

ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 2003

Library, St. Mary's County Governmental Center

Present: Martha M. Neal, Ph.D., Chair
George Baroniak, Member
Zora Siemasko, Member
Shirley Baldwin, Executive Secretary

Absent: David Deaderick, Vice Chair
Viola Gardner, Member

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Neal at 2:00 p.m..

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Shirley Baldwin will be out of town November 4 – 11, 2003.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes of October 20, 2003 Mr. Baroniak made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. Siemasko Motion carried.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

- Status 2001 Outstanding. No change in the status of 2001.
- Status 2002 Outstanding. No change in the status of 2002. The Ethics Commission received a letter from Mr. Forrest advising the BOCC believes it would not be in the best interest of the board or the citizens of St. Mary's County to take the actions against former board/commission members.
- Mr. Norris will be invited to the next Ethics Commission meeting to discuss our liability and consequences under the Ethics Ordinance. Further efforts will be made to insure the person from the Plumbing Board is still serving.
- Review Session. One financial disclosure statement reviewed and approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Education Program: No new requests received.
- State Ethics Commission Conference: Mr. Baroniak and Ms. Siemasko shared information and documents they received at the State Ethics Commission Conference. Copies of documents and the State Ordinance will be made and distributed at the next meeting.
- Verizon Wireless: A memorandum was received from Mr. John B. Norris, III, County Attorney, advising that Verizon Wireless has offered to State and County employees a discount for wireless cellular phone service. Mr. Norris questioned whether this benefit of reduced rates for wireless service may be passed along to County employees as a benefit without creating a conflict of interest. Discussion ensued regarding whether this came under Section 15.505 of the State Ordinance wherein it states you cannot offer anything to the State and County and not to the general public. After further discussion, it was decided to ask the following questions of the County Attorney: 1) Is it part of the contract or other contracts or very specifically limited to State and County employees? 2) What is the definition of the "public at large"? Dr. Neal will email a note to Mr. Norris asking these questions.

NEW BUSINESS

- Letter from Sheriff, St. Mary's County: A letter was received from Sheriff Zylak regarding establishing a Citizen Advisory Board to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. The letter requested the Ethics Commission's input and guidance on this Board. Shirley Baldwin was requested to draft a letter to Sheriff Zylak advising him that we would be happy to review the charter for this group. It was felt it would be hard to make recommendations without specific information about the tasks of the Advisory Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Siemasko made the motion to adjourn at 2:35 p.m., seconded by Mr. Baroniak. Motion carried.