

City of Atlanta Board of Ethics Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2012

The monthly meeting of the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair Caroline Johnson Tanner at 6:08 p.m. in the City Council Committee Room 2, 55 Trinity Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia 30303. Attending the meeting were board members Brent Adams, Carol Snype Crawford, MaryAnne Gaunt, and Kate Wasch. Staff members Jabu M. Sengova and Sherry H. Dawson also attended. Board member Shukura Ingram was absent.

MINUTES

1. The Board approved the minutes of the February 16, 2012, meeting on a motion by Ms. Gaunt and a second by Mr. Adams.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

2. Transparent Diamond Awards Ceremony

The Board held the Sixth Annual Financial Disclosure Awards Ceremony to honor departments with the best filing records. Ms. Wasch moved to adopt a resolution recognizing the Transparent Diamond Award winners with a second by Ms. Gaunt, and the Board adopted it unanimously. The Board recognized the following recipients: the Atlanta Police Department, Department of Watershed Management, Department of Law, Department of Procurement, Department of Information Technology, Municipal Court, Department of Human Resources, Office of City Auditor, Public Defender's Office, and the Department of Corrections.

3. Financial Disclosure Report

Ms. Sengova delivered the March 2012 report to the Board on persons required to file an annual financial disclosure statement, those who complied with the filing requirements, those who filed late, and those who failed to file in 2012 as required by law. Ms. Sengova reported that the percentage of timely filers was 95 percent this year, consistent with 2008 and 2011, which were the best filing years; and only 22 persons had not timely filed this year, slightly higher than last year, but still low compared to prior years. The percentage of late filers is the lowest in five years at 3.5 percent.

4. Roll of Delinquent Filers

The Board next considered the Roll of Delinquent Filers that lists 16 persons who have not filed a 2012 City Financial Disclosure Statement and five persons who filed after the March 1 grace period without reasonable cause. Ms. Crawford moved to adopt the Roll of Delinquent Filers, which was seconded by Ms. Wasch, and the Board unanimously adopted the motion.

BOARD OPERATIONS

5. Confirmation process for new Ethics Officer

Ms. Tanner delivered an update concerning Ms. Kalberman's pending confirmation. Ms. Kalberman was presented for confirmation at Committee on Council meetings on February 20th and March 5th, and her appointment held in Committee in order for her to meet with all councilmembers. Ms. Tanner reported that the Board had reached

out to Councilmembers concerning meeting with Ms. Kalberman, and expected that on March 19th the Committee would move on a vote for her appointment.

6. New legislation establishing council confirmation process for selection of the ethics officer

The Board next discussed the new legislation introduced by Councilmember H. Lamar Willis to full Council on March 5, 2012, proposing to amend the appointment process for the ethics officer. The proposed revisions would allow City Council to make the ethics officer appointment from a list of finalists provided by the Ethics Board. Ms. Gaunt expressed concerns regarding the impact the amendment would have on the Ethics Board and the City. Ms. Tanner stated that the paper would fundamentally change and jeopardize the independence of the Ethics Office and the Ethics Board, as well as erode eight years of good work. Ms. Crawford pointed out that the legislation would politicize the process and impair the objectivity of the Ethics Officer. Mr. Adams concurred, agreeing that it was critical that the appointment of the ethics officer remain an independent process.

7. FY13 Budget

Mr. Adams made a motion to adopt the FY13 Budget subject to further review, with a second by Ms. Wasch, and following a discussion, the Board adopted it unanimously. The budget allocates \$244,309 in personnel expenses and \$65,942 in operating expenses for a total budget of \$351,741.

INTERIM ETHICS OFFICER'S REPORT

8. 2012/2013 Work Plan

The Board adopted the 2012-2013 Work Plan on a motion by Ms. Gaunt which Ms. Wasch seconded.

9. Status report on activities performed under Work Plan

Ms. Sengova reported on activities that support the 2012-2013 Work Plan in the following areas: operations, training, advice, public education and outreach, investigation and enforcement actions, financial disclosure, and legislation and lobbying.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Jabu M. Sengova, Interim Ethics Officer
Approved April 9, 2012