MINUTES OF THE
MACOMB COUNTY ETHICS BOARD

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

A meeting of the Macomb County Ethics Board was held Tuesday, July 16, 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 8:39 a.m. He requested a moment of silence in remembrance of Michelle LaBelle who passed away over the weekend. Her service to the Ethics Board was much appreciated and she will be greatly missed.

ROLL CALL

The following Members were present:

   Dr. Donald Amboyer, Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, Paddy Laske and Darnell Blackburn

   Valerie Schave, Macomb County Finance, prepared/reported the Minutes

The following Members were excused:

   Brian Gabriel

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION

Chair Amboyer provided the Board members with an updated Preliminary Agenda.

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2019

MOTION
A motion was made by Dorie Vazquez-Nolan, supported by Paddy Laske, to approve the minutes of March 19, 2019. The Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Amboyer reviewed business that had been handled at the last meeting as a refresher for the Board members.

In April, they had received a letter from Mr. Dave King of the County IT Department with a question about a promotional item he had received at a conference. Chair Amboyer responded to Mr. King with a letter advising him of the Board's opinion. That same month they had received correspondence from an employee who was unhappy that Chrysler had told him they could not extend a discount to him because he is employed by the County. That was responded to with a follow-up letter informing the individual that there is nothing in the Ordinance to preclude him from receiving a discount from Chrysler.

In May, there had been some phone calls and voice mail messages received from a Ms. Ambrosia Jackson. Chair Amboyer returned Ms. Jackson's calls and also left messages for her, but to date has not received a response back. Another individual who is employed by Community Mental Health (CMH) had expressed some concerns to Ms. Laske because she also acts as an independent consultant and wondered if that was a conflict. She was referred to the Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR) for further follow-up.

Also in May, Ms. Vazquez-Nolan had a conversation with Chairman of the Board of Commissioners (BOC), Bob Smith regarding an update on the revised Ethics Ordinance. She reported that herself, Mr. Gabriel and Chairman Smith had all reached out to Corporation Counsel and none of them have received any type of response so far. This item was scheduled to be reviewed separately later in the agenda, but it was agreed by the Board members to continue discussing it now.

The Board expressed concern that Corporation Counsel has not responded because they have always been supportive in the past. Ms. Vazquez-Nolan offered to reach out to Chairman Smith to see if the BOC would be willing to continue the discussion (possibly without Corporation Counsel) and work from the last draft of the revised Ethics Ordinance that had been created. The Board agreed that the revisions process needs to make progress. Ms. Vazquez-Nolan, Ms. Laske and Mr. Blackburn will form a sub-committee and try to work with Chairman Smith and the BOC. Ms. Vazquez-Nolan has the latest draft and will provide copies to the other Board members as a starting point to begin working from again.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PROPOSED 2020 ETHICS BUDGET

Chair Amboyer advised that he had received notification from Mr. Dave Stiteler in the Finance Department about the 2020 Budget. He has since realized that the deadline for submitting the budget was a week ago, but the Board needs to discuss the budget before they submit the documents.

Chair Amboyer reminded the Board that in 2018, they had sent two letters to Finance Director, Stephen Smigiel with concerns about the line item for Training in the budget. A request was made for an increase in this line item to allow for Board members to attend conference(s). He also distributed a copy of the Board's budget for this year showing
what has been spent to date which reflects only the purchase of business cards.

The Board further discussed the “Goals” and “Challenges” that had been submitted previously and updated/revised those to reflect their current needs. One of the long-term goals the Board chose to keep is related to increasing awareness, understanding and compliance with the County Ethics Ordinance among employees. They agreed to extend an invitation to HR Director, Andrew McKinnon to attend their next meeting to discuss this with him (as well as thoughts on getting retirees and Board members involved in some of the special County events that are being held). They also discussed the Board’s “Biggest Accomplishments” and the “Status of their 2019 Goals”.

The Board agreed that they will request $15,000 for conferences in the 2020 Budget and Ms. Laske will search for possible options available to them. Chair Amboyer will prepare a draft of the 2020 Budget documents and will pass on to the other Board members for their review and input prior to submitting to the Finance Department. He also advised that he will be drafting the Board’s Annual Report very soon and will also distribute that for review. The Budget presentation is currently scheduled on October 29, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. before the Board of Commissioners.

ETHICS ORDINANCE & RULES OF PROCEDURE PROPOSED CHANGES

This item was discussed above under “Old Business”.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board members confirmed that the meeting schedule going forward is still acceptable.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019 - 8:30 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION
A motion was made by Carnell Blackburn, supported by Paddy Laske to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 a.m. The Motion Carried.

Approved:

Donald J. Amboyer, Ph.D., Chairperson

Brian Gabriel, Secretary