

## **City of Atlanta Board of Ethics Retreat Minutes of June 9, 2012**

The June retreat of the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics was held at the law offices of Holland & Knight, 1201 West Peachtree Street, N.E., One Atlantic Center, Suite 2000, Atlanta, Georgia, 30309. Attending the retreat was board chair Caroline Johnson Tanner; and board members Brent Adams, Carol Snype Crawford, Shukura Ingram and Kate Wasch. MaryAnne Gaunt was absent. Ms. Gaunt did not attend the retreat because of prior travel plans. Also attending were staff members Jabu M. Sengova and Sherry Dawson; and Ethics Officer Appointee Nina R. Hickson. Debbie Seagraves facilitated the session.

### **1. Integrity at Work Campaign**

Ms. Sengova provided an overview and status report of the ongoing campaign:

E-learning course – The project is still scheduled for completion in FY13, and The Department of Watershed Management will partner with the Ethics Office as planned. The Ethics Office is also reviewing other online courses in different jurisdictions.

Ethics training techniques – The ethics awareness videos have been a great success in classroom training, and the Ethics Office will renew its agreement with the vendor for another year. The office is also purchasing ResponseCards, which are clicker devices that will be used to elicit and improve audience participation during training sessions.

Lunch and Learn series – The Ethics Office has scheduled its first session for June. The session will focus on movie clips with ethical dilemmas following a lively interactive group discussion.

Kick-off celebration and Press conference – The official launch of the campaign is scheduled for August 21, 2012 in the City Hall Atrium. The Mayor, City Council President, Ethics Board Chair, and Ethics Officer will bring remarks to the press conference, and the kick-off celebration will feature refreshments for employees as well as tables with ethics educational materials.

### **2. Debriefing on Ethics Cases**

Ms. Sengova next reported on open ethics cases and a discussion followed on how to handle cases involving former employees. The Board reviewed past cases and agreed that the Ethics Code applies to former officials and employees, and the current status of an ethics code violator should not be relevant as to whether an ethics proceeding should be initiated. Further, consistency when handling all cases is critical to the enforcement process.

### **3. Lessons Learned**

The Board discussed and identified challenges faced, accomplishments, key lessons learned, and winning strategies for the future:

#### Challenges faced

- Resignation of prior Ethics Officer
- Appointment of new Ethics Board Chair
- Confirmation process of new Ethics Officer
- Challenges to the authority of Ethics Board
- Strained relationship with City Council
- Filling the vacant board member position

### Accomplishments

- Ethics Staff grew professionally
- High quality of work completed during transition/interim period
- Ethics Board successfully navigated through appointment process of new Ethics Officer
- Board developed a solid selection process
- Ethics Office achieved its best financial disclosure filing rate
- Integrity at Work campaign was successfully launched
- Legislation seeking to change the appointment process for the ethics officer failed to pass

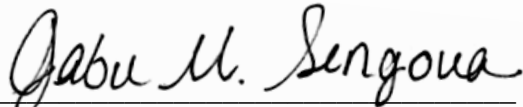
### Lessons learned

- Ethics Board will seek to build better rapport with City Council
- Board and Ethics Office will build better relationships citywide
- Recruitment process for retiring board members will begin while members are still serving

### Winning strategies going forward

- Roll-out of new e-learning course
- Send out annual report to Mayor, City Council and appointing authorities for board members
- Activate Ethics Board sub-committees

Having no further business, the retreat adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



Jabu M. Sengova, Associate Ethics Officer  
Approved July 19, 2012