

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**



**Statement by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability in Response to the
October 2, 2019 Report by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor**

On October 2, 2019, the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor released a report entitled, “BEGA Mishandled Whistleblower Complaint on Housing Procurement” (the Report). The Report focused on how BEGA’s Office of Government Ethics (OGE) handled a complaint it received in June 2018 related to the Housing Production Trust Fund and the Department of Housing and Community Development” (the Complaint).

The Board has had an opportunity to review the Report and to discuss its content with OGE Director Brent Wolfingbarger. Regrettably, the Board recognizes that OGE did mishandle this particular Complaint. This failure occurred because of both flawed processes and human error. Contrary to the conclusions in the Report, however, we believe the Complaint’s mishandling was an aberration and not the part of a pattern or the norm. While the mishandling of the Complaint was an unfortunate oversight, it is one that the Board is resolved to correct given the importance of BEGA’s mission.

The Board has tasked OGE with analyzing its current practices to discover the root causes that led to the mishandling of the Complaint and directed the office to implement revised procedures for the intake, handling, and tracking of complaints, as soon as possible. In fact, OGE had already started this process before the Report was released yesterday. Importantly, the Complaint at issue is being investigated and will receive an appropriate response in accordance with the laws, regulations, and procedures that govern BEGA.

Although the Complaint at issue was admittedly mishandled by OGE staff, the Board strongly disagrees with the Report’s broad conclusion that BEGA “has failed to live up to its mission.” Rather, we believe that BEGA employees work conscientiously to fulfill the agency’s mission daily.

The Board also disagrees with the Report’s assertion that Director Wolfingbarger misrepresented this matter to the Board. At its monthly meeting on October 3, 2019, the BEGA Board carefully reviewed the Report’s allegations that Director Wolfingbarger made misrepresentations. The Board determined that Director Wolfingbarger was forthcoming in his

discussions with the Board in light of the information known to him at the time, and therefore, the Board fully supports Director's Wolfingbarger's response to the Report.

The Board acknowledges the gravity of the concerns raised in the Report regarding the mishandling of the Complaint at issue and seeks to assure the public that BEGA takes its mission to investigate alleged ethics violations by District government employees and public officials seriously.


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