

**Clayton County Board of Ethics**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
October 14, 2019  
6:30 PM  
Business Meeting  
Meeting Facilitator: Walter Nix, Chairman

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

ROLL CALL: Present: CCBOE members Walter Nix (Chairman), Samuel Dixon, Oreatha Ensley, Tiffany Jones, Marla Thompson-Kendall, and Ryan Shaw (Clayton County Human Resources). Board member Shonterria Martin-Stokes joined the meeting at 6:39 PM. Absent: Karen Sullivan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the September 9, 2019 meeting were read.

**Motion** (Thompson-Kendall/Ensley) that the minutes be accepted as submitted by Karen Sullivan. **Approved.**

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Having conferred with the Clerk of Commission, Mr. Nix reported that the email address established by the County and listed on the Ethics Board Complaint form, [ethical.complaints@claytoncountyga.gov](mailto:ethical.complaints@claytoncountyga.gov) had never been monitored, and that the Clerk of Commission is already charged with monitoring multiple email accounts. Ethics Board members discussed continuing or discontinuing this email address.  
**Motion** (Dixon/Thompson-Kendall): To ensure that Clayton County citizens may submit completed Ethics Board Complaint Forms electronically, the Board requests that Clayton County Information Technology provide, to both the Ethics Board's Chairman and its Legal Counsel, access to the email account for timely monitoring. **Approved.**
- 2) On behalf of the Ethics Board, Legal Counsel Mr. James E. Elliott, Jr. invited three individuals, serving as members of official Clayton County boards who had failed to file the annual financial disclosure by January 31, 2019 as required by the County Code of Ethics (Ordinance Sec. 70-70), to attend the Board's October meeting. Two invitees attended the meeting to address the Ethics Board. The third did not attend but replied via email.
  - a. Mr. Louis Johnson (Clayton County Development Authority) told the Board that earlier notifications had been sent to the PO Box address of another non-profit he chairs, but had not been forwarded to him. He was in the hospital on March 1, 2019, the extended deadline for compliance prior to referral to the Ethics Board. He learned of his noncompliance from a fellow Development Authority board member on August 13, 2019. The following day, after meeting with Mr. Ryan Shaw (Clayton County HR), he submitted his signed financial disclosure to the Clerk of Commission. He stated there was "nothing nefarious or intentional" in his failure to comply, and that the primary issue was the address used for the financial disclosure communications, which was not his residential address.
  - b. Mr. Eric Bell (Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases Community Services) told the Board that he had received the financial disclosure notification letter. Since he had no relevant financial transactions with the County or financial interests to disclose, he concluded that he was not required to return the disclosure form. He called this a "pure, honest mistake." After learning on September 13, 2019 he was in non-compliance, he submitted his completed, signed, and notarized disclosure on September 16, 2019. He expressed his desire to continue serving as a board member to help provide much-needed mental-health services to Clayton County citizens.
  - c. Mr. Junior Jackson (Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases Community Services) emailed that he would be unable to address the Ethics Board since he would be out of town until October 15. Mr. Elliott offered to convey Mr. Jackson's email explanation to the Board; it was read aloud in its entirety at the meeting. Mr. Jackson stated he could not say if he had actually received the financial disclosure form, but nonetheless regrets not filing it in a timely fashion. He offered a "guarantee" that at the beginning of each year he continues serving as a board member, he will make sure his form is "filled out

and submitted ahead of the deadline.” In his email exchanges with Mr. Elliott, he did not indicate how he would achieve compliance with the financial disclosure required for the current year (2019).

- 3) Ethics Board members discussed ways that Clayton County board members might be reminded by their chairs of each individual board member’s requirement to comply with annual financial disclosure.

**Motion** (Dixon/Ensley): The Ethics Board requests the Clerk of Commission to communicate in writing to the chair of each official Clayton County board the Ethics Board’s recommendation that the annual financial disclosure requirement and compliance deadline be added to each board’s regular January meeting agenda. **Approved.**

**PENDING BUSINESS:** As discussed at the September meeting, the URL link to the Ethics Policy, as listed on the Ethics Board Complaint Form available online, is inoperative. To update the Ethics Board Complaint Form, Mr. Dixon proposed new wording for paragraph VII to make it simpler and earlier to understand, which was discussed and modified.

**Motion** (Dixon/Ensley): Change paragraph VII of the Ethics Board Complaint Form in its entirety to read:

VII. FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE ETHICS POLICY, please visit the Clayton County Ethics Board webpage at [www.claytoncountyga.gov](http://www.claytoncountyga.gov) (click on the magnifying-glass search icon and enter “Ethics”). The Ethics Policy may also be obtained from the County Clerk of Commission’s office (a copy fee may be assessed).

**Approved.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Opened by the Chairman at 6:59 PM. Two students from Clayton County’s Martha Ellen Stilwell School for the Arts attended the meeting with faculty members Mr. Marc DiTomasso and Ms. Tina Conner, to gain first-hand understanding of the Ethics Board’s public-service mission. Mr. DiTomasso thanked the Board members for their work. Mr. Mickey Garber praised the students for their interest in civic engagement, acknowledging them as the future of Clayton County, and asserting that economic development of Clayton County requires the County to be family-friendly by placing high value on the success of its public education system. Mr. Garber also expressed appreciation to Mr. Louis Johnson and Mr. Eric Bell for appearing before the Ethics Board, describing their statements to the Board as “made in a manner of true honesty,” and adding his wish that they may continue to serve on their respective boards.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The next Ethics Board meeting is scheduled for November 11, 2019 at 6:30 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **Motion** (Martin-Stokes/Thompson-Kendall) at 7:04 PM to adjourn the meeting. **Approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel C. Dixon on behalf of Karen C. Sullivan, Secretary

The Board did not go into Executive Session at its October meeting.