

Administration of the  
Harford County Ethics Law  
Calendar Year 2020

Report to the Harford County Executive  
and the Harford County Council



Harford County Ethics Board  
October 1, 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. Advisory Opinions
5. 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. Financial disclosure statements are due by April 30 of each year. However, due to COVID-19 and the County's declared State of Emergency, County Executive Glassman issued Executive Order 20-01 suspending all legal due dates required under County Code. Due to constraints within the software system for electronic financial disclosure filing, a July 31 due date was instituted. 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 and filed reports.

### **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. There were no legislative changes at the State level that required any changes to the County's Ethics law.

### **Advisory Opinions**

The Board issued one formal written advisory opinion during this reporting period. Advisory opinions are public documents and may be found on the Harford County Department of Law website under the Board of Ethics Section.

### **Administration**

The Board in compliance with the State law, posts notice of all meetings, agendas and minutes on the County's website. Copies of the agenda and minutes for the Board's meeting are attached to this report.

**BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 – 4:00 PM**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Administrative Matters – meeting requirement
3. Update schedule for Financial Disclosure review
4. Adjourn



## **Minutes of the Harford County Ethics Board**

1. Call to Order

The September 21, 2020 meeting of the Harford County Ethics Board was called to order at 4:00 pm by the Chair Doug Deleaver with Betsy Campion, Vernon Betkey and Mary Kate Herbig present.

2. Mary Kate Herbig reminded 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. Mary Kate Herbig informed the Board that by Executive Order 20-01, County Executive Barry Glassman postponed the due date for filing of Financial Disclosure statements for calendar year 2019. Due to the nature of the Financial Disclosure Filing System, all statements must be reviewed before the end of the current calendar year. The system was open for filing on July 1, 2020 and closed July 31, 2020. The board will be notified when the statements are ready for review.

4. Adjourn

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.



Board of Ethics Meeting

September 21, 2020 – 4:00 pm

Attendance Sheet

1. Doug Delearer
2. Vernon Betkey
3. Betsy Campion
4. Mary Kate Herbig
5. Beth Tolson
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_