

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

BOARD OF ETHICS

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday September 14, 2022
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 George Pruden called the meeting to order at 1:02 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, Legal Counsel to the Board
Latonya Allen, Administrative Assistant
Tamika Taylor, Office of Inspector General Associate General Counsel
Larry Carr, Office of Inspector General Criminal Investigator.

Open Session

Approval of Open Session Minutes – August 10, 2022

The Board reviewed the draft Open Session Minutes from the August 10, 2022 meeting.

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

Matters of Discussion

Ethics Program Monthly Report

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on the activities in the Ethics Office for August 2022. She reported that she provided ethics training to 9 new employees as part of the onboarding process.

Ms. Dorsey White shared that the Ethics Office provided guidance on 22 matters, of which the leading categories were Disclosure Statements and Soliciting or Acceptance of Gifts. Dr. Hausman noted that the number of inquiries related to gifts increased in August compared to prior months. Ms. Dorsey White replied that employees attending fall conferences are often offered gifts and marketing items by companies. Therefore, employees reach out to the ethics office asking whether they can accept such items.

Ms. Dorsey White also shared that the Ethics Spotlight topic “Gifts & Donations” was scheduled to be presented at the September 21, 2022 Commission meeting. However, due to an abbreviated Commission agenda, the spotlight will not be part of the meeting.

Ms. Dorsey White provided the status of the annual disclosure submissions. She stated that, due to the issues that arose during the launch phase and confusion among those who needed to resubmit their forms, the number of submissions were

lower than usual. Approximately 1,300 employees have complied, with approximately 300 employees who need to submit their disclosure statement.

Informational Items

Delinquent Financial Disclosure Filer(s)

Ms. Allen reported that there were no overdue financial disclosure filers.

Proposed Changes to Code

Ms. Dorsey White provided a proposal to change Code of Ethics § 1.70.250 - Illegal gifts and kickbacks and § 1.70.310 – Civil or administrative remedies against those who violate ethical standards. She recommended these changes in order to give WSSC the ability to take internal administrative action against a regulated person who attempts to offer a prohibited gift under Code § 1.70.220 to a WSSC official. Currently, WSSC can only take action after a conviction for bribery by the Office of the State’s Attorney. Per Code § 1.70.320, the proposed changes would not interfere with its ability to proceed with a criminal case.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to submit the proposed changes to the General Counsel’s Office for a legal sufficiency review and to recommend these changes to the Commissioners to revise the aforementioned chapters in the Code of Ethics.

Closed Session Approval

At 1:26 p.m., on motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to enter into closed session to approve August 10, 2022 Closed Session Minutes; General Provisions

Article § 3-305(b)(13) and WSSC Code of Ethics Ch. 1.70.110 to address one Complaint; and General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(7) to obtain legal advice regarding one Complaint and Potential Complaints/Legal Investigations.

Attendees: Chair George Pruden; Member Steven Hausman; Member Jeffrey Hysen; and Alternate Member Chandria Slaughter. Staff present: Ethics Officer Angelique Dorsey White; Legal Counsel to the Board Russel Beers; and Administrative Assistant Latonya Allen.

Approval of Closed Session Minutes – August 10, 2022

The Board reviewed the draft Closed Session Minutes from the August 10, 2022 meeting.

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

Complaint C-22-06

Ms. Dorsey White provided an overview of this case.

Potential Complaints / Legal Investigations

Potential Complaint #8

Ms. Dorsey White provided an overview of this matter.

Potential Complaint #9

Ms. Allen provided an overview of this matter.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, 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).

Potential Complaint #10

Ms. Allen provided an overview of this matter.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, 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).

Adjournment

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angelique Dorsey White". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Angelique Dorsey White, Esq.

Ethics Officer