

City of Atlanta Board of Ethics Retreat Minutes of December 1, 2012

The December 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 were board members Caroline Johnson Tanner, MaryAnne Gaunt, Brent Adams, Carol Snype Crawford, Shukura Ingram Millender, Kate Wasch, and Kai Williamson. Also attending were staff members Nina R. Hickson, Jabu M. Sengova and Sherry Dawson. Crandall O. Jones with ENOSHA Management Services, LLC, facilitated the session.

Board Chair, Caroline Johnson Tanner, opened the retreat by welcoming board members and setting the context of the retreat to review the 2012-2013 Work Plan and revise the plan, to the extent the Board deemed appropriate. Ethics Officer Nina R. Hickson requested that the Board review its current activities in light of the original recommendations of the Ethics Task Force created by former Mayor Shirley Franklin as well as the report done by Georgia State University about the Ethics Office in its current configuration. Additionally, she requested the Board discuss whether the current work plans are consistent with the original intent of the Board and whether there needed to be changes to the manner in which the Board and Office operate.

Discussion of Amendments to Georgia Open Meeting and Open Records Act

Holly Manheimer, Executive Director of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation, provided a training session on the recent amendments to the Georgia Sunshine Law, particularly as they affect the Board of Ethics. As part of the discussion, Ms. Tanner emphasized that board members needed to maintain copies of all Board-related communications for at least the period of time that they serve on the Board and beyond that time to the extent there is the potential for the documentation to be relevant to pending litigation and to the extent required by the records retention policy of the City and State. She also reminded them that all of this communication is subject to disclosure pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Law. Ms. Tanner recommended that board members should segregate their Ethics Board correspondence from other communication for that reason.

Review of 2012-2013 Work Plan

The Board and staff discussed major accomplishments for the Ethics Office for 2012 that were outlined in the 2012-2013 Work Plan:

- The position of the ethics officer was established at the senior management level and the associate ethics officer position upgraded to the pay grade equivalent to the assistant city attorney position.
- The Integrity at Work campaign was successfully launched.
- Greater numbers of city employees were completing the ethics pledge forms.
- Ethics materials were disseminated to neighborhood and civic groups.

The Board, by consensus, agreed to remove the following actions from the 2012-2013 Work Plan for various reasons including redundancy and a failure to support the mission of the Board and office as well as a determination that the activity was not the best use of limited resources:

- Creation of an annual ethics award to recognize extraordinary acts by those who comply with the city's ethical standards.
- Establishment of standard procedures for investigating complaints in areas of joint jurisdiction with departments such as with misuse of city property.

- Establishment of a system for monitoring compliance with the city's laws on conflicts of interest, developing a checklist and a scorecard for departments to evaluate their policies and rate their compliance, and auditing one department's policies and practices.

The Board next discussed and identified goals and priorities for 2013:

Operations

- New Ethics Board members should undergo an informal orientation within 30 days of their appointment and attend at least one previously scheduled ethics training provided by staff; within six months of appointment. The staff should gather materials to develop written orientation package for new board members.

Training

- The Ethics Officer will offer and provide ethics training for staff members in the Mayor's Office as well as for members of the staffs of City Council.
- The staff will seek to offer ethics training at least once a month.
- The staff will complete development and implementation of the ethics e-learning course.
- The Ethics Officer will seek an Executive Order from the Mayor mandating ethics training for all city employees at least once every three years.

Advice

- The Ethics Officer will review informal advisory opinions and present her recommendations for those which need to become Formal Advisory Opinions at the June 2013 board retreat.
- The Ethics Office will continue to maintain a database of all advisory opinions.
- The Ethics Officer will identify additional topics for the Board to address in formal advisory opinions.

Public Education and Outreach

- The Ethics Officer will work with the Department of Human Resources to improve notification to employees who are leaving city employment about the post-employment rule and financial disclosure filing requirements, where applicable.
- The staff will continue to disseminate ethics literature citywide and research the future use of social media.
- The Board of Ethics website will be linked to the City of Atlanta's website for quicker public access.
- The Ethics Office staff will provide the Highlight of the numbers report of its activities to the Mayor, City Council, and the appointing authorities for Board of Ethics members.

Investigations and Enforcement

- The Ethics Officer will meet with the Solicitor's Office concerning prosecution of ethics cases in Municipal Court.

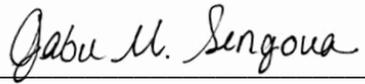
Financial Disclosure

- The Ethics Officer will develop a plan no later than December 2013 regarding an approach to auditing Financial Disclosure statements.

Legislation and Lobbying

- The Ethics Officer will seek to discuss the possibility of mandating Ethics training every three years for all city employees by ordinance.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jabu M. Sengova". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Jabu M. Sengova, Associate Ethics Officer
Approved January 17, 2013