

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

BOARD OF ETHICS

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday, December 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 1:14 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
Amanda Stakem Conn, General Counsel
Russel Beers, Legal Counsel to the Board.

Open Session

Approval of Open Session Minutes – November 9, 2022

The Board reviewed the draft Open Session Minutes from the November 9, 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 November Open Session Minutes.

Matters of Discussion

Ethics Program Monthly Report

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on the activities in the Ethics Office for November 2022. She reported that she provided ethics training to 19 new employees as part of the onboarding process.

Ms. Dorsey White shared that the Ethics Office provided guidance on 20 matters, of which the leading categories were Disclosure Statements and Soliciting or Acceptance of Gifts.

The Board asked how the presentation of the Ethics Spotlight on Gifts and Donations at the November Commission meeting was received. Ms. Dorsey White relayed that the Commissioners were engaged, particularly concerning accepting invitations to luncheons and receptions sponsored by contractors. The federal government addresses these types of invitations through the “Widely-Attended Gatherings” exception to federal gift acceptance prohibitions. While WSSC does not have a similar policy, Ms. Dorsey stated that she has previously circulated guidance on this issue. Additionally, the Board suggested that the Ethics Office proactively send emails to companies doing business with WSSC reminding them of the gift acceptance policy in the Fall of each year.

Board Meeting Dates for 2023

Ms. Dorsey White provided a list of proposed dates for the 2023 Board meetings. The Board decided to continue holding the meetings on the second Wednesday of each month. The Board stated that it will default to in-person meetings, with a virtual option available when necessary.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to schedule the 2023 Board meetings for the second Wednesday of each month, subject to future modification by the Chair and Board.

Informational Items

Delinquent Financial Disclosure Filer(s)

Ms. Dorsey White reported that there were four delinquent financial disclosure filers.

Closed Session Approval

At 1:32 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 pursuant to Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(13) to approve November 9, 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; General Counsel Amanda Stakem Conn; and Legal Counsel to the Board Russel Beers.

Approval of Closed Session Minutes – November 9, 2022

The Board reviewed the draft Closed Session Minutes from the November 9, 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 November Closed Session Minutes.

Complaint C-22-08

Ms. Dorsey White provided an update on this case.

On motion of Dr. Hausman and seconded by Mr. Hysen, three members of the Board (Hausman, Hysen, and Pruden) voted to: 1) schedule a hearing in this case for February 8, 2023; 2) hold a pre-hearing conference in this case in January 2023; and 3) designate Chair Pruden as the Hearing Official for both proceedings.

Potential Complaints / Legal Investigations

Potential Complaint #11

Ms. Dorsey White presented 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 WSSC Code of Ethics Ch. 1.70.080(b) alleging a violation of WSSC Code of Ethics Ch. 1.70.200(a).

Legal Investigations

Mr. Beers and Ms. Conn provided updates on pending legal matters.

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 2:32 p.m.



Angelique Dorsey White, Esq.

Ethics Officer