

Stephan W. Fogleman, Chair
Donna M. Davis, Vice-Chair
Melodie Hengerer
Arnold Sampson
Vacant



BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ETHICS

May 23, 2022

The Honorable President
Members of the City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: City Council Bill 22-0234 (“Police Accountability”)

Dear President and City Council Members:

You have referred City Council Bill 22-0234 (“Bill”) to the Ethics Board for comment. The Bill establishes the Baltimore City Police Accountability Board (“Board”) and the Administrative Charging Committee for the City (“Committee”), and requires the Director of the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights (“Director”) to adopt rules and regulations to carry out the Bill.

Among other provisions concerning the administration of the Board and Committee, the Bill also amends the Ethics Law—specifically, section 7-8 of Article 8 of the City Code—to require the members of the Board and Committee, the Director, and all non-clerical employees¹ assigned to the Board and the Committee to file a financial disclosure statement.

The Ethics Law requires many City public servants² to file annual financial disclosure statements, including the members of many City boards and commissions. City Code, Article 8, Subtitle 7. The public disclosure of public servants’ financial interests and other relevant affiliations furthers the purpose of the Ethics Law, which is “[t]o guard against improper influence or even the appearance of improper influence, and to ensure public trust in government.” City Code, Art. 8, § 1-2(2). The process of financial disclosure assists in identifying potential conflicts of interest between City duties and private interests. Because Board and Committee members, along with the Director, are charged with important public duties related to police accountability, it furthers the

¹ The term “non-clerical employee” means any City official or employee “who: (1) is compensated for his or her services; and (2) is not employed solely in a secretarial, clerical, or custodial capacity.” City Code, Art. 8, § 7-6(b).

² The term “public servant” means any City official or employee.

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purpose of the Ethics Law to require these individuals to disclose their financial interests and other relevant affiliations.

There is likely minimal fiscal or administrative impact in requiring these additional individuals to file financial disclosure statements. The Ethics Board, in collaboration with Baltimore City Information Technology, maintains an online financial disclosure portal that allows filers to create an account and file their disclosure statements online, which are then viewable by Ethics Board staff and members of the public who have registered for viewer accounts.

Accordingly, although the Ethics Board does not take a position on the Bill, the Bill's financial disclosure requirements are consistent with the Ethics Law's substance and pose little, if any, additional administrative burden.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephan W. Fogleman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephan W. Fogleman
Chair, Ethics Board

Cc: Ethics Board Members

Isabel Cumming, Executive Director
Ethics Board

Nina Themelis, Deputy Director
Mayor's Office of Government Affairs

Matt Stegman,
Council President's Office

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