

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes (approved June 18, 2007)

Monthly Meeting

June 11, 2007

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. on June 11, 2007.

Members present on call to order: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, Courtney Watson, Jen Terrasa, and Mary Kay Sigaty.

Council Chairman Ball reported that he has requested that the archive of the Council meeting minutes be made available on the Council's website. He stated that he would like to get the past year on line. Mary Kay Sigaty stated that she met with Ira Levy who is trying to get all of the archived legislation on line by August 1.

Mary Kay Sigaty did not have a report from the Patuxent River Commission as she is still awaiting approval of her appointment by the Governor.

The Acting Administrator reported that the Administrator's report was provided in writing. If there are any questions about the report, Sheila will be back on June 18 and will be able to answer your questions then. Courtney Watson confirmed that the Councilmembers should estimate their expenses through June 30th. Ms. Watson also wanted to know if it would be possible for the Special Assistants to attend the mediation class on Wednesday at the MACo conference in August. The Council approved SAs attending the Wednesday conflict resolution meeting and the resulting hotel expense.

County Auditor Haskell Arnold reported on audit reports issued, sent to the administration for comments, in review, and in progress.

Dr. C. Vernon Gray, Administrator for the Office of Human Rights, and Mary Campbell, Senior Investigator for the Office of Human Rights, presented a briefing on the Office of Human Rights. Dr. Gray offered statistics of the various cases from the previous year. Ms. Campbell presented information on the Offices Hate Bias Impact Panel where they bring in victims and the perpetrators of hate crimes to discuss hate crimes. She stated that the Police Department maintains the statistics for hate crimes, for which there are federal guidelines for how to report, but not every act of hate against a protected class is considered a crime and some crimes with multiple victims are counted as one crime, so the numbers can be deceptive. Mary Kay Sigaty, Courtney Watson, and Mary Campbell discussed ways that the Office of Human Rights can work with the Board of Education to help teenagers understand hate crimes.

Nan Shull, Human Resources Administrator, provided information on the most recent union contracts. She summarized the various changes and provided explanations of the more significant changes. Ms. Shull mentioned that her office is working with the fire and police departments to determine physical fitness requirements. She explained the COLA and why the County increased the public safety employees as they did. Courtney Watson asked what the Council's legal responsibility is with respect to the contracts and whether it was the normal process that the Council was requested to approve the contracts after the Council passed the budget, and confirmation of the steps of the process. Ms. Watson also asked whether the Council had ever not approved union contracts and the staff person replied in the negative. Chairman Ball also requested that the Office of Law be asked for this information and that they would like to discuss this further at the legislative work session.

Jen Terrasa stated that MACo is accepting ideas on legislation for next year until June 29, 2007.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.