

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

Board Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2019

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

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer
LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel
Lamont Judd, Investigator

Next meeting: April 12, 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 5:05 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

Board Member Covette Rooney was not in attendance at the present meeting, so the Board deferred adopting the January 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes with edits noted. The Board approved the minutes (3-0) for the meeting held on February 8, 2019.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

None to report.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board that OEA is continuing its collection efforts for Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) for calendar year 2018. To date, thirty-five (35) lobbyists have registered for 2019.

The Executive Director provided the Board information regarding OEA's training efforts that included conducting two (2) New Employees Orientation Program trainings. OEA also conducted ethics training for the Office of Community Relations. The Board was updated on the status of legislative amendments required pursuant to State Ethics Law changes and was provided the ethics advice tables for February, 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 5:11 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)
Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Board Member (teleconference)
Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer
LaShanda Whaley, Legal Counsel
Lamont Judd, Investigator

CLOSED SESSION

Advisory Opinion 19-0191

The Board was advised of a County Official's request for a formal opinion regarding Post-Employment. The Board approved the Advisory Opinion 3-0.

Investigation 18-0415e

The Board was updated regarding an investigation involving a Conflict of Interest related to a County employee and the agency's request for an extension to respond.

Waiver Request 19-0188

The Board was provided information regarding a request by a former Director for an extension of time to file a Financial Disclosure Statement (FDS). The request was moot because the FDS was filed on time, but the Board voted (3-0) to notify the filer to amend the FDS.

Investigation 19-0127e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving receipt of gifts related to a luncheon sponsored by a County vendor. The Board voted 3-0 that there is a reasonable basis to believe a violation has occurred and in lieu of conducting a hearing, the Board is giving the agency 30 days to address the violation. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations, which included the County repayment to the vendor for the luncheon.

Investigation 18-360e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving receipt of gifts by County employees from County vendors. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations that the employees be instructed to report on their FDS's the gifts received for travel-related expenses in accordance with the County's Ethics Code.

Investigation 18-0383e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving allegations of Misuse of Prestige of Office by County employees in taking bribes from 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. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations to the agency related to policy development and training on gifts.

Investigation 19-0033e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving allegations of Misuse of Prestige of Office by a County Official in the hiring of a family member. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations to review the agency's use of temporary agencies.

Investigation 19-0037/38e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving allegations of Misuse of Prestige of Office by County employees in the hiring of 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. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations to review the agency's use of temporary agencies.

Investiation 19-0156e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving allegations of Misuse of Confidential Information by a County employee in the hiring process. The Board voted 3-0 that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation and dismissed the complaint. The Board accepted OEA's recommendations on policy development and hiring processes.

Investiation 19-0161e

The Board was provided a report on an investigation involving the unauthorized solicitation of funds by a County employee. The Board voted 3-0 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 to address the violation.

The Board was provided written 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 6:01 pm.