

Baltimore City Ethics Board
626 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202
June 11, 2013

Minutes of the Public Session

The Ethics Board met on June 11, 2013 in the Conference Room of the Office of Department of Legislative Reference, 626 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland.

Call to Order: Chairwoman Linda Pierson called to order the meeting of the Baltimore City Ethics Board at 9:50 a.m. with a quorum present. Present were Board members Linda Pierson (via telephone), Dawna Cobb, Guy Flynn and Jennifer Burdick. Also present was Director Avery Aisenstark and Deputy Director Thaddeus Watulak.

A. Approval of the minutes-Minutes for the May 2013 meeting and minutes for the closed meeting sessions for April and May 2013 as amended were approved by a unanimous vote.

B. Chair's Report-There was no report this month.

C. Director's report

1. State Mandated Open Meetings Training: Mr. Watulak will send Board members information about the Open Meetings training requirement, which requires someone from each board to attend open meetings training. Training must be completed within 90 days of October 1, 2013.

2. On Line Financial Disclosure Project: The MOIT employee assigned to the project has not returned from leave. MOIT has brought in Sharepoint developers on contract to complete the project. Mr. Watulak called MOIT to confirm that the time-frame for completing the project is two months from now. He had not heard back from MOIT at the time of this meeting.

3. Request from City Solicitor regarding Board of Estimates (BOE) process for public comment at BOE meetings: City Solicitor, George Nilson, is concerned that some individuals who make public comments at the BOE meetings may be unregistered lobbyists. He would like to adopt a process that requires all individuals who make a public comment identify whether they are lobbyists and if so, whether they are registered. Any unregistered lobbyist would be given five days to register. Mr. Nilson asked the Board to prepare a registration form for this purpose. Mr. Aisenstark will

draft a form for the Board to review. The Board expressed the view that it does not want this process to discourage community participation.

5. Status of bill 12-0142: Mr. Watulak has not heard back from the City Council President's Office on whether the President will put forward this bill, but Mr. Watulak doubts that this will occur. Because this bill was suggested by the Inspector General, the Board decided to invite the new Inspector General to the next meeting to discuss the bill and its future, if any.

D. Solicitation Requests

1. Fire Chiefs Conference-Baltimore is the site of this 2014 conference. This Fire Department solicitation request involves selling sponsorships for the conference. Sponsors are invited to the conference, but do not get access to City officials. Mr. Watulak confirmed this with the Fire Department's attorney. A motion to approve the request was approved by a 4-0 vote. The approval letter will caution the Fire Department about whom is solicited.

E. Late fee policy- The Board was presented with two requests to waive the late fee for failure to file a financial disclosure form.

1. The Public Art Commission: Members of this commission were not appointed or sworn in during the reporting period and thus were not notified of the disclosure requirement. Because of this, no late fee will be assessed. Mr. Aisenstark will provide the required ethics training to members of this Commission.

2. The Department of Transportation's Request: The Board voted 3-0 not to waive this request.

3. Board's role in future waiver requests: The Board discussed but did not vote on whether it should have a role in deciding future requests to be relieved of the late fee for failure to file a financial disclosure form.

F. Draft opinion on cohabiting partner: This matter was deferred because the Board was about to lose its quorum.

G. Request for an opinion on travel: Mr. Flynn recused himself from this discussion. The matter was deferred because the Board no longer had a quorum.

H. A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting is July 9, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.