

**ST. MARY’S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION  
2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

***INTRODUCTION***

The St. Mary’s County Ethics Commission was established on June 29, 1982, pursuant to Article 40A of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Commission is bound by St. Mary’s County Public Ethics Ordinance 2022-42 and operates under Ethics Commission Rules of Procedure. These documents are available for public review on the County’s Ethics Commission Website.

The Commission manages the financial disclosure process, hears complaints and renders decisions involving violations of the Ethics Ordinance, provides Advisory Opinions on the Ethics Ordinance, and offers education on the requirements and application of the Ethics Ordinance.

***MEMBERS***

The Ethics Commission is a volunteer commission composed of five regular voting members and one alternate member who does not vote unless a regular member is not present. The members with their position and expiration date for calendar year 2023 were:

<b><u>Current Members</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Appointment Date</u></b>	<b><u>Expiration Date</u></b>
David Willenborg	Chair	01/01/2022	12/31/2024 (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)
Joseph Russell	Co-Chair	07/01/2022	06/30/2025 (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)
Lawrence Crabtree	Member	01/01/2023	12/31/2025 (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)
Dr. Joseph DeVitis	Member	07/01/2022	06/30/2025 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Kathleen McClernan-Walz	Member	07/01/2021	06/30/2024 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Robert McGann	Alternate	01/01/2023	06/30/2024 (Partial)

***MEETINGS***

The St. Mary’s County Ethics Commission met in January, March (special meeting), April, July and twice in November. The minutes from these meetings are available for public review and are available on the Ethics Commission website.

***ATTENDANCE***

St. Mary’s County Ethics Commission held six meetings in 2023 with one absence.

***ELECTIONS***

Elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions are held each July. David Willenborg was elected as the Chairman and Joseph Russell, Vice Chair.

***FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS***

The Ordinance establishing the St. Mary’s County Ethics Commission provides that certain public officials, employees, and non-compensated volunteers in county service are required to file financial disclosure statements. The disclosure statement is used to identify and declare potential conflicts of interest before they become issues and to preserve public confidence in the integrity of

county employees.

The Ethics Commission annually receives approximately 100 financial disclosure statements. In accordance with Ethics Ordinance 2022-42 the financial disclosure statements are available for public inspection. The Ordinance requires the Commission to notify any member whose financial disclosure statement is examined, providing the name and address of the person who requested the document. In 2022, there were zero requests to examine statements.

### ***COMPLAINTS AND ADVISORY OPINIONS***

Advisory Opinions are issued as a result of an official written inquiry. The advisory opinion contains the original inquiry, the applicable Ethics Ordinance section, the decision of the Commission, and any other relevant information concerning the decision-making process.

In 2023 the Ethics Commission received two (2) requests for Advisory Opinions, the first was completed in April and the second in November 2023. There were no Complaints filed in 2023.

### ***EDUCATION AND TRAINING***

The Ethics Commission is charged with conducting information and education programs regarding the purpose and implementation of the Ethics Ordinance.

### ***CONCLUSION***

The St. Mary's County Ethics Commission is dedicated to serving the citizens of the County, with the utmost integrity and conviction. The Commission strives to respond to citizen requests and complaints in a timely and professional manner, and all members look forward to serving the public during the 2024 session.

Questions or comments about this report are welcome and may be sent to the Ethics Commission via the Ethics Commission Secretary at [diane.gleissner@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:diane.gleissner@stmaryscountymd.gov).