



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting, March 8, 2022

Conducted via Zoom call

Minutes

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Susan Beard, Chair

Bruce Romer, Vice-Chair

Jennifer Collins

Rahul Goel

Mary Ann Keeffe

### PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

Dalia Mustafa

Siddharth Voonna

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Staff Members: Robert W. Cobb, Chief Counsel

Erin Chu, Program Manager

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION**

**100 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROOM 204, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850**

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Item 2. The Commission approved the minutes from the January 11, 2022, with several edits to the draft that was presented.

Item 3. Ethics Education: Mr. Cobb briefed the Commission on the developments concerning employee training. With respect to the five elements of the training plan previously reported to the Commission, Mr. Cobb reported that a meeting occurred with concerned OHR employees on February 22. Cobb reported that he thought the meeting was disappointing as some key OHR players had not taken any necessary steps toward implementation of the five elements of the first phase of the ethics training plan. Mr. Cobb indicated that the concerns were relayed to the OHR Director after the meeting. A motion was heard and unanimously agreed upon to invite the OHR head and the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer to the April 12, 2022, Commission meeting for purposes of addressing the implementation of the different elements of the training plan.

Item 4. Changes to State Ethics Law: The Commission considered State ethics law and requirements for local jurisdictions as developed by the State Ethics Commission. The Commission unanimously determined that Mr. Cobb should work with the Office of the County Attorney and counsel to the County Council on legislation to propose to address the State requirements. The Commission would like to obtain from staff additional insight as to the rationale for the State provisions.

Item 5. Procurement Integrity Amendments: The Commission considered a draft amendment to 11B-52(a) that would make clear that that procurement integrity provision applies to MCRA and to HOC. The Commission unanimously agreed that Mr. Cobb should seek to have that provision incorporated into the proposed legislative changes to address the State requirements discussed in Item 4.

Item 6. New Business: The Commission considered its reaffirmation at its September 9, 2021, meeting of its position to seek compliance with requirements, including lobbying registration, prior to imposition of penalties for noncompliance, with penalties only to be sought in evidenced instances of intentional or willful noncompliance. The Commission discussed obtaining, if possible, additional sources of information from the County Council regarding who may be a lobbyist. The Commission unanimously supported a motion for Mr. Cobb to explore the issue of obtaining additional information about the identity of potential lobbyists with the County Council's executive director.

Pursuant to GP Art. 3-305, at 8:25 p.m. the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to the public to discuss legal advice and confidential matters.

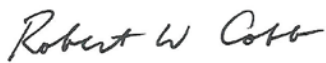
- a. The Commission approved outside employment requests, excepting those requiring waivers and with respect to one request where more information is to be obtained by Mr. Cobb and communicated to the Commission.
- b. The Commission unanimously decided to grant a waiver concerning outside employment.
- c. A Commission majority (3-2) decided to grant two waivers concerning post-employment requirements, subject to reviewing the proposed waivers.

- d. The Commission discussed some informal advice Mr. Cobb intended to provide to an employee and approved the handling of the matter.

The meeting reopened at 9:32.

Item 7. The meeting adjourned at 9:32.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert W. Cobb

Chief Counsel