



MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

**Public Meeting, July 12, 2022
Conducted via Zoom call
Minutes**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Susan Beard, Chair
Bruce Romer, Vice-Chair
Jennifer Collins
Rahul Goel
Mary Ann Keeffe

Staff Members: Robert W. Cobb, Chief Counsel
Erin Chu, Program Manager

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Item 2. The Commission approved the minutes from the June 14, 2022, meeting with a minor edit.

Item 3. Ethics Education: Mr. Cobb informed the Commission on the progress with implementation of the Board Committee and Commission (BCC) training. In particular, Technology and Business Solutions (TEBS) staff is currently working on making the BCC ethics training videos accessible in accordance with relevant requirements. In August, TEBS intends to have a programmer work on building the videos into a system to provide notice and tracking of the BCC ethics training videos.

Mr. Cobb discussed the idea of seeking an individual to provide assistance in the development of relevant ethics training materials pursuant to a personal services contract. Mr. Cobb indicated that he thought reaching out to local law schools would hopefully result in obtaining a person with the requisite technology skills. The Commission encouraged the idea of seeking paid assistance, although acknowledging that there can be challenges in obtaining full benefit of assistance due to technological challenges. The Commission thought it would be a good idea to seek additional funds for the Commission's FY'24 budget for purposes of obtaining a part-time employee to provide training related services.

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Item 4. Ethics bill status: Mr. Cobb informed the Commission that proposed changes to the ethics law are scheduled for a public hearing at 1:30 on July 26 at 1:30. There are three items that will need to be considered for inclusion in the ethics legislation: adding the Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee to the list of entities whose members are required to file financial disclosures; addressing the issue of whether members of a board representing constituencies, particularly the Building Performance Improvement Board, are to be exempted from coverage of the prohibitions of 19A-11(a)(1) and 19A-12; and adding an ethics training requirement for BCC members (along with parliamentary procedure and open meeting act training for BCC members.) Mr. Cobb is to confirm that the appropriate time to address these issues is when the Government Operations Committee of the Council is going to take up the legislation.

Item 5. New Business: The Commission discussed the role of the Commission with respect to the County's finance department's policy of requiring a permission letter from the Ethics Commission for County employees' who seek to be listed on the County's vendor list. This process is not a function of the County's ethics law but has been handled by staff as an accommodation to the Department of Finance. Mr. Cobb is to seek to have the Finance department policy and references to it refer only to obtaining the letters from the counsel to the Ethics Commission rather than the Ethics Commission itself as there is no statutory role for the Commission.

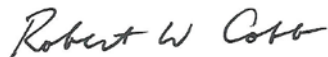
Item 6: Pursuant to GP Art. 3-305, at 7:50 p.m. the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to the public to discuss legal advice and confidential matters.

- a. The Commission decided to issue a waiver.
- b. The Commission considered a request for advice concerning a County program and decided that further study of the issues was warranted.
- c. The Commission considered an issue of whether to grant relief from the imposition of a fine but deferred making a decision on the issue.
- d. The Commission approved the outside employment requests as presented.

The meeting reopened at 9:15.

Item 7. The meeting adjourned at 9:15

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert W. Cobb
Chief Counsel

