

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

BOARD OF ETHICS

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

Friday, May 15, 2020
Laurel, Maryland

The Board of Ethics ("Board") met via videoconference to conduct an Open Session pursuant to Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(13).

Chair Pruden called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with the following members present:

George Pruden II, Chair
Steven Hausman, Member
Jeffrey Hysen, Member
Chandria Slaughter, Alternate Member

Also present:

Angelique Dorsey White, Ethics Officer
Russel Beers, Deputy General Counsel
Latonya Allen, Administrative Assistant
Amanda Stakem Conn, General Counsel
Tamika Taylor, Office of Inspector General Associate Counsel
David McDonough, Police and Homeland Security Director

Open Session

Approval of Open Session Minutes – April 21, 2020

The Board reviewed the draft Open Session Minutes for April 21, 2020.

On motion of Mr. Hysen and seconded by Dr. Hausman, three members of the Board (Hysen, Hausman, and Pruden) voted to approve the April Open Session Minutes.

Matters of Discussion

Update on WSSC Operations

General Counsel Amanda Stakem Conn introduced Police and Homeland Security Director David McDonough to the Board. Mr. McDonough provided an overview of his role as the WSSC Incident Commander for the COVID-19 response team. Mr. McDonough stated that weekly meetings are held with Department Directors to provide updates on the COVID-19 response and to address any issues with day-to-day functions. He also shared that three task forces — Personnel Policy, Revenue and Billing, and New Normal — have been established to address how to best serve WSSC customers during the pandemic and to establish plans to provide safe workplace operations going forward.

Mr. McDonough left the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

Dates of Board of Ethics Meetings During the COVID-19 Emergency

Ms. Dorsey White gave an overview of this matter. She informed the Board that management is currently holding updates on the COVID-19 pandemic response each Thursday at 2:00 p.m. Both the employee meetings and the Board of Ethics meetings are broadcast via livestream, but only one such meeting can occur at a time. She stated that management has asked the Board whether it would be amenable to temporarily changing the Board of Ethics meeting date to accommodate the COVID updates. The Board reached a consensus that the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. would be an acceptable temporary meeting date. The Board stressed that it intends to return to its regular meeting date as soon as practicable. Ms. Dorsey White

stated that a vote was needed to make this change because the Board has already published its meeting time and dates for the year as required by Code of Ethics Ch. 1.65.030(a)(1).

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to change the day of the Board meetings to the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. until there is no longer a conflict with the COVID-19 employee meetings.

Ethics CY 2019 Annual Report Update

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on this matter. She stated that Chair Pruden would present the annual ethics report at the Commission meeting on May 20, 2020. Ms. Dorsey White also stated that the report will be sent to the elected leaders of Montgomery and Prince George's counties once the Commission approves it.

Ethics Monthly Report for March and April

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on the activities in the Ethics Office for March and April 2020. She stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Employee Orientation has been limited to items required for onboarding. Accordingly, no employee ethics training was conducted in March or April. Ms. Dorsey White also shared that the Ethics Office provided guidance on 15 matters in March, of which the leading categories were Financial Disclosures and Soliciting or Acceptance of Gifts. Lastly, she stated that the Ethics Office provided guidance on 36 matters in April, of which the leading categories were Financial Disclosures and General Inquiry/Administration.

Informational Items

Financial Disclosures for Boards

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on this matter. She stated that the financial disclosure form for WSSC Boards and Committees has been modified so that it can now be completed electronically. She also stated that the forms would be released on June 1, 2020 with a due date of July 31, 2020.

Delinquent Financial Disclosure Filer(s)

No delinquent financial disclosure filer was reported.

Closed Session Approval

At 1:48 p.m., on motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to conduct a Closed Session pursuant to Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(13) to approve March 12, 2020 Closed Session Minutes; General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(13) and WSSC Code of Ethics Ch. 1.70.110 to address three Complaints; and General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(7) to obtain legal advice regarding three Complaints, Potential Complaints, and Proposed changes to the Code of Ethics.

Attendees: Chair George Pruden; Member Steven Hausman; Member Jeffrey Hysen; and Alternate Member Chandria Slaughter. Staff present: Ethics Officer Angelique Dorsey White; Deputy General Counsel Russel Beers; and Administrative Assistant Latonya Allen, Associate Counsel Julianne Montes De Oca, Retained Investigation Counsel Steven Wrobel, and Associate Counsel Rahel Kifle.

Closed Session

Approval of Closed Session Minutes – March 12, 2020

The Board reviewed the draft Closed Session Minutes from March 12, 2020.

On motion of Mr. Hysen and seconded by Dr. Hausman, three members of the Board (Hysen, Hausman, and Pruden) voted to approve the March Closed Session Minutes.

Complaint C-19-09

Associate Counsel Julianne Montes de Oca joined the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Ms. Julianne Montes de Oca provided an update on this complaint.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to approve scheduling a hearing for August 12, 2020 via videoconference.

Ms. Montes de Oca left the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

Complaint C-20-04

Retained Investigation Counsel Steven Wrobel joined the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Mr. Wrobel provided an update on this complaint.

Mr. Wrobel left the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

Complaint 20-02

Associate Counsel Rahel Kifle joined the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

Ms. Kifle provided an update on this complaint.

On motion of Mr. Hysen and seconded by Dr. Hausman, three members of the Board (Hysen, Hausman, and Pruden) voted to extend the time for receiving the preliminary report to the July meeting for good cause shown in accordance with

Board of Ethics Rules of Procedure Ch. 1.65.070(b)(5)(ii).

Ms. Kifle left the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

Potential Complaints

2020 Potential Complaint #5

Ms. Allen gave an overview of this matter.

On motion of Mr. Hysen and seconded by Dr. Hausman, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to file a complaint on its own motion pursuant to Code of Ethics Ch. 1.70.080(b) for a violation of Ch. 1.70.340(c).

2020 Potential Complaint #6

Ms. Dorsey White gave an overview of this matter.

Legal Advice on Proposed Changes to the Code of Ethics

Mr. Beers provided an update on this matter.

Approval to Reconvene in Open Session

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) agreed to end the Closed Session of the meeting at 3:21 p.m. and reconvene in Open Session.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business discussed.

Adjournment

On motion of Mr. Hysen and seconded by Dr. Hausman, three members of the Board (Hysen, Hausman, and Pruden) voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:22 p.m.



Angelique Dorsey White, Esq.
Ethics Officer