

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

The Ethics Board (“Board”) met on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 2:38 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 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 December Board Meeting: Chair Fogleman read the following statement:

Per the Open Meetings Act, the Board discloses that it adjourned its virtual open meeting on December 13, 2023 to enter the Administrative Session at approximately 3:25 PM. Four Board members were present. Newman was 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.

Approval of Written Minutes for the Public Session of the December 13, 2023 Board Meeting: With a vote of 4-0, the minutes were approved.

Request for Guidance – CIAA Tournament Suite and Tickets Donation – Mayor’s Office – Mayor’s Office: Executive Assistant Natasha Edmonds joined the meeting and shared that the CIAA is coming and Visit Baltimore and The CFG Arena has offered to give the Mayor a bunker suite during the tournament. Ms. Edmonds requested guidance if it was appropriate to accept the offer, what documentation would be needed, or if the Mayor's Office should decline the offer. Director Amberger asked about the date of the CIAA Tournament. In response, Ms. Edmonds shared that the tournament starts on February 26 and runs through March 3rd. Director Amberger shared further background with the Board and explained that the arena's Operator is a tenant of the City and is likely a controlled donor. Director Amberger explained the offer of an unsolicited gift and that this can be approached as an application for gift acceptance. Director Amberger drew the Board's attention to a similar event from 2012, where the "gift" of tickets was a term in the contract between the operators of the Arena and the City. Director Amberger did a cursory review of the contract and suggested the Board discuss the implications in the context of a potential more General advisory. Referencing the event in 2012, Director Amberger explained that the Board expressed displeasure with the lack of documentation of who would receive those tickets and for what City-related purpose those tickets were distributed. Director Amberger shared that a couple of questions were provided to the Law Departments; however, they were never answered. The

request could allow more deliberation in the administrative session to create a more acceptable and applicable board ruling. Board member McCauley inquired if the Mayor's Office planned to submit a formal application for a gift waiver or if this was an oral request for waiver. In response, Ms. Edmonds agreed to submit a formal waiver application. Board member Newman inquired if the CIAA has been to Baltimore in the past and if there have been any donations of tickets. In response, Ms. Edmonds denied any past ticket donation and explained that the City bought tickets last year due to the arena being under construction. Officer Romo offered clarification to the Board that the Mayor's office is not soliciting tickets; instead, it is an exemption to the acceptance restrictions rather than a waiver request to solicit gifts, so we have to come up with a form for the request.

Charitable/Governmental Gift Solicitation Waiver Application – Connect 2 Success/ Squeegee Collaborative Program- Mayor’s Office of African Male Engagement: Officer Estep provided the Ethics Board with an overview of the waiver request. Funds would be solicited to provide stipends, barrier removal, transportation, and anything that falls under the guidelines for success. The funds are submitted to the Baltimore Civic Fund. Chair Fogleman inquired if a list of all public servants who would solicit contributions was provided in the application. Officer Estep confirmed this. Board member McCauley questioned Section V of the waiver’s application, specifically, that the response did not answer the question as to what measures would be taken to not solicit controlled donors. In response, Officer Estep explained that MOAAME and the Squeegee Collaborative Program does not solicit donations from people who directly do business with the city. Chair Fogleman clarified that it would be broad solicitation. Board member McCauley also inquired why City officials would be soliciting of these funds and not MOAAME. Officer Estep explained that some charitable organizations do donate to the MOAAME, however philanthropic dollars are solicited to assist with the program due to minimal agency budget. Officer Estep explained that the program reached a vast number of young people throughout Baltimore City and to have funds outside of City dollars helps to assist young people with the necessities they need. Board member McCauley inquired if the Squeegee Collaborative Program was a part of the City or a separate charitable entity. In response, Officer Estep explained that the Squeegee Collaborative Program is a combination of City leaders, MOAAME, and business leaders in a working group to minimize the panhandling of young people. Board member Newman echoed Board member McCauley’s inquiry about section V of the waiver application and asked for clarification of control measures to ensure no soliciting of controlled donors. Officer Estep explained that donations would go through MOAAME and outside of who is listed, solicitations cannot independently occur. Officer Romo informed the Board that the Ethics Law stated that solicitations must be broad and if a controlled donor is unknowingly solicited, the gift solicitation waiver permits it so as long as it is disclosed on activity reports filed by that office. Contingent on amendments made to the waiver application, the Board voted 4-0 to approve waiver.

Staff Update: Special Assistant Bond provided the following metrics for December on the Board staff’s recent work:

- Help Desk
 - Numbers will be provided at the next Board meeting.

- Ethics Training
 - Numbers will be provided at the next Board meeting.

- Complaints
 - FY24 Complaints: 14
 - Open: 2
 - Dismissed: 12
 -
 - 2 new complaints.

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

- Gift Solicitation Waivers
 - 1 gift solicitation waiver applications were submitted to the Board for the January Board meeting.
 - 5 gift solicitation waivers expired since the last Board meeting.
 - FY24 Active Waivers: 14
 - FY24 Expired/Rescinded Waivers: 15

- Financial Disclosure Statements
 - Ethics Board staff are still waiting for 5 agencies/boards to provide a list of required financial disclosure filers. The deadline to provide the list was January 1, 2024
 - Elected Officials have been notified to file their disclosures by January 31.

- Lobbying
 - Ethics Board staff sent reminders to Lobbyist informing them that Annual Lobbying reports are due by the end of the month.

The Public Session adjourned at 4:09 pm.