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Baltimore City Board of Ethics Conflict of Interest – Public Summary 005

The complaint alleged that a City official had a conflict of interest related to their support for a City matter that benefitted a private entity (“Entity”) because the official was on the governing board of that Entity. Ethics Board staff undertook an investigation that included interviewing the official and reviewing relevant material, including the official’s financial disclosure statement, material pertaining to the relevant City matter, and the Entity’s organizational documents.

The investigation revealed that the official was not a member of the Entity’s governing board but was on the board of a separate entity that shared some of the Entity’s same organizational details and officers (“Entity 2”). Based on this information, the Ethics Board determined there were insufficient grounds to find a *prima facie* violation of the Ethics Law’s conflict of interest provision in Section 6-6.¹ That section, in relevant part, prohibits a City official or employee from participating in a City matter if they sit on the governing board of an entity that is a party to the matter.

However, given the circumstances, the Ethics Board cautioned the official about the potential for an appearance of a conflict of interest. Accordingly, the Ethics Board encouraged the official to either refrain from participating in any matters involving the Entity while sitting on Entity 2’s governing board, or to resign from Entity 2’s governing board.

The official took the advice of the Ethics Board and resigned from Entity 2’s governing board. The Ethics Board subsequently dismissed the complaint.

¹ The Ethics Law is contained in Article 8 of the City Code.