

Baltimore City Ethics Board
626 City Hall
Baltimore MD 21202
April 20, 2012

Minutes of the Public Session

The Ethics Board met on April 20, 2012 in the Conference Room of the Office of Department of Legislative Reference, 626 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland.

- A. Call to Order: Chairwoman Linda Pierson called to order the meeting of the Baltimore City Ethics Board at 9:40 a.m. on April 20, 2012 with a quorum present. Present were Board members Linda Pierson, Jennifer Burdick, Guy Flynn and Dawna Cobb. Also present was Director Avery Aisenstark and Deputy Director Thaddeus Watulak. Ms. Kim Trueheart, a Baltimore City resident, was also present as a guest.
- B. Approval of the minutes: March 2012 minutes were approved as amended by a vote of 4-0.
- C. Chair's report: None.
- D. Director's Report:
 - 1. The effort to obtain the list of those entities that are doing business with the City is ongoing. The current list, now one document, was compiled from 10 different documents. It cannot be searched to determine which agency has done business with which company. The Department of Finance has not provided a list of those contracts approved by the Board of Estimates. Mr. Aisenstark has called the Deputy Director for the DOF to get this year's BOE minutes.
 - 2. Sport/ cultural events-Since the last meeting Mr. Aisenstark received an inquiry from a member of the City Council about whether he could accept tickets to the unveiling of hall-of-famer statues at Camden yards. Mr. Aisenstark advised that the tickets could be accepted because the Council member would not attend the game thus making this a cultural event.
- E. State Ethics Law Changes- Senate Bill 920 requiring on-line registration of ethics statements. This bill neither exempts nor requires local jurisdictions to comply with SB 920. Current law states that local jurisdiction laws must meet or be stricter than State law. The Board by a vote 4-0 agreed to file a second report on Council Bill 11-003 stating that Council members SB 9210 may require Council members to register on-line.
- F. Investigation report on complaint against L.G. See closed session notes.
- G. Solicitation requests-

Mayor's Commission on Disability: The Muscular Dystrophy solicitation was approved via e-mail before the meeting. The Board by a vote of 4-0 authorized the approval of this request upon receipt of the Board of Estimates endorsement.

- H. Discussion of Official's Request to Purchase City Property- An employee of the Department of Housing and Community Development wishes to purchase from HCD a vacant property that adjoins another property owned by the employee. After the employee expressed interest in the property, it was posted on line as available for purchase. No one has expressed an interest in purchasing the property. The Law Department has opined that the purchase is permissible-pending confirmation that the purchase price is appropriate--because the property was acquired by the City at tax sale. Relying on the Law Department's opinion, the Board voted 4-0 to instruct the Director to advise HCD that this purchase does not violate Ethics law.
- I. Proposed gift regulations- The law authorizes the Board to exempt certain gifts pursuant to section 6-28. The Board made a finding that the proposed exemption—retention of pharmaceutical samples by City clinics and acceptance of sporting event tickets from public educational institutions- met the requirements of section 6-28. These proposed gift exemptions were approved 4-0.
- J. Discussion of draft bills to broaden definition of conflicted parties beyond parties with a relationship with an official's agency- There are two bills at issue. The Board approved one and so advised the Mayor. The other draft bill dated 16 Feb 12 still needs a sponsor. It was passed on to the Council President's office, but Board staff has not learned whether the President will sponsor the bill.
- K. A Mayor's Fellow will be assigned to the Ethics Board. The fellow will be available June 11-August 17.
- L. At 11:10 a.m. a motion was made and approved by a vote of 4-0 to go into closed session to discuss two complaints.
- M. Ms. Burdick needs our input on the annual report and it will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Board's next meeting will be May 8, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30 a.m.