person)

Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Member (teleconference – entered at 6:13 pm)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director

LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel

Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer

Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide

Barry Stanton, DCAO (in-person @ 5:15pm)

Jared McCarthy, County Attorney (in-person @ 5:15pm)

CLOSED SESSION

Advisory Opinions (17-0213)

The Board was provided with an update on the investigation of alleged abuse of prestige of office/conflict of interest of a County employee. Representatives from the Office of the County Executive, seeking ethics advice, presented the County's proposed corrective actions regarding the alleged conflicts of interest covered under Section 2-293 of the Ethics Code. The Board will provide an advisory opinion in response to their request.

Advisory Opinion (18-0113)

The Board was informed of a request from a County Board to be granted an exemption from Financial Disclosure Statement filing requirements.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was passed (3:0) to reconvene in open session to approve the April 14, 2017 minutes, which were approved (3:0). A motion to adjourn the meeting passed 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.