

Baltimore City Ethics Board  
626 City Hall  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
October 8, 2013

## **Minutes of the Public Session**

The Ethics Board met on October 8, 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 9:45 a.m. with a quorum present. Present were Board members Linda Pierson, Dawna Cobb and Jennifer Burdick. Also present was Director of the Ethics Board, Avery Aisenstark, Deputy Director of the Ethics Board, Thaddeus Watulak and Yvonne Wenger from the *Baltimore Sun*.

**A. Approval of the minutes:** Minutes for September 2013, as amended, were approved by a vote of 3-0.

**B. Chair's Report:** There is no report.

### **C. Director's Status Updates**

1. **On-Line Financial Disclosure Project:** This project is in the procurement process. Anticipate it will be a 90 day project that will start on 10.17.13.

2. **Open Meetings Act Training:** We sent a message to [openmeeting@oag.state.md.us](mailto:openmeeting@oag.state.md.us) stating that Ms. Cobb and Ms. Burdick will take the training. Mr. Aistenstark will send them the link so they can sign up for the training.

3. **Ethics training cycle:** Five dates for general training will be announced this week via an e-mail to all City employees.

4. **Unregistered Zoning Lobbying:** A lobbyist who recently requested a zoning bill for a client was identified as someone who had not registered as a lobbyist in the past. He was notified of this and he paid the late fee for the past lobbying effort because the income threshold was met. The threshold has not been met for the more recent lobbying effort so he does not need to register for the other matter.

5. **Tracking Ethics Fees:** We had asked if we could have a separately designated account and we can! Registration fees and late fees will go into it. Finance will have access to this info, the Board won't, but Finance can give us the info. It still goes into the general fund, but at least we can see how much is there. The Bill for increasing the fee has been scheduled for a hearing. The Board has filed its neutral position on the bill.

#### **D. Solicitation Requests Previously Approved**

- Share Our Strength: this request, which was approved via e-mail before the meeting was ratified by a vote of 3-0

#### **E. Solicitation Requests**

1. P.L.A.Y . This request was approved by a vote of 3-0
2. Regina Boyce – Waverly Main Street was approved by a vote of 3-0
3. Lester Davis – Belair-Edison Neighborhoods was approved by a vote of 3-0.
4. Carolyn Blakeney – Suited to Succeed was approved by a vote of 3-0
5. Cailin Benson – Waverly Main Street was approved by a vote of 3-0
6. Cailin Benson – Friends of Wyman Park Dell was approved by a vote of 3-0
7. Cailin Benson – Soccer Without Borders was approved by a vote of 3-0
8. Mayor’s Commission on Disabilities -Dr. Wood did not obtain the Board of Ethics approval before conducting the solicitation. They filed a report, which is what triggered Mr. Watulak’s knowledge that the Ethics Board had not approved this request. A motion to approve retroactively the solicitation and send a letter stating: a) that this Commission failed to follow the procedure; and b) that if the organization fails to do this again, its request will not be approved. The motion was approved by a vote 3-0.
6. BoE Lobbying-The issue is whether a protest whether in writing or in person is an act of lobbying. The Board relies on a borrowed statute, i.e., the State's law. The Board directed Staff to research this issue. A motion to review check with other counties to see how they handle this was approved 3-0.

At 10:52 a.m., the Board unanimously moved to go into closed session to discuss a complaint and a potential complaint.

The Board returned to open session at 11:15 a.m. and voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting.

The Board’s next meeting is November 14, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.