

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting, May 9, 2023

In-person only meeting, Council Office Building Room 114

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners:

Jennifer Collins, Vice-Chair

Susan Beard

Rahul Goel

Mary Ann Keeffe

Staff Member:

Erin Chu, Program Manager

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the Vice-Chair.

Item 2. The Commission approved the minutes from the April 11, 2023, meeting with one minor change. A question was raised whether the time of adjournment of the administrative meeting is required. Counsel to the Commission will look into this issue and advise the Commission.

Item 3. Ethics Education: Ms. Chu notified the Commission of an in-person training Mr. Cobb, Chief Counsel to the Commission, provided to employees of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. She also notified the Commission of upcoming trainings being provided to various groups of employees. A commissioner inquired whether the video training provided for boards, committees and commissions has any accessibility issues, and Ms. Chu assured the Commission that the online ethics video training has been close captioned and vetted for accessibility issues by TEBS.

Item 4. The Commission discussed vetting of persons appointed to positions in County for ethics issues. Mr. Cobb created an ethics questionnaire and shared it with the County Attorney, John Markovs, who viewed it favorably. The Commission approved of the questionnaire, and

there was discussion as to whether, eventually, a similar questionnaire could be used by the Office of Human Resources for all County hires.

Item 5. Erin Chu provided an update on annual financial disclosure filings. At the time of the meeting, there were 1,562 annual filers, four of whom had yet to file their 2022 Annual financial disclosures. Ms. Chu assured the Commission that she would be working towards assisting those four in completing their filings, and the Commission agreed to discuss enforcement at the June meeting if there remained any delinquent filers at that time.

Item 6. The Commission discussed initiatives concerning Racial Equity. Ms. Chu provided a brief explanation of what transpired at the Government Operations Committee hearing regarding the Ethics Commission's Racial Equity and Social Justice rating. She told the commission that Mr. Cobb proactively reached out to the County Racial Justice Officer, Tiffany Ward, when he learned of the score two days before the GO hearing. Mr. Cobb and Ms. Chu will be taking the nine hours of racial equity training provided to County employees and will await advice from Ms. Ward on additional ways ethics staff can work towards improving the program's rating.

Item 7. New Business. There was no new business.

The open meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m to conduct administrative matters.

In the administrative meeting the Commission decided to issue a waiver. The Commission also approved outside employment except as discussed in the meeting. The Commission discussed a question related to the application of the ethics law to an advisory board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Chu

Program Manager