

Baltimore City Ethics Board
635 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202
January 12, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting

The Ethics Board met on January 12, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. by conference call.

Call to Order: Chairman Stephan Fogleman called the Ethics Board meeting to order at 2:38 p.m. with a quorum present.

Statement Concerning December's Administrative Session:
Director Hochstetler read the following statement:

Per the Open Meetings Act, the Board discloses that it adjourned its virtual open meeting on December 9, 2020 to enter into an administrative session at approximately 3:17 pm. All Board members were present. Members discussed complaints and a City employee's request for guidance on potential outside employment.

Statement Concerning Potential Administrative Session: Chair Fogleman read the following statement:

The Board may need to close some or all of this meeting to preserve the confidentiality mandated by the Ethics Code or as otherwise authorized by the State Open Meetings Act. Likewise, upon adjournment of the Open Session, the Board may reconvene for an Administrative Session to discuss non-public, administrative functions of the Board.

Director's Update: Director Hochstetler explained that Board staff will continue to record virtual public meetings but will not record virtual administrative meetings. The Board will also keep written minutes of both meetings.

Director Hochstetler provided the following updates:

The next Ethics Training is January 28th (possibly January 27th, as well) for the Mayor and his staff. Board staff are currently working with the Department of Human Resources to deploy an automated Ethics Training.

The approved Notice of Ethics Requirements has been provided to the Department of Human Resources and the Mayor's Office to be distributed to public servants.

The online financial disclosure system will be ready for deployment on January 19, 2021 for elected officials.

Executive Assistant Ford provided an update on lobbyist registration and report filing. She also discussed the gift solicitation campaigns' filing. Director Hochstetler discussed the Board's collaboration with the Baltimore Civic Fund regarding the reporting and the review of gift solicitation campaigns.

Councilmember Cohen Gift Solicitation Request - Healing City Baltimore 2021: Board member Hengerer asked for the other members' input regarding the answer to the third question of the Healing City Baltimore 2021 gift solicitation application. Board member Hengerer is concerned that the Board has no mechanism to ensure that the funds are distributed as indicated. Director Hochstetler emphasized the importance of a new review regime that incorporates the help of the fiscal sponsor, specifically, the Baltimore Civic Fund.

The Board approved the Healing City Baltimore 2021 gift solicitation application based on the information given; As a term of the

approval, the Board states that the sponsoring agency must notify the Board of any change in the distribution of the funds.

The Board unanimously supported the decision to update the gift solicitation application to include the Board's additional questions.

Vice Chair Davis requested that she and the other board members review the gift solicitation application and report before the next Ethics Board meeting.

Review of the Complaint Process: Vice Chair Davis provided the following suggestions for the Complaint Process Flowchart:

If a complaint is not within the Board's jurisdiction, it may be referred to another agency.

The decision-making points should be triangles, not circles.

Vice Chair Davis requested that the Board continue to be notified within a timely manner of complaints and referrals. She requested a monthly report of the Board staff's work in the form of metrics. She asked that we create a placeholder during the Confidential meeting for an update on the metrics. Board staff has already been keeping these metrics, and will provide them monthly to the Board.

New Business: Vice Chair Davis reminded the Board of the Annual Report, due by September 2020. The Board will continue to record metrics to provide in the annual report.

Move to Administrative Session: Board members unanimously voted to move to an Administrative Session.

The public meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.