

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

Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2022

Present: Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Chair (Microsoft Teams)
Melanie Barr-Brooks, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)
Charlene Gallion, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)
Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director (Microsoft Teams)
Bamidele Alexander, Legal Counsel (Microsoft Teams)
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer (Microsoft Teams)

Next meeting: November 4, 2022
9201 Basil Court, Suite 155
Largo, Maryland 20774

OPEN SESSION

I. OPENING OF MEETING

The Board Chair, Cassandra Burckhalter, opened the meeting at approximately 5:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There was a quorum present with three (4) Board Members. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

II. GENERAL BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The four (4) Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance approved the agenda as presented by a vote of 4-0.

The four (4) Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance approved a motion to amend the Meeting Minutes from the September 9, 2022, meeting with corrections by a vote of 3-0-1 (3 yes and 1 abstention) because Board Member Melanie Barr-Brooks was not in attendance at the September 9, 2022, Board meeting.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

The Board Chair noted the correction to her last name on documents. The Board Chair recommended that Board Members delay discussion of the Board of Ethics Manual until January 23, 2023. The Board Members voted unanimously (4-0) in favor of the Board Chair's

recommendation.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board of the following Office of Ethics and Accountability compliance activities: Two (2) Board Removal Letters to be submitted for Board deliberation pertaining to delinquent non-filers. Agency delinquencies have been escalated to the Compliance Officer to coordinate settlement agreements with the Office of Ethics and Accountability's Legal Counsel; Sixty (60) Registered Lobbyists in 2022; and One (1) Lobbyist terminated activities in 2022 with the requisite annual report.

The Executive Director informed the Board that the Compliance Officer continues to work with the Office of Information Technology and the Office of Human Resources Management on the issue with the E-learning web browser. This will enable Board and Commission members to take E-Learning training during the on-boarding process.

The Executive Director informed the Board that lobbyist activities will be monitored now that the County Council is back in session.

The Board was informed that the County Council was considering the replacement Board Member to fill the position of former Board Member Curtis Eugene. Once confirmed and sworn in, the Office of Ethics and Accountability will contact the new Board Member to schedule a Board orientation.

The Executive Director informed the Board that her last day with OEA will be on December 2, 2022, and she will transfer to the Office of Law. The Board was further informed that Council Member Todd Turner is slated to be the next Executive Director of the Office of Ethics and Accountability.

The Board was provided the ethics advice table for September 2022, which summarized the informal ethics advice, information requests and legal advice provided by the Office of Ethics and Accountability.

The Board was provided with a case status report and updates on pending cases.

V. READING OF WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING MEETING UNDER THE OPEN MEETING ACT

At 5:32 pm, a motion was made by Board Chair Cassandra Burckhalter and seconded by Board Member Charlene Gallion 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 4-0. This meeting was closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) for the following reasons: (A) To discuss a confidential matter not to be disclosed to the public; and

(B) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. Those in attendance were as follows:

Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Chair (Microsoft Teams)
Melanie Barr-Brooks, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)
Charlene Gallion, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)
Sharon Theodore Lewis, Board Member (Microsoft Teams)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director (Microsoft Teams)
Bamidele Alexander, Legal Counsel (Microsoft Teams)
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer (Microsoft Teams)

CLOSED SESSION

Resolution

The Board voted 4-0 to accept the settlement agreements for four County employees in lieu of a formal hearing on the matter and to issue final orders for each matter based on each employee's admission of not filing on time, which is fully described in the settlement agreements. The settlement agreements constitute a final action and finding of a violation by the Board.

Lobbyist 22-0404

The Board was provided an update on a pending hearing for a delinquent lobbyist to appear before the Board.

Investigation 23-0016

The Board was provided an investigation report on a matter involving an allegation of a County Council Member sending a newsletter/flyer to constituents during an election period. The Board voted 4-0 to dismiss the complaint for insufficient evidence upon which to find a violation of the Code of Ethics. The report included recommendations to the Council.

Resolution

The Board voted 4-0 to send a letter to the County Council Administrator recommending implementation of a franking privilege policy.

Investigation 23-0064

The Board was updated on an investigation involving an allegation of vendor kickbacks and unauthorized secondary employment at the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Investigation 23-0076

The Board was updated on an investigation involving an allegation of unauthorized secondary employment on County time involving telework at the Office of Information and Technology.

FDS Board Removal Letters

The Board was informed that Board Removal Letters will be sent to the County Executive's Office regarding two board members of the Electrical Board and of the Building Contractors Board, respectively.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 pm. The motion was approved 4-0.