

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

Board Meeting Minutes

**April 13, 2018**

*Present:* Covette Rooney, Board Chair (teleconference)  
Curtis Eugene, Board Member (teleconference)  
Cassandra Burckhalter (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director  
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer  
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide (entered 5:43pm)

*Next meeting:* May 11, 2018 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 5:07 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**

The Board of Ethics (Board) Members in attendance approved the meeting minutes for March 9, 2018 with a vote of 3-0, with a change in Section C, pg. 2 from 4:0, should be 4-0.

**III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

None to report.

**IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

The Executive Director informed the Board of OEA's collection efforts for Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) for calendar year 2017. To-date, 53% of designated filers have submitted their FDS's. In addition, twenty-nine (29) lobbyists have registered for calendar 2018 compared to sixty-one (61) registered lobbyists for calendar 2017.

The Executive Director informed the Board of OEA's training efforts that included Mandatory Ethics Training for nineteen (19) new employees of Prince George's County Government through the New Employees Orientation Program and eight (8) employees via the regularly scheduled monthly ethics trainings (PGCEthics).

The Executive Director informed the Board that OEA is communicating with the Office of Law (OOL) on how to standardize investigations throughout the County, which includes alleged ethics violations. The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and OOL have provided their input on OEA's draft Administrative Procedure. Once all of the requested changes have been reviewed and agreed upon, the proposed Administrative Procedure will be given to Executive Leadership with a recommendation for the Chief Administrative Officer's promulgation to County agencies.

On recommendation from the Office of Law, the Executive Director recommended the Board adopt a resolution formally delegating authority to OEA to investigate all complaints alleging a violation of any of the provisions of the Code of Ethics on behalf of the Board without an express referral from the Board in accordance with the County's Code of Ethics, Section 2-292(i). The sitting Board Chair Cassandra Burkhalter made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Board Member Curtis Eugene with no opposition. The resolution was approved (3:0) by the Board.

The Board was provided ethics advice tables for March, 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 5:20 pm, a motion was made by Board Member Cassandra Burckhalter 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 disclosure 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 and an advisory opinion 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)

Cassandra Burckhalter (teleconference)

Robin Barnes-Shell, Esq., Executive Director  
Roslyn Walker, Compliance Officer  
Chelinda Bullock, Administrative Aide (entered 5:43 pm)

## **CLOSED SESSION**

### **Exemption Request 18-0315**

The Board was provided additional information involving a request for exemption of filing a Financial Disclosure Statement from an official of a County Board. The Board approved (3:0) a resolution waiving the requirement for the Park and Recreation Advisory Board Members to file CY 2017 and CY 2018 Financial Disclosure Statements unless any such member is reappointed in 2018. In which case, the member is required to file as any newly appointed member would have to file. The Board encourages all the members to file their 2017 and 2018 disclosures. This limited exemption was granted because the members were not informed prior to accepting their appointments of the requirement to file disclosure statements.

### **Ethics Advice 18-0253 and 18-0367**

The Board was provided a copy of a memorandum (#18-253) from the Executive Director to the County Attorney in response to a consult on Conflicts of Interest related to the Special Property Tax Sale provided in House Bill 1573 requiring Prince George's County to conduct a limited auction of property subject to tax liens prior to conducting a public auction. The Board was also apprised of the advice rendered to a County employee (#18-367) regarding Conflict of Interest concerns associated with the employee's participation in a public tax sale auction.

### **Ethics Advice - Financial Disclosure Statement 18-0292**

The Board reviewed a request to determine whether the Prince George's representative to the Central Maryland Regional Transit Agency (RTA) is required to file a Financial Disclosure Statement and voted (3:0) not to subject the representative to file.

### **Investigation – 17-0169**

The Board was updated on the status of the pending investigation that may have involved Misuse of County Resources; this matter is no longer under Board review as it falls outside of the County's Ethics Code.

### **Investigation – 18-0207e**

The Board was updated on the investigation involving allegations of Misuse of County Resources by a County employee.

**Investigation – 18-0226e**

The Board was updated on the investigation involving allegations of Abuse of Prestige of Office, Conflict of Interest, Honraria and Secondary Employment by a County employee.

**Investigation – 18-0231e**

The Board was updated on the status of the pending investigation involving Use of Prestige of Office.

**Investigation – 18-250**

The Board was provided an update on the investigation, which has been referred to the Office of Human Resources Management for the investigation of personnel related issues.

**Investigation – 18-0255e**

The Board was updated on the investigation involving allegations of Abuse of Prestige of Office and Misuse of County Resources by County employees.

**Investigation – 18-0284e**

The Board was updated on the status of the pending investigation involving allegations of Conflict of Interest of a County employee.

**Investigation – 18-0288**

The Board was updated on the status of the pending investigation of a complaint involving allegations of Conflict of Interest by a County employee involved with a procurement matter.

**Investigation – Case #18-0326e**

The Board was notified of a complaint alleging Misuse of County Resources by a County employee.

**Investigation – Case #18-0327e**

The Board was notified of a complaint alleging Use of Prestige of Office, Conflict of Interest and violations of County policies by a County employee.

**Investigation – Case #18-0353e**

The Board was notified of a complaint alleging Use of Prestige of Office by a County employee.

At the conclusion of all business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:59 pm.