

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting of February 25, 2021

Conducted via Zoom call

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Susan Beard, Chair

Bruce Romer, Vice-Chair

Kenita Barrow

Rahul Goel

Steven Rosen

Staff Members: Robert W. Cobb, Chief Counsel

Erin Chu, Program Manager

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item 2. The Commission approved the minutes from the December 15, 2020, meeting as presented.

Item 3. The Commission ratified its January email decision to send a letter [January 11, 2021] to the State Ethics Commission regarding whether Bill 47-20 was consistent with State ethics law requirements.

Item 4. Mr. Cobb gave an overview of current activities. This included discussion of the progress towards appointment of new Commission members, a minor change to the Financial Disclosure System, status of annual financial disclosure filings, the receipt of 100 percent of lobbying semi-annual reports, and the annual budget process.

Item 5. Mr. Cobb stated that the County Council will be reviewing Bill 47-20 on March 2. Mr. Cobb will attend the session in the event the Council has any questions about the legislation.

Item 6. Mr. Cobb discussed developments in the training area. He indicated that the Housing Opportunities Commission, based on recommendations in a 2014 Inspector General report, was requesting, and Commission staff agreed to provide, ethics training to HOC Commissioners and staff. Additionally, the Executive Director of the County Council requested that all members of Council appointed Boards Commissions and Committees receive ethics training. In anticipation of the Council's approval of Bill 47-20 and its grant of authority to the Ethics Commission concerning training, Commission staff will be considering approaches to providing training to County board, commission and committee members, balancing relevant considerations regarding need for the training including risk assessment as to specific boards and commissions, efficiency and affect on BCC participation. Commission members suggested providing training as part of new Board member onboarding and use of an ethics video and materials that can be easily accessed by new BCC members.

Item 7. The Commission approved the draft of the Commission 2020 Annual Report for release by March 1, 2021.

Item 8. Pursuant to GP Art. 3-305, at 7:30 p.m. the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to the public to discuss legal advice and confidential matters.

- a. The Commission considered matters concerning possible violations of the ethics law.
- b. The Commission considered a request for advice under the ethics law.
- c. The Commission considered how a possible request for a waiver of ethics requirement should be handled.

The meeting reopened at 8:30.

Item 9. The next meeting was not scheduled.

Item 10. The meeting adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert W. Cobb

Chief Counsel