

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

The Ethics Board (“Board”) met on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 at 2:30 pm by conference call via Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order & Statement Concerning the Recording of the Public Session: Chair Fogleman called the Board meeting to order at 2:31 pm. Four Board members were present, forming a quorum.¹

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 June 12, 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 June 12, 2024 to enter the Administrative Session at approximately 3:40 pm. Four Board members were present. No members were absent. 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.

Due to the number of waiver petitioners, the preliminary Agenda was changed to allow petitioners to make their case(s) to the Board before all other business:

- (1.) Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Veterans Day Parade-Mayor’s Office:** Marva Williams, Special Assistant from the Mayor’s Office, explained that the Veterans Day Parade is an annual event organized by the Mayor’s Office to honor military personnel and veterans. This year’s Parade will take place on Saturday, November 9. Williams represented that the funds to be solicited from donors were needed to cover expenses for the event: The organizers would like to provide transportation to and from the event for students, including junior ROTC programs and marching bands, as well as meals for parade participants.

Board member McCauley pointed out a discrepancy involving the June date of the Board of Estimate’s endorsement, which predated the signed application by two days. Williams explained that a draft application had been completed on that date but required sign-off from management. McCauley inquired if solicitation efforts had already started. Williams emphasized that solicitation would only commence after approval from the Board of Estimates (BOE) *and* the Ethics Board had been obtained. Board member Sampson inquired if solicitation requests had been submitted in previous years. Williams stated that, while this is a regular annual event, last year (2023) was

¹ The Ethics Board currently has one vacancy.

the first time a waiver was requested and granted. Sampson further asked if there was significant difference between what is being proposed this year versus last year. Williams stated that the only difference was the hope to start solicitation earlier. **The Board approved the waiver with a vote of 4-0.**

- (2.) **Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Infrastructure Summit – Mayor’s Office of Infrastructure Development (MOID):** Chief Ann Haskins-Brookover and Project Manager Ramona S. Harry were present. Chief Haskins-Brookover explained that the Infrastructure Summit is intended to bring together stakeholders in the public workforce system, the business community, the infrastructure industry sector, and state officials to explore how the city is using the influx of Federal funds for infrastructure jobs, training, infrastructure maintenance, etc. Haskins-Brookover emphasized that opportunities created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) would be discussed, as well as the future of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Solicitations for the event are earmarked to rent space at the Baltimore Convention Center, as well as for food for the event and the production of any collateral materials, including printing of event programs and promotional materials.

Chair Fogleman asked how much money would be raised. MOID anticipates between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Harry explained that the event was initially conceived on a smaller scale, but the influx of infrastructure funds necessitated the involvement of the local business community in a bigger way. Harry also pointed out that the rental cost for the Convention Center had significantly increased after July 1.

Board member Newman requested more information on the application’s “Part B: Purpose of Proposed Solicitation”. Chief Haskins-Brookover explained that the Summit represents an educational opportunity involving potential employers and young citizens. MOID plans to bring together the business community and young people who want to learn about the spectrum of jobs available. The Summit seeks to engage with contractors and consultants in the business community and improve workforce development. This would involve connecting with Baltimore City Public Schools to prepare high school students to consider these long-term careers. Newman asked if the intent was to also inform about the process of bidding for government projects. Harry confirmed and explained that the Small Business Development program would be among the presenters, as well as Baltimore City Public Schools, a local advisory committee on apprenticeships, and vendors currently serving the City’s various agencies. Newman further inquired if the planning of the event would be outsourced. Ms. Harry explained that all the planning would be through MOID. Chief Administrator Leach, Maya Gilmore, and Dana Moore were identified as members of the planning team. Chief Haskins-Brookover pointed out that tickets may be sold for the event. Newman inquired about ticket costs and sponsorships. Haskins-Brookover indicated that tickets would start at \$25 and sponsorships at \$500. Chief Haskins-Brookover and Ms. Harry continued to share information about the waiver, mentioning Ms. Harry’s attendance at the Northeast Infrastructure Day and

answering Board member Sampson's question regarding ethical implications. **The Board approved the waiver with a vote of 4-0.**

- (3.) **Amended Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – City Council President Transition – Office of Councilmen Zeke Cohen:** Director Amberger presented Councilman Cohen's memorandum rescinding his prior application for a waiver relating to fundraising for the upcoming inauguration. **The Board voted unanimously to accept the waiver amendment and approve the solicitation request to raise transition funds**, adding that the funds were to be designated to fund transition activities involving the office of the sitting Council President and whoever the citizens of Baltimore City vote into that office in the November election.

Approval of Written Minutes for the Public Session of the June 12, 2024 Board Meeting: Chair Fogleman inquired if there were any comments or suggested edits. Board member McCauley expressed his displeasure that the submitted minutes were not up to the usual standards due to typos, grammatical errors, and syntactical mistakes. Director Amberger promised resubmission of redacted minutes at the next Board meeting (9/11); the vote to approve was deferred.

Ethics Director Update: Director Amberger announced that, after a lengthy interviewing process, former Special Assistant Bond was selected for the position of the new Ethics Officer. Ethics is currently interviewing for a new Special Assistant A decision will be made by the next Board meeting.

Staff Update: Ethics Officer Bond provided the following **metrics for June and July** on the Board staff's recent work:

- Help Desk
 - 35 help desk requests were received and resolved by Board staff in June.
 - 2 help desk requests were from lobbyists.
 - 4 help desk requests were concerning gift solicitation waivers.
 - 26 help desk requests were concerning financial disclosure statements.
 - 2 help desk requests were ethics inquiries.
 - 1 help desk requests were administrative (question about deadlines, forms, etc).
 - 57 help desk requests were received and resolved by Board staff in July.
 - 21 help desk requests were from lobbyists.
 - 7 help desk requests were concerning gift solicitation waivers.
 - 18 help desk requests were concerning financial disclosure statements.
 - 6 help desk requests were ethics inquiries.
 - 5 help desk requests were concerning the Ethics Training.
 - **FY24 requests: 935**
- Ethics Training
 - 12 people completed the Ethics Training in June.
 - 53 people completed the Ethics Training in July.

- **FY24 attendees: 365**
- Complaints
 - 3 complaints were received in June.
 - **FY24 Complaints: 30**
- Secondary Employment Waivers
 - Received 1 secondary waiver request for August 2024 meeting.
 - **FY24 Granted Waivers: 1**
- Gift Solicitation Waivers
 - 3 gift solicitation waiver applications were submitted to the Board for the August Board meeting.
 - **FY24 Waiver Approvals: 30**
- Financial Disclosure Statements
 - More than 3,000 public servants in qualifying positions were required by law to file annual financial disclosure statements. The Ethics Board has received **3,128** annual and departure financial disclosures and amendments through the end of FY23-24.
 - This compares to 2,965 filings in the preceding fiscal year. For Calendar Years 2021, 2022, and 2023, 99% of all City employees required to file have provided their annual financial disclosures.
 - There are 120 outstanding filers (excluding public servants on leave or who are no longer with the City).
 - Since more than 60 days have passed since the deadline, the Ethics Law authorizes the Board to refer the matter to the outstanding filers' agency heads, the Director of Human Resources, and the City Solicitor, with a recommendation that the outstanding filers be suspended without pay until they file.
- Lobbying
 - Semi-annual lobbying reports were due on 7/31/2024. Three lobbyists have yet to file their semi-annual reports.
 - 142 lobbyists have registered.

The Public Session adjourned at 3:30 pm.