

Baltimore County Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability
Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, August 30, 2022
Meeting held via Zoom

Present

Rev. William Johnson, Chair
Brigadier General Janeen Birkhead
Ms. Kathleen Cox
Mr. Thomas Glancy
Mr. Jon Laria
Ms. Cynthia Leppert

Not Present

Ms. Joanne Antoine

Schaefer Center Staff Present

Dr. Ann Cotten
Dr. Sarah Ficenec
Ms. Catherine Znamirovski
Mr. Stephen Jenkins

1) Call to order:

- The meeting was called to order by Chair Johnson at 5:30 p.m.

2) Welcome

- The Chair welcomed the commission members and the public and announced the agenda for the evening. He then reviewed various housekeeping items, including that the session was being recorded, commission materials and information will be posted to the commission website, and how to contact the commission.

3) Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

- The Chair asked if commission members had any comments on or changes to the previous session's minutes, which had been provided to the commission members earlier. Mr. Laria motioned to approve the previous meeting's minutes, and Brigadier General Birkhead seconded the motion, so the minutes were approved as distributed.

4) Report on Findings of Ethical Climate Survey

- Chair Johnson introduced Dr. Cotten, who presented the results of the Ethical Climate Survey. Dr. Cotten reviewed the survey's methodology and explained that the survey received good response and participation rates.
- Throughout Dr. Cotten's presentation, the commission members asked questions. These included the following:
 - Mr. Laria asked what the gross number of respondents for the entire survey was, and Dr. Cotten said that 1,470 individuals responded to the survey. Mr. Laria further asked if it

This Commission is staffed by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore

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was possible to report the sample size of respondents for each question. Dr. Cotten said the Schaefer Center staff will provide the sample size for each survey question in the Ethical Climate Survey report.

- Mr. Laria asked how the commission members should evaluate the survey responses and gauge the meaning of the statistics presented. Dr. Cotten explained that the survey results act as a baseline and can be used to assess improvements and changes over time. She also said that no extreme results emerged from the survey, which suggests there is not an undercurrent of unethical behavior or something of particular concern that needs to be addressed immediately.
- Mr. Glancy stated that there were several questions relating to the participants' experience dealing with investigations or reporting. Mr. Glancy asked if there is any way to break down the data to show the reactions of individuals who dealt specifically with the OIG. Dr. Cotten responded that the Schaefer Center staff will provide that information.
- There were additional questions about the significance of the findings, especially with respect to statistical significance. Dr. Cotten said that additional information on significance will be included in an updated version of the report.

5) Report on Findings of Best Practices Research

- Chair Johnson introduced Dr. Ficene, who presented the results of the Schaefer Center's Best Practices research. Dr. Ficene discussed the methodology used to find data and summarized the characteristics and practices of the identified OIGs.
- Throughout the presentation, commission members asked questions, which included the following:
 - Ms. Leppert asked that, when charts are shown in the Best Practices report, can percentages also be included? Dr. Ficene said that that information can be included with a caveat that the results in this report are affirmative only (in other words, that the percentage only represents the share of offices for which the characteristic was found, and the information was not found for the other offices).
 - Mr. Laria asked if jurisdictions most like Baltimore County will be indicated in the report. Dr. Ficene answered that the Schaefer Center staff will attempt to include that information.
 - Mr. Laria asked how the financial independence variable is determined. Dr. Ficene explained that "independent" means that the OIG has a minimum budget that is normally outlined in enabling legislation compared to offices for which the OIG is subject to normal appropriation processes.
 - Brigadier General Birckhead asked if the size of the population of the jurisdiction will be reported. Dr. Ficene said that the Schaefer Center staff will attempt to include that information.

6) Subcommittees Update

- Chair Johnson acknowledged the work of the subcommittees led by Brigadier General Birckhead and Ms. Cox. Both subcommittees began their work during the month of August and intend to meet again in September.

7) Commission Business

- Chair Johnson asked if any of the commission members had business to discuss, of which there was none.

8) Adjournment

- Chair Johnson asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Brigadier General Birckhead proposed a motion, which was seconded by Ms. Cox. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.
- The next meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Ethics and Accountability is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. The Commission is set to hear from Robin Kempf, an academic expert on OIGs, as well as Gregory Hill and Stephen Street, the leaders of the Association of Inspectors General.

Action Items

Item	Responsible Party
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revising the Ethical Climate Survey report to include more information about sample sizes and significance of the results• Revising the Best Practices report to include accompanying percentages with the report's charts	Schaefer Center staff