

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

Board Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2017

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

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

Next meeting: Friday, May 12 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 approximately 5:04 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

Two Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance amended the February 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Vote to approve minutes was reserved until next meeting when a quorum is present with a vote.

Two Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance amended the March 31, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Vote to approve minutes was reserved until next meeting when a quorum is present with a vote

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

None to report.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board that OEA is in the final stages of Financial Disclosure Statement collection efforts for calendar year 2016 disclosures which are due by April 30, 2017.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the status of pending legislation Senate Bill No. 0488, regarding changes to the Board of Licensed Commissioners. The Board was also informed of the House Bill 879, which proposed changes to State Ethics Law to prohibit members of the General Assembly from representing or assisting certain parties for compensation in specified matters.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the status of submitted annual reports for registered lobbyists for calendar year 2016. There are two (2) lobbyists with delinquent annual reports. The Board was informed of OEA's several efforts to contact one lobbyist. The Board Chair Covette Rooney proposed a letter be sent to the lobbyist instructing him to file the annual report within 10 days or provide notification of an inability to file; otherwise the Board will suspend future registration until the delinquent report is filed.

The Executive Director informed the Board that the OEA has the last round of budget meetings scheduled in April. The proposed budget provides funding for a full time investigator and an analyst position.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the number of ethics advice and information requests received by OEA for the months of February and March.

Board Member Cassandra Burkhalter provided comments on navigating the website linking to the online portal for filing a financial disclosure statement.

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

At 5:30 pm a motion was made by Board Member Cassandra Burkhalter 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 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)

Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (teleconference)

Cassandra Burckhalter, Board Member (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director

LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel

LaTonya Davis, Investigator

Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer

Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide

CLOSED SESSION

Advisory Opinions (17-0192)

The Board was provided a draft response to the Solid Waste Advisory Commission (SWAC) Board Liaison, granting an exemption to its members for the 2016 FDS reporting period. The Board voted 3-0 to approve the resolution granting the SWAC members an exemption from filing an additional disclosure statement for 2016, apart from their 2016 statements filed during the appointment process.

Advisory Opinions (17-0151)

The Board voted 3-0 to approve the draft response to a registered lobbyist correspondence regarding the reporting of a gift on the lobbyist' annual report.

Investigation – Case #16-0263

The Board was provided with an update, final determination of ethics portion of the investigation along with OEA departmental recommendations. The Board reviewed the memorandum provided on the investigation and voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of an ethics violation and to dismiss the complaint.

Investigation – Case # 17-0039

The Board was provided with an update on the investigation of alleged misuse of prestige of office by a County employee. The Board reviewed the memorandum provided on the investigation and voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of an ethics violation and to dismiss the complaint.

Investigation – Case # 17-0037 and 17--0048

The Board was provided with an update on the investigation of misuse of prestige of office regarding the hiring process of an agency. The Board reviewed the memorandum provided on the investigation and voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of an ethics violation and to dismiss the complaint.

Investigation – Case #17-0014 and #17-0015

The Board was provided with an update on the investigation of prestige of office/fraud regarding a property manager of a Housing Authority owned property. The Housing Authority is not a County agency, but is riding a County contract in order to secure staffing. The Board reviewed the memorandum provided on the investigation and voted 3-0 that the individual(s) implicated in the investigation are not subject to the authority of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics. Therefore, the matter falls outside of the jurisdiction of the Board.

Investigation – Case # 17-0118

The Board was provided with an update on the investigation of misuse of County resources regarding secondary employment by an employee. The Board reviewed the memorandum provided on the investigation and voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of an ethics violation and to dismiss the complaint.

Investigation – Case # 17-0166

The Board was provided with an update on a complaint received regarding allegations that a County employee disclosed confidential information.

Investigation – Case #17-0130

The Board was updated on complaint received involving abuse of prestige of office alleging that a County employee has been unilaterally removing fees from customers' accounts.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made by Board Member Cassandra Burkhalter to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:34 pm.