

**ETHICS BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SESSION**

The Ethics Board (“Board”) met on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 2:30 pm by conference call via Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order & Statement Concerning the Recording of the Public Session: Chair Stephan Fogleman called the Board meeting to order at 2:30 pm with four Board members, a quorum, present.

Chair Fogleman read the following statement:

All participants in the Public Session of the Board meeting acknowledge and consent to the video and audio recording of the Public Session and the publication of the recording on the Board’s website and social media accounts.

Statement Concerning the Administrative Session of the April 10, 2024, Board Meeting: Chair Fogleman read the following statement:

Per the Open Meetings Act, the Board discloses that it adjourned its virtual open meeting on April 10, 2024 to enter the Administrative Session at approximately 3:34 pm. Four Board members were present. Members discussed administrative matters including complaints.

The Board may need to close some or all of this meeting to preserve the confidentiality mandated by the Ethics Code or as otherwise authorized by the State Open Meetings Act. Likewise, upon adjournment of the Open Session, the Board may reconvene for an Administrative Session to discuss non-public, administrative functions of the Board.

Review of Schedules and Agenda.

Approval of Written Minutes for the Administrative Session of the April 10, 2024 Board Meeting: The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Mayor’s Back to School Pep Rally 2024 – Mayor’s Office of Family & Children Success: The Mayor’s Back to School Pep Rally 2024 event is an annual community event at the beginning of the new school year. Chief Lugay informed the Board that the event has grown significantly: 4,000 families were hosted last year. The event offers a festival with free book bags and supplies for grades K-12, on-site resources, free meals, and entertainment. MOCFS partners with local organizations and major partners like Xfinity, Downtown Locker Room, and Under Armor to service the youth and their families. Organizers coordinate with Baltimore Public Schools to ensure they meet students’ needs. The Baltimore Civic Fund is the fiscal sponsor and will oversee donations. All-access funding will be rolled over to the following year.

Board member Sampson inquired how donations would be acknowledged. Chief Lugay explained that there would be tiers of donations, and for particular sponsors, names are added to a sign and will receive a thank you note. Board member Sampson also asked if there was a minimal amount for acknowledgment. Chief Lugay informed the Board that \$25,000 was the minimum amount for acknowledgment. Director Amberger questioned if this was more of a

sponsorship program than a pure charity drive because if sponsorships are involved, it would be more of a quasi-contract, not a gift under the Ethics Law. Board Sampson asked whether there would be some acknowledgment for all donations. Chief Lugay presented the sponsorship package to the Board and explains the respective tiers. Any donation outside of the sponsorship program would receive acknowledgment, no matter how much is donated.

Board member Newman reiterated Dir. Amberger's point about the differentiation of sponsorship and donation. Dir. Amberger clarified for the Board that, for purposes of the waiver petition, the Ethics Law's focus would be on the small donations, because the sponsorship tiers do not require the Ethics Board's approval. Director Amberger suggested that it be clarified in the waiver that this is a dual-track program that involves sponsorships and that he would confer with the Petitioners to update to the language on the webpage to have sponsors choose their sponsorship separately from the gift donations. Chair Fogleman reiterated the amendment to the waiver. The Board approved the waiver with a vote of 4-0.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – MOED Programs– Mayor's Office of Employment Development: The MOED Programs waiver is a repeat waiver that the BOE and the Board have previously approved. Director David Hagans and Chief Riley Grant joined the meeting. Director Hagans explained that donations are being solicited to support the Summer Youth Works program, where youth participants aged 14 to 21 are employed through a five-week, 25 –hour-per-week program. The Baltimore Civic Fund will be the financial sponsor, receiving private donations from several sources. Last year, MOED received \$2.4 million in private donations through the Baltimore Civic Fund. Director Hagans informed the Board that the program's total cost exceeds \$12 million dollars per summer, which is funded by other state and city government sources. The money received from donations will be used to pay the wages for youth participants in the program. The Board approved the waiver application with a vote of 4-0.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – LGBTQ Affairs – Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs: The Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs seeks to solicit donations to support their office. Operations Assistant Alexis Blackmon shared with the Board that the office would like to outsource office tasks and hire staff to help identify grants and sponsor events. Ms. Blackmon continued to explain that although there is a budget from the Mayor's Office, the office's budget is insufficient for expansion. The Baltimore Civic Fund would assist with helping get donations from the community.

The Board discussed the role of the Baltimore Civic Fund and expressed interest in inviting Director Chung to the next meeting to clarify the functions of the Civic Fund. With a vote of 3-1, the Board approved the waiver.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Key Bridge Emergency Response – Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: With this waiver, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs sought to repurpose a preexisting account established during COVID-19. Dir.

Amberger informed the Board that the agreement between OEM management and the Board in the case of emergencies would provide preliminary approval contingent on BOE approval. The Baltimore Civic Fund will allocate funds and sponsor MIMA. Chief Alexandra Smith explained that the account was being explicitly repurposed to aid the families of victims of the Key Bridge Collapse through partnerships with community-based organizations that provided case management and crisis services to the families. With a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the waiver.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse Response Efforts – Mayor’s Office: Dir. Amberger explained to the Board that waivers were similar, and the Board discussed the waiver. With a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the waiver.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Food Fund for Port Workers Effected by Key Bridge Collapse – Councilmen Zeke Cohen’s Office: Maggie Master informed the Board that the waiver is for a food fund to support port workers affected by the Key Bridge collapse. The fund was submitted following a request from union leaders concerned about the long-term implications for furloughed or reduced-hour workers, especially regarding food insecurity. The proposed fund seeks flexibility to solicit monetary and in-kind donations, including restaurant discounts for affected workers. The Board discussed the waiver and approved it with a vote of 4-0.

Staff Update: Director Amberger and Assistant Bond provided the following metrics for February on the Board staff’s recent work:

- Help Desk
 - 603 help desk requests were received and resolved by Board staff in February.
 - 6 help desk requests were from lobbyists.
 - 0 help desk requests were concerning gift solicitation waivers.
 - 15 help desk requests were concerning financial disclosure statements.
 - 18 help desk requests were ethics inquiries.
 - 1 help desk requests were concerning the Ethics Training.
 - 0 help desk requests were administrative (question about deadlines, forms, etc).
 - 3 help desk requests were not within the Board’s jurisdiction and were referred elsewhere.
 - FY24 requests: 525
- Ethics Training

- 25 people completed the Ethics Training in March.
 - FY24 attendees: 264

- Complaints
 - FY24 Complaints: 21
 - Open: 0
 - Dismissed: 21

- Secondary Employment Waivers
 - Waiver Requests: 0
 - FY24 Granted Waivers: 1

- Gift Solicitation Waivers
 - 6 gift solicitation waiver applications were submitted to the Board for the April 10, 2024 Board meeting.
 - 1 gift solicitation waivers expired since the last Board meeting.
 - FY24 Active Waivers: 20
 - FY24 Expired/Rescinded Waivers: 17

- Financial Disclosure Statements
 - Ethics staff has notified all agencies of the April 30, 2024, deadline.
 - 1800+ filers have filed.

- Lobbying
 - 101 lobbyists have registered.

The Public Session adjourned at 3:10 pm.