

Administration of the
Harford County Ethics Law
Calendar Year 2019

Report to the Harford County Executive
and the Harford County Council



Harford County Ethics Board
February 20, 2020

County Executive and Council Members:

The General Assembly passed legislation amending § 5-807 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to require that local ethics boards provide to the local governing body a report on the administration of the local ethics law. This report summarizes the work of the Harford County Ethics Board (Board) over the past calendar year in each of the following areas:

1. Financial Disclosure
2. Lobbying
3. Legislative and Regulatory
4. Administration

Financial Disclosure

The Harford County Public Ethics Law (Ethics law) requires certain officials, employees and members of certain boards to file financial disclosure statements. The Board is responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for compliance with the provisions of the Ethics law. All disclosure statements are public records available for review. The Board reviewed all 122 disclosure statements filed for calendar year 2018 and did not find any conflict of interests based on the information contained in the statements.

The Board provides those officials and employees required to file financial disclosure statements the ability to complete and file their statements either electronically or through submission of a written pdf form. The overwhelming majority of disclosure statements are filed electronically.

To assist filers who are required to disclose certain interest that they may have with businesses that contract with the County, the Board maintains a comprehensive list of County vendors. The list of vendors is published on the Harford County Law Department website.

Lobbying

The Board is responsible for maintaining all lobbying registrations and reports filed under the Ethics law. An individual must register as a lobbyist if the individual: (1) personally appears before a County official or employee intending to influence the individual in performance of their official duties; and (2) in connection with the intent to influence, expends or expects to expend in the calendar year in excess of \$100 on food, entertainment or other gifts for officials or employees of the County.

A registered lobbyist must file an activity report within 30 days after the end of any calendar year disclosing: (1) the value, date and nature of any food, entertainment or other gift provided to a County official or employee; and (2) the identity of any official or employee who received a gift or series of gifts exceeding a \$100.

The Board provides, via the Harford County Law Department website, forms for lobbyist registration and reporting as well as a list of registered lobbyist.

Legislative and Regulatory

The Board is responsible for determining whether legislative changes are necessary to the County's Ethics law to ensure compliance with the State law. The Board reviewed the Harford County Public Ethics Law and proposed to the County Executive legislative changes to the County's Ethics law. The proposed changes included changes mandated by State law. The

mandated changes were: redacting home addresses from statements; prohibiting a former lobbyist who become employees from participating in matters in which they were involved as lobbyist; requiring a filer whose spouse is a regulated lobbyist to disclose the entities on whose behalf the spouse represents; and providing that a candidate who fails to file a financial disclosure statement after being notified by the Board of Elections shall be deemed to have withdrawn their candidacy. Two changes were to definitions under the law. The final change was to increase the fines for failing to file either a financial disclosure statement or a lobbying registration. Draft legislation was prepared containing the Board's recommended changes. The draft legislation was reviewed and approved by the State Ethics Commission on October 25, 2018. The County Executive introduced legislation, Council Bill 19-005, proposing the adoption of the Board's recommended changes. The County Council adopted Bill 19-005 and it became law on March 21, 2019.

Administration

The Board, in compliance with the State law, posts notice of all meetings, agendas and minutes on the County's website. The Board held one public meeting in each of the calendar years 2018 and 2019. Copies of the agenda and minutes for those meetings are attached to this report.

Members

Douglas DeLeaver, Chairman
Vernon Betkey, Jr.
Elizabeth Campion
Mary Theresa Kearney

BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING – SEPTEMBER 19, 2018 – 6:15PM

AGENDA

1. Recommend changes to the Harford County Ethics Law necessary for compliance with the State Ethics Law
2. Adjourn

BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILLY BONIFACE
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



MELISSA LAMBERT
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Minutes of the Harford County Ethics Board

1. Call to Order

The September 19, 2018 meeting of the Harford County Ethics Board was called to order at 6:15 pm by the Chair Doug DeLeaver with all members present.

2. The Board reviewed the draft legislation and discussed the changes necessary for the Harford County Public Ethics Law to comply with the provisions of the State law.

The changes discussed included:

Redacting home addresses from financial disclosure statements;

Removing from the definition of interest college savings plans recognized under the IRS Code and publicly traded stocks and mutual funds not in a particular sector or area regulated by the individual's agency;

Prohibiting a former lobbyist who becomes an employee or official from participating in a contract or other matter for one calendar year after terminating their registration as a lobbyist if they represented another party in the matter;

Requiring a financial disclosure filer whose spouse is a regulated lobbyist to disclose the entity that has hired the spouse to lobby on their behalf;

Providing that a candidate who fails to file a financial disclosure statement in a timely fashion will be deemed to have withdrawn their candidacy if the financial statement is not filed within 8 days after the County or Board of Elections provides the individual written notice of the failure to file the required statement; and

Increasing the fine for failure to file a timely financial disclosure statement or lobbyist registration or report.

A motion to recommend the changes as discussed and contained within the draft legislation to the County Executive for enactment by the County Council, was made by Board Member Betsy Campion, seconded by Board Member Terri Kearney and approved by unanimous vote.

3. Adjourn

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

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BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILLY BONIFACE
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



MELISSA LAMBERT
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Board of Ethics Meeting

September 19, 2018

Attendance Sheet

1. Doug DeLeaver
2. Elizabeth Champion
3. Terri Kearney
4. Vernon Betkey
5. Mary Kate Herbig
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING – DECEMBER 10, 2019 – 4:30 PM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Administrative Matters – meeting requirement
3. Adjourn

BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILLY BONIFACE
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



MELISSA LAMBERT
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Minutes of the Harford County Ethics Board

1. Call to Order

The December 10, 2019 meeting of the Harford County Ethics Board was called to order at 4:30 pm by the Chair Doug Deleaver with all members present.

2. Mary Kate Herbig apprised the Board of the change in the State Ethics law requiring local boards to meet at least once a year and to file a report with the local governing body.

3. Adjourn

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

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BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILLY BONIFACE
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



MELISSA LAMBERT
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Board of Ethics Meeting

December 10, 2019

Attendance Sheet

1. Doug DeLeaver
2. Elizabeth Campion
3. Terri Kearney
4. Vernon Betkly
5. Beth Tolson
6. Mary Kate Herbig
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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