

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION**  
**St. Mary's County Potomac Building**

**Minutes of June 6, 2011**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert W. Denning, Chair  
Robert E. Elwood, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Long, Member  
Sean Rogers, Member  
Karin Bailey, Member  
Kathy Suite, Alternate Member

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sarah Cannavo, Executive Secretary  
George Sparling, County Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Denning at 2:00 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mr. Denning thanked all members for their participation in the Regional Ethics Conference which was held on May 16, 2011, at the Riverview. The conference was very successful with maximum participation from Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties.

**Next Meeting:** The Regional Ethics Conference will be held on June 20, 2011, in conference room 14 of the Potomac Building.

Ms. Long and Ms. Bailey informed the membership that they would not be able to attend the next meeting (June 20, 2011).

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Minutes for Open Session of May 2, 2011:** Ms. Long made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Mr. Rogers and carried.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**New Ethics Ordinance:** Mr. Sparling presented the membership with a copy of the proposed draft ordinance which was prepared in accordance with the new State Ethics Ordinance requirement outlined in SB 315. Mr. Sparling explained that the draft ordinance was created from the State's recommended draft for the counties and should be the foundation used to build the St. Mary's County Ethics Ordinance. Mr. Elwood asked what the timeline would be to have the new ordinance finalized and approved. Mr. Sparling explained that the process involved the Ethics Commission providing a draft to the Board of County Commissioners for preliminary review, followed by a State Ethics review.

Once the ordinance received the initial approval of the BOCC and the State, a public hearing would be held so citizens could voice any concerns they had with the new document. After a ten day public comment period, the BOCC would consider any changes brought forth via public comment and then finalize / adopt the new ordinance. Mr. Sparling believes that August would be a good target date to present the draft to the BOCC and begin the process. This would ensure that the final ordinance would be adopted and in place by the October deadline.

The members asked to have a work session prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting to review the draft and prepare comments as needed. Ms. Cannavo will coordinate the session and use of room 14 and contact the members with the confirmed date and location.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Advisory Opinion Processing: Members discussed the procedures used to process and post request for Advisory Opinions (AO) on the Ethics Commission website. Current procedures do not include the public release of AOs. Members discussed the benefit of posting the results of AOs so others could benefit from the information. However, there was a concern that the public release of AOs information could deter some employees from filing a request for fear of reprisal from individuals in the supervisory chain.

Members decided that each AO would be judged on its own unique situation and decision to publicly release the information would be based on those circumstances. Additionally, the filer could request that the AO not be released if they felt the information could have a negative impact on them or their employment.

#### **FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS:**

Three FDS forms were reviewed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Ms. Long to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rogers and the motion was carried. The St. Mary's County Ethics Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:22 PM.