

ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF February 27, 2006

St. Mary's County Governmental Center, Commissioners' Library

Members Present: David S. Deaderick, Chair
George E. Baroniak, Vice Chair
Joseph Bush, Member
Arthur Goeller, Member
Warren Kunz, Member
Viola M. Gardner, Alternate
Susan J. Wolfe, Executive Secretary

Others Present: John B. Norris, III, County Attorney

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Deaderick at 2:02 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2006.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES:

Minutes of February 6, 2006. A motion was made by Mr. Baroniak to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS:

Thirty-four statements for calendar year 2005 were reviewed. To date, 94 statements have been reviewed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Financial Disclosure Statement, Schedule A. Members discussed refinements that will be needed on Schedule A of next year's Financial Disclosure Statement (FDS). Further discussion will be held as the Commission prepares for next year's FDS.

Revised Ethics Ordinance; Maryland State Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion Re Acceptance of Tickets to College and Professional Sporting Events. Members reviewed the February 2006 advisory opinion of the Maryland State Ethics Commission dealing with acceptance of tickets to college and professional sporting events. John Norris, County Attorney, joined the discussion and promised to review the advisory opinion and draft language to recommend changes in the proposed revision of the County Ethics Ordinance by the Commission's March 6 meeting.

Charles County Ethics Commission. A note of appreciation was received from John Warrington, Member, Charles County Ethics Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

Calvert County Ethics Commission and Possible Future Tri-County Ethics Commissions Meeting. Mr. Deaderick reported that he spoke with Charles Bucy, Member, Calvert County Ethics Commission, concerning the possibility of a future meeting among the tri-county Ethics Commissions' members to discuss administrative issues, interaction with the State Ethics Commission, and other items of mutual interest. No confidential issues would be discussed. All Commission members agreed that it would be beneficial to hold such a meeting, and Mr. Norris agreed as long as parameters were set prior to the meeting. Mr. Deaderick also requested that Ms. Wolfe prepare a notebook of Commission materials to be sent to Mr. Bucy.

Employees Running for Office. Based upon a recent newspaper article discussing the Howard County Sheriff maintaining his position while running for higher office, Commission members asked Mr. Norris about how this issue would be handled in St. Mary's County. Mr. Norris agreed to prepare advice prior to the Commission's March 6 meeting.

Request for Information from St. Mary's County Employees Association. A representative from the St. Mary's County Employees Association requested guidance from the Ethics Commission regarding the purchase of items at a discount from St. Mary's Chamber of Commerce members. After discussion, members agreed to recommend to the Association that such discounts would constitute a gift to the employee and could, at a minimum, have the appearance of influence by the Chamber member giving the discount on the decisions/actions of government over time. Mr. Deaderick agreed to respond and offer the option of the Association to request a formal advisory opinion.

Appreciation. Mr. Deaderick presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Norris for his support of the Ethics Commission during his tenure as County Attorney. A Certificate was also presented to Heidi Dudderar, Deputy County Attorney, in absentia. Mr. Norris announced that his replacement has been selected and will be announced at the Board of County Commissioners meeting on February 28.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Baroniak moved to adjourn at 4:10 p.m. The motion was seconded and carried.