A meeting of the Macomb County Ethics Board was held Tuesday, August 20, 2019, at 8:30 a.m., in the Talmer Building 2nd Floor Conference Room, 120 North Main Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Amboyer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Members were present:

   Dr. Donald Amboyer, Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, Paddy Laske and Brian Gabriel
   Lynne Lapierre, Macomb County Finance, recorded meeting

The following Members were excused:

   Darnell Blackburn

Also in attendance: Mr. Andrew McKinnon, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR)

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Amboyer provided the Board members with a Preliminary Agenda.

MOTION

A motion was made by Ms. Laske, supported by Ms. Vazquez-Nolan, to adopt the Agenda as provided. The Motion Carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 16, 2019

MOTION

A motion was made by Ms. Vazquez-Nolan, supported by Ms. Laske, to approve the minutes of July 16, 2019. The Motion Carried.
NEW BUSINESS

A. Ethics Orientation and Professional Development

Chair Amboyer reminded the Board that at their last meeting they talked extensively about their roles and responsibilities in carrying out the mandates of the Charter and the Ethics Ordinance. They are continuing that conversation today and have invited Mr. McKinnon to join them.

In conjunction with that discussion, the Board has been addressing their role in Ethics Training for employees, elected officials and others within the County. When the original Ordinance was in place, there had been a fairly comprehensive online training program available to employees. As revisions have been made, it has not made sense to continue utilizing that same program and the Board has asked Mr. McKinnon to help provide input/feedback on HRLR's ability to help facilitate future training.

Mr. McKinnon expressed appreciation at being included in this discussion. He advised that HRLR had recently let its contract with their former online Learning Management System (LMS) expire and they will be exploring other options for training (possibly through an existing platform that is already used for the employment application process). He sees necessary training on the topic of ethics as twofold – first training on the County’s specific Ordinance and what it covers as well as “canned” training that applies broadly to ethics in general (what a reasonable person would do in certain situations). HRLR has also recently hired a Training Assistant to help manage the training program overall.

Ms. Laske expressed appreciation to Mr. McKinnon for seeing the value in a partnership between HRLR and the Ethics Board. He stated that he is looking forward to working with them. Mr. Gabriel asked about a timeline for implementing the new LMS and Mr. McKinnon stated he is hoping to have it up and ready by December.

Ms. Vazquez-Nolan inquired about any mention of the Ethics Board within the County employee handbook. Mr. McKinnon stated that he did not recall any, but that the Ethics Board and Ordinance are mentioned during employee on-boarding and that each person is given a “Conflict of Interest” checklist. There is no specific “Ethics Policy” available as far as he is aware at this point (outside of the Ethics Ordinance itself).

Chair Amboyer also gave Mr. McKinnon a synopsis regarding what has transpired with the revisions to the Ethics Ordinance over the past year. The Board has made some notes on the last draft that was provided by Mr. Schapka and Chair Amboyer suggested that perhaps Mr. McKinnon could take a look at that to familiarize himself with some of the concerns/questions that the Board has related to the Ordinance and provide some feedback to them.

Mr. Gabriel inquired whether or not it would be possible to add something online for employees to acknowledge that they have read/received the Ethics Ordinance (until more formal training is implemented). Ms. Vazquez-Nolan wondered if it would be
possible to also have a brochure or some type of handout that could be available for new employees as well. Mr. McKinnon stated he would be happy to work with the Board to ensure communication regarding the Ordinance and the Ethics Board is provided to employees.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Ethics Ordinance and Rules of Procedure Proposed Changes

Chair Amboyer discussed the progress of the Board’s work with Mr. John Schapka and Chair Bob Smith of the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on revisions to the existing Ethics Ordinance. This has been a topic of discussion for over a year and a number of different drafts have been created. There has not been a response from Mr. Schapka for quite some time. A meeting has been scheduled to discuss the Ordinance with BOC Chair Smith next week. Ms. Vaquez-Nolan and Ms. Laske coordinated a sub-committee meeting between themselves prior to the meeting with BOC Chair Smith next week to go over what they would like to discuss with him. Mr. McKinnon will try to provide his feedback related to the most recent Ordinance draft prior to that sub-committee meeting.

Chair Amboyer will also put together an email to the County Executive’s office to provide an update on where the revisions of the Ordinance stand and the next steps in the process as the Ethics Board sees them. He will copy all of the Board members on that email.

B. State/National Ethics Organizations and Workshop Training

Ms. Laske did some research and had provided some information via email to the Board members regarding a few different ethics organizations and related training. She has not found much available as far as conferences go, but will keep searching. It was generally agreed that perhaps Board training would be better once the revised Ordinance is in place. The Board also discussed the possibility of enlisting a consultant who could provide specific guidance in the areas they are looking for (legal issues, rules and procedures, etc.).

C. Proposed 2020 Ethics Budget

Chair Amboyer confirmed that the proposed budget was submitted to the Finance Department. There is a Board of Commissioners Finance Committee meeting scheduled on October 29th at 3:00 p.m. where the Ethics Board’s budget will be reviewed and discussed.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019 - 8:30 A.M.
ADJOURNMENT

MOTION
A motion was made by Ms. Laske, supported by Mr. Gabriel to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m. The Motion Carried.

Approved:

Donald J. Ambreyer, Ph.D., Chairperson

Brian Gabriel, Secretary