



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FREDERICK COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION
Office of the County Attorney

Stephen K. Hess, Chair

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Frederick County Ethics Commission

Wednesday, February 8, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Present:

Stephen K. Hess (Chair)
Rev. Douglas P. Jones (Vice-Chair)
Deborah L. Lundahl
Mary Beth Kaslick
Michael G. Bunitsky
James A. Stanker
Stephen Larsen
Christopher Perry, Alternate Member

Absent:

None

Also in Attendance

Andrew Ford, Secretary

-
1. Call to Order / Approval of Agenda. Commissioner Hess called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Larsen made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Bunitsky and approved unanimously.
 2. Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Bunitsky made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved unanimously.
 3. Approval of schedule of regular meetings for 2023. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the schedule of meetings which was seconded by Commissioner Kaslick and approved unanimously.
 4. Acknowledge receipt of the County Executive's Public Ethics Report. The Commission by consensus acknowledged receipt of the report.
 5. Discussion on possible changes to the County's Ethics laws, procedures or interpretations. The Commission discussed treatment of virtual meetings for purposes of the definition of lobbying. Mr. Ford was asked to research how other counties handle this. The

Commission also discussed the use of social media and possible need for guidance to be provided by the Commission and changing the law re: the dollar amount on gifts.

6. Vote to conduct an administrative function meeting. Commissioner Jones moved to enter into an administrative function in order to discuss two (2) requests for advisory opinions. Commissioner Larsen seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Required information regarding the administrative function meeting - The Commission entered into administrative function at 7:46 p.m. All of the Commission members and the Alternate Member were present. Mr. Ford was also present. The Commission members first discussed a request for an advisory opinion regarding the special provisions of the Public Ethics Law, which applies only to Frederick County, and are codified in Sections 5-857 through 5-864 of Title 5 of Maryland's General Provision Article. Specifically, the request concerned the applicability of the law to posts that might be made on social media. The members directed that an advisory opinion be prepared.

The Commissions then turned to a second request for an advisory opinion relating to the conflicts of interest provisions of the Ethics Law with respect to a County Council member's employment and matters that may come before the County Council with respect the member's employer. The members directed that an advisory opinion be prepared.

Commissioner Bunitsky moved to leave administrative function. Commissioner Larsen seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The Commission resumed the public meeting at 8:13 p.m.

There being no other business before the Commission, Commissioner Larsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Kaslick and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

/s/
Andrew J. Ford
Secretary