

# ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JUNE 2, 2003

Room 14, Governmental Center

**Present:** Dr. M. Martha Neal, Chair  
John J. Roberts, Vice Chair  
George Baroniak, Member  
Shirley Baldwin, Executive Secretary

**Excused:** David Deaderick, Member  
Zora Siemasko, Member

## CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Neal at 2:08 p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mr. Deaderick and Ms. Siemasko are unable to attend today's meeting.
- Dr. Neal will not be present for the June 16, 2003 meeting.

## REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes of May 19, 2003. Mr. Roberts made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Baroniak. Motion carried.

Dr. Neal entertained a motion to go out of order on the agenda to allow Mr. Norris to make his presentation on item under "New Business." Motion made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Baroniak. Motion carried.

## NEW BUSINESS

- Memo from County Attorney re conflict of interest issue concerning matter before the St. Mary's County Board of Electrical Examiners. Mr. Norris discussed the memo attaching a letter from Mr. John Finch, Chairman of the St. Mary's County Board of Electrical Examiners, who seeks an opinion concerning a possible conflict of interest with the Board issuing a ruling on a Master Electrician license renewal. The license has lapsed through no fault of the electrician's own. The prior company policy was that all license renewals be handled by management. The license has not been renewed since 1999 due to an oversight by the

company. Mr. Norris will provide a copy of additional rules and regulations for the Committee's consideration.

## **FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS**

- Status 2001 Outstanding. Letter has been sent to the Board of County Commissioners re removing two individuals. Dr. Neal spoke with Mr. Forrest and he will follow up on them.”
- Status 2002 Outstanding. There are still 14 FDS's outstanding. Second Request letters are being sent to those individuals today, June 2, 2003.
- Review Session: Two FDS's for 2002 and one for 2003 were reviewed and approved.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Advisory Opinions on Web Page. Recent correspondence received from Mr. Roth indicates he is in the process of putting the opinions on the web page.
- Education Program: Mr. Roberts will make a presentation to the Agriculture Preservation Board on June 19, at 12:30 p.m. The date for presentation to the Ag Seafood and Forestry Board has not been determined. Mr. Baroniak will advise the Committee when a date has been set.
- Meeting with Acting County Administrator: Dr. Neal met today with Mr. Forrest and covered the following topics:
  - 2001 Financial Disclosure Statements. Letter previously sent BOCC requesting removal of two individuals who have not filed financial disclosure statements. Mr. Forrest will locate the letter and bring it to the BOCC's attention and try to resolve the issue. Dr. Neal gave Mr. Forrest an update on the status of filing the 2002 financial disclosure statements.
  - Membership. Dr. Neal advised him we have two appointments that are up the end of this month. Members will continue to serve until new appointments are made. An alternate also needs to be appointed.
  - Budget. Our budget has been cut because of our spending history which was low due to lack of secretarial support. Now that the Committee has full-time support, we may require additional funds. Mr. Forrest said he does not see a problem and would work with the Committee. Also with regard to the Budget, he understands why we need an outside attorney and he agreed with that.
  - Education Program. Dr. Neal told Mr. Forrest about our Program and that we would like for him to promote it. Mr. Forrest shared some ideas he has and would like for the Committee to participate in. Mr. Forrest would like to attend one of our Ethics Committee meetings to meet with the group. Dr. Neal will coordinate that.
  - Dr. Neal discussed with him the procedures that when new committees are formed

that we are made aware of it and also the requirement that FDS is submitted and approved prior to members serving on committees. Mr. Forrest agreed with that and he will reinforce it with his staff.

- Annual Report – Mr. Forrest observed that we had started to close the gap on those who are in non-compliance in submitting their FDS.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Memo from County Attorney re conflict of interest issue concerning matter before the St. Mary's County Board of Electrical Examiners. Mr. Norris' office provided the Committee with copies of "Rules and Regulations of the Board of Electrical Examiners for St. Mary's County, Maryland." The Committee requires additional time to read the document and obtain answers to some questions. Mr. Baroniak will draft an opinion and forward it to Committee members for comment.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Lauricella, St. Mary's Today, described himself as a new reporter who will cover local government. He noticed the budget cut and asked if the Ethics Commission had the resources to do its job. The make-up of the Commission was explained to him as well as what the Commission's main responsibilities are (Financial Disclosure Statements, Advisory Opinions, Complaints, & Education Program). All the Commission members are volunteers. The main expense is for secretarial services. The BOCC looked at past spending history where the Commission had a lack of secretarial services and decided to cut the budget. The Commissioners will work with us on that. The Ethics Commission has the resources to do its job.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Roberts made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Baroniak. Meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.