



Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, February 8, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Sandra Price, Board Chairperson.

Present:

Sandra Price – Board Chairperson
Richard Weisenhoff – Board Vice Chairperson
Patricia Branch – Board Member
Jerome Rollerson – Board Member
Rosa Maymi – Board Member
Young Smith – Board Member
Tracy Rezvani – Administrator, Office of Consumer Protection
Cheryl Mattis – Deputy Director, Department of Community Resources and Services
Jennifer Jones – Deputy Chief of Staff, County Administration
Lila Boor – Investigator, Office of Consumer Protection

Business Discussed:

Lila Boor gave updates from the Office of Consumer Protection. The Office is working with the new Administrator, Tracy Rezvani, who is reviewing current Office of Consumer Protection processes:

- Tracy Rezvani discussed the edits to the final draft of the Board’s annual report. Sandra Price made a motion to approve the draft as the final version of the report with Patricia Branch’s edit regarding legislation. Richard Weisenhoff seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor of approving the report. Tracy Rezvani asked Cheryl Mattis what the next steps are. Cheryl Mattis said that the report will be posted on the Office’s webpage, and it will be given to the County Executive.
- Sandra Price inquired if the annual report was something new or if it was done in the past. Lila Boor replied that there haven’t been any reports since the former Administrator, Becky Bowman, left in 2018. She did not know if any reports were written prior to that year.
- Tracy Rezvani informed the Board that the County Executive, Calvin Ball, will be joining the April Board meeting. Sandra Price asked Tracy Rezvani if she had met with all Board members. Tracy Rezvani said that she still had to connect with two members.

National Consumer Protection Week:

Tracy Rezvani discussed the following possible options:

- Plan A - Videos, but there is no Manager of the Communications Team available to do recording;
- Plan B - Tip Sheets;
- Plan C – Social Media Campaign;
- If plan C is chosen, concepts need to be flushed out this week for the topics previously approved at the last meeting. There needs to be three “communication points” for each topic. Sandra Price stated that the theme for the week is “How to be a Smart Consumer.” Tracy Rezvani shared her screen to show examples provided by the FTC. She asked for two volunteers to host two webinars that she is planning to conduct at 7:00 PM on 03.08.22 and 03.10.22. She stated that the one on 03.08 will be on “Credit, Credit Reports and Debt Collection,” and the one on 03.10 will be on “How to Safely Use Payment Apps.”
- Sandra Price explained to Tracy Rezvani how things worked using a moderator for the Landlord/Tenant event. Cheryl Mattis said the Board should pre-generate some questions to ask Tracy beforehand just in case the participants don’t have any. Rosa Maymi volunteered to moderate the webinar on 03.08, and Richard Weisenhoff volunteered to do the moderating for 03.10. Sandra Price said she will help with the planning.
- Tracy Rezvani shared her screen to show what the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) has for “Consumer Protection Week” on various topics and sample messages. She asked the Board if they want to modify the FTC’s tool kit, or have volunteers work on projects. Tracy said that she needed someone to work with the Communications Team on graphics to use with modified messages. Cheryl Mattis expressed concern about using the FTC’s pre-existing graphics because they don’t talk about Howard County Office of Consumer Protection, they only drive viewers to FTC’s website, and they have no message. Tracy Rezvani said the graphics can be used as samples. Cheryl Mattis also said the Board needs to come up with content and then the Communications Team can work on graphics.
- Tracy Rezvani asked for volunteers to write content to include the three top things they want to communicate for each of the topics chosen. Rosa Maymi volunteered to do Government Imposters, Richard Weisenhoff volunteered to do “Warranties,” Sandra Price volunteered to do “Safeguarding Credit,” Patricia Branch volunteered to do “What to Know Before Signing a Lease,” and Jerome Rollerson will do “Refund Policies.” Tracy Rezvani said that this information is needed by Friday, 02.11.22. Tracy asked the Board to think of questions to be asked at the webinars, and to have them to the moderators by the week of 02.21.22. Cheryl Mattis asked Tracy Rezvani to share a brief description of the webinars with the Board.

Budget:

- Sandra Price said that she has been looking for training opportunities but hasn't found anything so far. Tracy Rezvani said that she found some inexpensive and free training that she will forward to the Board. Tracy asked if anyone has been certified in "Open Meeting Act" training. Sandra Price stated that she has taken the training.

Other Business:

- Patricia Branch discussed bills that were introduced into the 2022 legislative session she thinks could be important to the OCP (Office of Consumer Protection). She will send this information out to the Board as soon as she gets her computer repaired. Tracy Rezvani said this is a valuable service to the Office, and she explained how this worked at the Montgomery County OCP. Jennifer Jones said that the County administration has a person in "Government Affairs" that deals with legislation. Cheryl Mattis said that the Board should inform the Executive on bills they think should be supported or not supported. She told the Board that they can testify on bills as County residents, not Board members.
- Tracy Rezvani stated that the next Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 03.08.2022, conflicts with a webinar scheduled at the same time. Sandra Price made a motion to move the Board meeting to Tuesday, 03.01.2022 at 7:00 PM. Patricia Branch seconded the motion. Tracy Rezvani asked if the Board was interested in meeting in person since the County Executive has given permission for in-person meetings. She suggested maybe meeting for dinner. Patricia Branch said that she wants to wait until warm weather and meet outside. Sandra Price also said that she would like to meet outside.
- Tracy Rezvani discussed if the Board would be interested in attending the "Office on Aging and Independence's Age Friendly Program" meetings, or the Commission on Aging meeting, since one of their focus areas for 2022 is seniors. She asked if someone would like to volunteer to attend the meetings. She will send out the meeting dates.

Announcements:

- None

Adjourn:

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM by Sandra Price, Board Chairperson.