



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT BOARD OF ETHICS

Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

Todd M. Turner
Executive Director

Cassandra Burckhalter, Chair
Charlene Gallion, Member
Melanie Barr-Brooks, Member
Sharon Theodore-Lewis, Member

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

Board Meeting Minutes May 8, 2024

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

Todd M. Turner, Executive Director (Microsoft Teams)
Bamidele Alexander, Legal Counsel (Microsoft Teams)
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer (Microsoft Teams)
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide (Microsoft Teams)
Kathleen Ibeh, Compliance Analyst (Microsoft Teams)

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 (Virtual)
9201 Basil Court, Suite 155
Largo, Maryland 20774

OPEN SESSION

I. OPENING OF MEETING

The Board Chair Cassandra Burckhalter opened the Board of Ethics ("Board") meeting at approximately 5:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There was a quorum present with four (4) Board of Ethics Members ("Board Members") present. The meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

II. GENERAL BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The four (4) Board Members in attendance virtually approved the agenda, by a vote of 4-0.

The Meeting Minutes for April 10, 2024, were approved with noted edits, by a vote of 4-0.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

The Chair explained that the Board of Ethics does not report to The Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) or the Executive Director of OEA; and expressed her concerns that OEA forwarded information from the internal Board Manual, without first consulting the Board for review and approval.

The Chair indicated that OEA has the authority to adopt internal policies and regulations for their office and staff, however; they do not have the authority to override the Board of Ethics, which is an independent Board, per Prince George's County, Division 17-Code of Ethics: Section 2-292 Administration.

The Chair shared the following information from Division 17- Code of Ethics, regarding the Office of Ethics and Accountability:

DIVISION 17A-OFFICE OF ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Sec. 2-301. - Executive Director; Powers and Duties; Compensation.

The Executive Director shall also serve as the Executive Director of the Board of Ethics and shall supervise the operations of the administrative staff of the Office of Ethics and Accountability, including the hiring, direction and discharge of all Office of Ethics and Accountability staff members in accordance with the County personnel laws. The Executive Director and his staff shall be compensated as provided in the classification plan of the County.

Sec. 2-303. - Authority.

The Office of Ethics and Accountability is authorized to engage in the following specific functions:

(i) Provide support to the County Board of Ethics established by Section 2-292 of this Subtitle;...

The Chair also discussed Division 17: Sec. 2-292. – Administration (I)...The Board may adopt additional policies and procedures related to complaints, complaint hearings, the use of independent investigators and staff, and cure and settlement agreements.

The Chair asked Bamidele Alexander, the Board's assigned OEA attorney, to prepare a draft policy for the board's review, feedback, and approval. The Executive Director also agreed to review issues related to the Board's hearing procedures and public notice.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The Executive Director informed the Board of the following Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) compliance activities:

- OEA is continuing the 2023 Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) Agency/Board/Commission filing process and has sent updated memoranda to each Agency/Board/Commission.
- The April 2024 lobbyists registrations were posted to OEA's website and provided to the Executive and Legislative Branch and in Board backup.

The Executive Director informed the Board of the following items:

- OEA coordinated with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to provide the annual Mandatory Compliance Training to all County employees/officials, including ethical behavior, to be completed by May 31, 2024;
- OEA provided ethics training to the Office of Human Rights Commission on April 22, 2024.
- OEA received a request for ethics training for the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. A training will be scheduled once the new board members have been appointed.
- OEA met with the Office of Law (OOL) and Office of the County Executive (CEX) on May 3rd to update Executive Order No. 13-2014 regarding possible revisions to FDS required filers.
- OEA notified the Board that the Quality Assurance Review is expected to be completed by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2024) and has held several status meetings related to the OEA & Board policy review and the approximately three hundred (300) or 15% cases from FY 2019 – 2023 being reviewed.
- OEA notified the Board the Council Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GOFPP) Committee Budget work session on OEA was held on April 11, 2024, and the Board Chair's statement was submitted. The FY 2025 County Budget is expected to be approved by the end of May.
- OEA notified the Board that the OEA/BOE Brochure is being translated into Spanish.
- OEA notified the Board that the monthly OEA Public Service Announcement (PSA), related to Secondary Employment, will be forwarded to County employees/officials during the month of May.
- OEA will continue to coordinate with the Office of Community Relations (OCR) regarding attending community events and is scheduled to participate in the annual Bowiefest in Bowie in June.
- OEA notified the Board that the Executive Director was accepted into the 2024 Leadership Maryland program which will conclude in November 2024.

Finally, the Board was provided the Ethics Advice Table for April 2024, which summarized the informal ethics advice, information requests, and legal advice provided by OEA. Also, 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 MEETINGS ACT

At 5:45 pm, a motion was made by Board Chair Burckhalter and seconded by Board Member Barr-Brooks 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 Board Chair 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: (2) To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business, (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (13) To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

Those in attendance were as follows:

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

Todd M. Turner, Executive Director (Microsoft Teams)
Bamidele Alexander, Legal Counsel (Microsoft Teams)
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer (Microsoft Teams)
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide (Microsoft Teams)
Kathleen Ibeh, Compliance Analyst (Microsoft Teams)

VI. CLOSED SESSION

The Board was informed of an update on one (1) lobbyist for an outstanding payment of an annual report. By a vote of 4-0, the lobbyist cannot perform any activities related to lobbying until his fees are paid and OEA will send a letter to their employer.

The Board was informed there were no FDS Violations or Settlement Agreements to review and that a Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) request was received for four (4) Council Members for their 2023 Financial Disclosure Statements.

Investigation 23-0064e

The Board was provided an update on an investigation involving allegations of the Use of County Resources, Secondary Employment, and Gifts to a County employee receiving kickbacks. In the April 10th meeting the Board voted to reserve taking further action for

thirty (30) days to allow the agency to respond to the identified ethics violation, which is to be submitted by May 10, 2024, and will be provided to the Board.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 pm. The motion was approved 4-0.

The next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 5:00 pm.