

ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The St. Mary's County Ethics Commission was established on June 29, 1982, pursuant to Article 40A of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Commission is bound by St. Mary's County Public Ethics Ordinance 2022-42 and operates under Ethics Commission Rules of Procedure. These documents are available for public review on the County's Ethics Commission Website.

The Commission manages the financial disclosure process, hears complaints, and renders decisions involving violations of the Ethics Ordinance, provides Advisory Opinions on the Ethics Ordinance, and offers education on the requirements and application of the Ethics Ordinance.

MEMBERS

The Ethics Commission is a volunteer commission composed of five regular voting members and one alternate member who does not vote unless a regular member is not present. The members with their position and expiration date for calendar year 2024 were:

| <u>Current Members</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Appointment Date</u> | <u>Expiration Date</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Lawrence Crabtree | Chair | 01/01/23 | 12/31/25 (3 rd term) |
| Robert McGann | Vice-Chair | 01/01/24 | 12/31/27 (partial trm) |
| Dr. Joseph DeVitis | Member | 07/01/25 | 06/30/28 (2 nd term) |
| Nicholas Hooper | Member | 07/01/25 | 12/31/27 (partial trm) |
| Daniel Kerns | Member | 07/01/25 | 06/30/28 (1 st term) |
| Kathleen McClernan-Walz | Alternate | 07/01/25 | 06/30/27 (2 nd term) |

MEETINGS

The St. Mary's County Ethics Commission met in February, April, May, July, and October. The minutes from these meetings are available for public review and are available on the Ethics Commission website.

ATTENDANCE

St. Mary's County Ethics Commission held five meetings in 2025 with six absences.

ELECTIONS

Elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions are held each July. David Willenborg was elected as the Chairman and Joseph Russell, Vice Chair. Lawrence Crabtree was elected as chair in August after Mr. Willenborg's term expired.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The Ordinance establishing the St. Mary's County Ethics Commission provides that certain public officials, employees, and non-compensated volunteers in county service are required to file financial disclosure statements. The disclosure statement is used to identify and declare potential conflicts of interest before they become issues and to preserve public confidence in the integrity of county employees.

The Ethics Commission annually receives approximately 100 financial disclosure statements. In accordance with Ethics Ordinance 2022-42 the financial disclosure statements are available for public inspection. The Ordinance requires the Commission to notify any member whose financial disclosure statement is examined, providing the name and address of the person who requested the document. In 2024, there were zero requests to examine statements.

COMPLAINTS AND ADVISORY OPINIONS

Advisory Opinions are issued as a result of an official written inquiry. The advisory opinion contains the original inquiry, the applicable Ethics Ordinance section, the decision of the Commission, and any other relevant information concerning the decision-making process.

In 2025 the Ethics Commission received one request for an Advisory Opinion. No Complaints were filed.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Ethics Commission is charged with conducting information and education programs regarding the purpose and implementation of the Ethics Ordinance.

CONCLUSION

The St. Mary's County Ethics Commission is dedicated to serving the citizens of the County, with the utmost integrity and conviction. The Commission strives to respond to citizen requests and complaints in a timely and professional manner, and all members look forward to serving the public during the 2025 session.

Questions or comments about this report are welcome and may be sent to the Ethics Commission via the Ethics Commission Secretary at diane.gleissner@stmaryscounty.md.gov.