

**Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043**

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission was held virtually via WebEx on April 4, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

- Suzanne Geckle
- Douglas Miller
- Ginna Rodriguez-Panqueva
- Ralph Frith
- Keith Ohlinger

Staff Members Present:

- **Diane Zagorski**, Chief – Bureau of Tax & Specialty Services, Department of Finance, assigned to assist the Commission pursuant to Code Section 10.310 (h).
- **Brenna Punte-Pinos, Chief** – Bureau of Water/Sewer & Misc Revenue, Department of Finance
- **Kristen Perry**, Deputy County Solicitor, Attorney for Finance
- **Rafiu Ighile**, Director of Finance
- **Kim Boyd-Washington**, Deputy Director of Finance

Special Guest:

- **Jared DeMarinis**, Director – Division of Candidacy & Campaign Finance, Maryland State Board of Elections

As the Chair of the Commission, Ms. Geckle called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:01 p.m.

1. Administrative Items

- o Ms. Slaughter tendered her resignation from the Commission on April 4, 2022.
- o Ms. Geckle confirmed meeting minutes from Jan 10, 2022, were previously approved.
- o Ms. Geckle confirmed date of the next meeting will be scheduled for June 28th, 2022 at 6:00p.m.
- o Commission decided to keep meetings as virtual sessions and will reassess if a change is needed at each meeting.

2. Revision to Website

- o The Commission reviewed the “Announcement” section of the Citizens' Election Fund website.
- o Ms. Geckle requested an edit to the bottom of the Citizens' Election Fund webpage that contained an old link to a previous version of the Rules of Procedure.

3. Revision to Summary Guide & FAQ due to change in election cycle
 - Commission agreed not to make any changes to the Summary Guide at this time.
 - Revisions were made to #40 and #43 of the FAQ's regarding date changes in lieu of the Primary Election changes.
 - Mr. Frith made a motion to approve the changes and Mr. Ohlinger seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the changes made to the FAQ's.

4. Interpretation of the Code
 - A revision was made to #3 of the FAQ's to identify Maryland Election law states primary and general elections are separate elections.
 - Mr. Frith made a motion to approve the changes and Mr. Ohlinger seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the changes made to the FAQ's.

5. Complaint Process
 - Ms. Geckle requested to save this topic for the next meeting on June 28, 2022. In lieu of this topic, Ms. Geckle proposed amending the agenda to discuss a question that came in from a candidate.
 - Mr. Frith made a motion to amend the agenda and Mr. Ohlinger seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to amend the agenda.
 - Ms. Geckle requested a closed session. Motion was made by Mr. Frith and seconded by Mr. Ohlinger. The Commission voted unanimously to go into Closed session.

6. **Closed Meeting Summary:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, minutes of this open session are required to include the following:
 - Date of Closed Meeting: April 4, 2022
 - Time of Closed Meeting: Approximately 6:45 p.m.
 - Place of Closed Meeting: Via WebEx
 - Purpose: To seek legal advice regarding questions raised by constituents regarding running for multiple offices while utilizing the CEF.
 - Authority to Close: Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. Art. §3-305(b)(7): To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter.
 - Listing of topics discussed: Counsel for the Commission provided the Commission with a legal analysis regarding questions posed by constituents regarding running for multiple offices while utilizing the CEF.

- Persons present: Suzanne Geckle; Douglas Miller; Ginna Rodriguez-Panqueva; Ralph Frith; Keith Ohlinger; Attorney Perry; Staff Zagorski and Punte-Pinos.

 - Actions taken: Commission consulted with counsel.

 - Motion to Close the Closed Meeting and go back into Open Session: Motion by Ohlinger, Seconded by Frith; unanimously approved. Closed Session ended at approximately 6:59
7. Returned to Open Session: Approximately 7:01 pm. Commission decided that Ms. Geckle should respond to constituent questions and draft letter response consistent with Commission's analysis - a candidate cannot run for two offices (a party office and public office) while participating in the CEF.
8. Maryland Open Meetings Act
- The Commission discussed increasing the frequency of the meetings. After much conversation, it was decided not to make any changes at this time. A special meeting can be called by the Chair if one is required given there is a minimum of three days' notice of the public meeting.
9. CPI Index
- Ms. Geckle advised the commission that the Director of Finance will publish any changes to the contribution limit by January 1, 2023. At which time, the FAQ's and Summary Guide will need to be revised.
10. Adjournment:
- Upon motion by Mr. Frith and seconded by Mr. Ohlinger, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 7:10pm.