

Baltimore City Ethics Board
626 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202
February 12, 2013

Minutes of the Public Session

The Ethics Board met on February 12, 2013 in the Conference Room of the Office of Department of Legislative Reference, 626 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland.

Call to Order: Chairwoman Linda Pierson called to order the meeting of the Baltimore City Ethics Board at 9:40 a.m. with a quorum present. Present were Board members Linda Pierson, Jennifer Burdick, Dawna Cobb and Alicia Wilson (present by telephone). Mr. Flynn was not present at the time the meeting was convened, but arrived at 9:55 a.m. Also present were Director Avery Aisenstark and Deputy Director Thaddeus Watulak.

A. Approval of the minutes: Minutes for January were approved with changes by a vote of 4-0.

B. Chair's Report: No Report

C. Discussion of pending ethics legislation and regulation: Bill 0163 has been sent to the Mayor for her signature. Bill 0110 is being held because of Councilman Henry's concerns regarding donations from community organizations. Bill 0142 was put on indefinite hold on third reader. The proposed regulation on community associations is on hold waiting for definition of "community organization" from the Department of Planning.

D. Director's Status Updates

1. Response to letter to BV-This letter signed by Ms. Wilson, has been sent.
2. Response to RJ-The Board's letter in response has been sent.
3. Auditor's review- The City auditor is doing a whole city audit with assistance from the accounting firm of KPMG. The auditors have expressed concern that the City's financial disclosure form will not detect conflicts of interest arising from City employees trading on inside information with outside contractors. Mr. Aisenstark and Mr. Watulak explained to the auditors' satisfaction that the procurement process would ferret out this information.

4. Mayor's fellow- The Board does not have a project that would justify applying for a Mayor's fellow, but the services of an intern would be helpful. The Board staff will talk to the Law Department about sharing an intern or the process for hiring one.

5. Online financial disclosure project: MOIT does not have the resources to manage on-line filing of financial disclosure forms during this cycle. The Board will ask MOIT to post new disclosure forms on the Board's website. Last year's forms will be completed by Board members during this cycle.

6. Possible future complaint-An employee working in the Housing Department's permits office has a significant other who files permits for demolition work. The employee did not disclose this relationship. The agency will follow up with the employee and advise Board staff accordingly.

7. Status of doing business with the City list-This has not been received despite a commitment from the Department of Finance that it was forthcoming. Mr. Aisenstark will follow up with Mr. Henry and will let the Board know if it needs to send him a letter.

E. Solicitation requests

Baltimore-Xiamen Sister City Committee: this committee solicited donations in 2012 without Board approval. A motion to defer reviewing the Committee's 2013 request until additional information about why it failed to seek the Ethics Board approval for the 2012 campaign was made and seconded. The Board voted 3-2 in favor of the motion.

F. Discussion on precedent on cohabiting partners:

A motion to go into closed session to discuss a request for an opinion was made at 11:00 a.m. and was approved by a vote of 5-0. The Board returned to open session at 11:18 a.m.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved at 11:20 a.m. The next meeting will be on March 12, 2013.