

Baltimore City Ethics Board
635 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202
June 8, 2022

Minutes of the Meeting

The Ethics Board met on June 8, 2022 at 2:30 pm by conference call.

Call to Order: Chairman Stephan Fogleman called the Ethics Board meeting to order at 2:37 pm with three Board members, a quorum, present.

Statement Concerning May's Administrative Session and Potential Administrative Session: Chair Fogleman read the following statement:

Per the Open Meetings Act, the Board discloses that it adjourned its virtual open meeting on May 11, 2022 to enter into an administrative session at approximately 2:55 pm. All Board members were present. Members discussed administrative matters including complaints.

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.

Approval of Written Minutes for May 11, 2022 Public Meeting: Ethics Officer Ford corrected the number of active charitable/governmental gift solicitation waivers presented at the May 11, 2022 Public Meeting. The Board approved the amended May 11, 2022 minutes with a vote of 3-0.

Ethics Officer's Update: Ethics Officer Ford updated the Board on the Board staff's recent work:

- Ethics Training
 - April – 23 people completed automated training; 23 people attended live training
 - May – 132 people completed training; 12 people still enrolled
 - June (45 people registered)
 - July (21 people registered)
 - **Total FY22 attendees: 852**
- Help Desk
 - 273 help desk requests were received and resolved by the Ethics Board Staff in May.

- 0 help desk requests were from lobbyists.
 - 5 help desk requests were concerning gift solicitations.
 - 206 help desk requests were concerning financial disclosure statements.
 - 49 help desk requests were ethics inquiries.
 - 7 help desk requests were concerning the Ethics Training.
 - 4 help desk requests were administrative (question about deadlines, forms, etc).
 - 2 help desk requests were not within the Board’s jurisdiction and were referred elsewhere.
 - **Total FY22 requests (May 31, 2022): 1,443**
- Complaints
 - Since last Ethics Board meeting:
 - New Complaints: 1 (dismissed for lack of jurisdiction)
 - Open Complaints: 3
 - **FY22 Closed Complaints: 10**
 - **FY22 Total Complaints: 13**
- Advisory Opinions
 - Pending: 2
 - **FY22 Issued Opinions: 8**
 - **FY22 Published Opinions: 4**
- Financial Disclosure Statements:
 - May 23, 2022 – 15-day late notice sent to 236 outstanding filers
 - Copy of the notice and master list of all outstanding filers sent to the City Solicitor and the Director of the Department of Human Resources
 - Copy of the notice and list of outstanding filers sent to agencies/boards
 - Ethics Board staff were notified about outstanding filers that are no longer with the City
 - June 13, 2022 – Ethics Board staff will refer outstanding filers to the Office of the Inspector General
- Gift Solicitation Reports (since last Ethics Board meeting)
 - 4 gift solicitation waiver applications submitted to the Ethics Board.
 - 2 gift solicitation campaigns filed final reports.
 - Pending supplemental information for both reports.
 - 1 gift solicitation campaign filed an interim report.
 - **FY22 Active Campaigns: 11**
 - **FY22 Expired Campaigns: 9**

Board Discussion: Member Sampson proposed that Board staff provide an interview with the press on the Board’s metrics and work. Director Hochstetler stated that Board staff will be drafting and publishing an annual report, which will include the Board’s annual metrics and which will likely receive media coverage. Member Sampson suggested publishing a report prior to the annual report.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Applications

Healing City Baltimore, Office of City Councilmember Cohen: Healing City Baltimore Coordinator Ann Coy provided additional information about Healing City Baltimore and the three charitable/governmental gift solicitation waiver applications that request to solicit and accept donations for different initiatives of Healing City Baltimore. With a vote of 3-0, the Board moved to approve waivers for the following three campaigns: Healing City Baltimore Summit and Neighborhood Events, Healing City Staffing, and Peer Recovery Specialists in Agencies.

2022-23 LEE Public Policy Fellow, Office of City Councilmember Cohen: Maggie Master, the Chief of Staff in Councilmember Cohen’s Office, provided an overview of the request for the Board. Chair Fogleman inquired about the other fellows in the Councilmember’s office and Master responded, listing the fellows. The Board moved to approve the waiver with a vote of 3-0.

Bill Reports

City Council Bill 22-0234 (“Police Accountability”): Director Hochstetler explained the purpose of the bill and stated that Chair Fogleman signed a brief statement in support of the bill.

City Council Bill 22-0238 (“Charter Amendment – Inspector General – Advisory Board”): Director Hochstetler explained the provisions of the bill, which include granting the Ethics Board Chair the authority to pick members for the Inspector General’s Advisory Board, requiring the Ethics Board Chair to train the advisory board members, and authorizing the Ethics Board to remove advisory board members subject to a majority vote. Inspector General Cumming opined on the bill, stating that she disagrees with bill’s provisions that require the Ethics Board Chair to train the advisory board members and the provisions that authorize the Ethics Board to remove advisory board members. In agreement with this opinion, Chair Fogleman recommended that the Ethics Board accept any administrative functions proposed in the bill, such as randomly picking the members of the Inspector General’s Advisory Board, but that the Ethics Board reject the substantive, discretionary duties the bill assigns to the Board. Fogleman stated that he supports the complete independence of all City boards. Vice Chair Davis and Member Sampson agreed with Chair Fogleman’s recommendations.

Board Discussion: Vice Chair Davis inquired about the Office of the Inspector General’s budget hearing. Inspector General Cumming stated that the hearing officials appeared to be in favor of a one-time financial enhancement for a new financial disclosure filing site,

but that the officials were concerned about finding and allocating other City funds to the Office of the Inspector General for this enhancement. Inspector General Cumming stated that she had encouraged the officials to allocate the money and that she had spoken directly with the Director of Baltimore City Office of Information and Technology (BCIT) regarding the allocation of funds for the new site.

Move to Administrative Session: Board members elected to move to an Administrative Session.

The public meeting adjourned at 3:23 pm.