

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Henry County Board of Ethics



ABOUT THE BOARD

Senate Bill 22 established the Henry County Board of Ethics in March 2021. This Board provides training on the Code of Ethics, issues advisory opinions regarding whether certain actions by county employees and officials violate the code and investigates suspected violations.

The Henry County Board of Ethics is an independent body of seven volunteer citizens dedicated to ensuring transparency and integrity in the County's operations.



VISION

The Henry County Board of Ethics envisions a community where the highest ethical standards are upheld at every level of local government. We strive to foster a culture of integrity and accountability, ensuring that all Henry County employees and officials act with unwavering dedication to the well-being of the public.



MISSION

To ensure city officials and county personnel adhere to high standards of ethical conduct and accountability to promote confidence in government so that positions of public responsibility are acting for the benefit of the public.

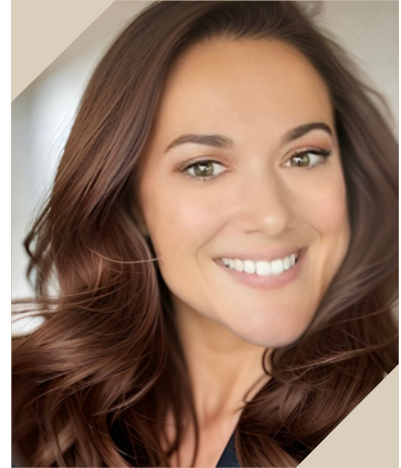
2024 BOARD OF ETHICS MEMBERS



DISTRICT I
Ethel Olivia McCornell



DISTRICT II
Craig Simmons



DISTRICT III
Laurin Brie Smith



DISTRICT IV
Felicia Harrell



DISTRICT V
Desmond McLain

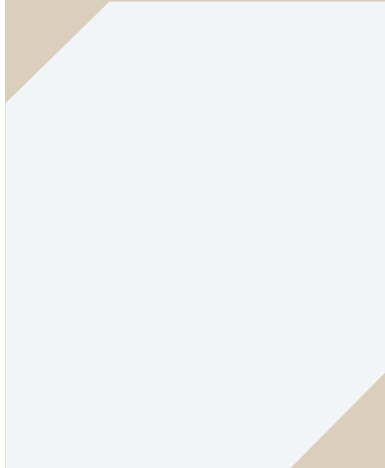


**TAX
COMMISSIONER
APPOINTEE**
Antonio Taylor

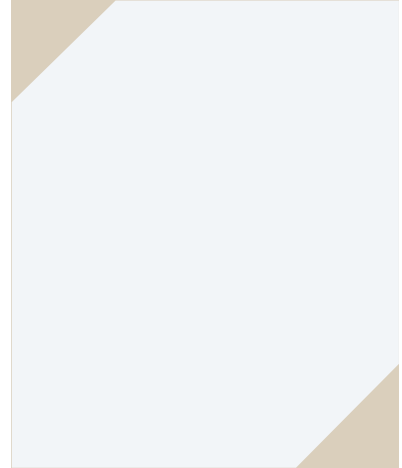
2024 BOARD OF ETHICS MEMBERS



**TAX
COMMISSIONER
APPOINTEE**
Cynthia Cornog



**CLERK OF
SUPERIOR COURT
APPOINTEE**
Vacant

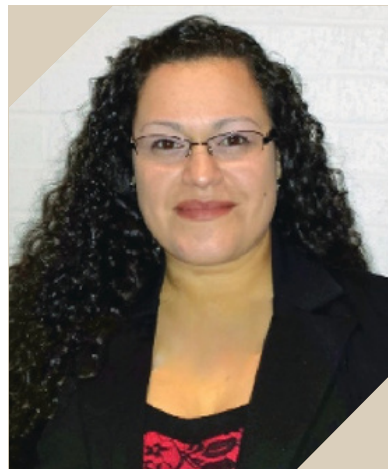


**CLERK OF
SUPERIOR COURT
APPOINTEE**
Vacant

ADMINISTRATION



**ETHICS
OFFICER**
Obrézia L.
Bullard, Esq.



**ETHICS
ADMINISTRATOR**
Gloria Banister



MESSAGE FROM ETHICS OFFICER

A Year in Review from the Ethics Officer

As we look back on the past year, I am pleased to share the significant progress and achievements of the Henry County Board of Ethics. Our dedication to promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability has guided our efforts, and I am proud to report that we have made remarkable strides.

One of our major achievements was successfully resolving the docket and closing all pending cases that had been suspended. During 2024, we held six evidentiary hearings regarding ethical complaints. Each hearing provided an opportunity for comprehensive reviews and just outcomes, underscoring our commitment to the Code of Ethics.

Another significant accomplishment was the creation of our virtual platform. At the beginning of 2024, we aimed to expand our training outreach to larger departments. The platform enhances access to ethical training and allows us to engage with employees more effectively. A beta test was conducted after collaborating with the county's information technology department to ensure a smooth transition for employees. Following its success, the first batch



OUR DEDICATION TO PROMOTING INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY HAS GUIDED OUR EFFORTS.

of virtual courses was sent to Henry County's Fire Department. By the end of 2024, over 67% of the department had completed the training—many of which occurred within the first two weeks of receiving it.

Looking ahead, we aspire to expand our training content and make it more interactive to enhance retention and engagement. Our vision is to create a dynamic learning environment where every participant feels empowered to embrace ethical practices in their department.

To achieve this goal, we must continue to educate ourselves and collaborate with ethics offices worldwide to learn the best strategies. This year, the board's staff engaged in vital training provided by the Society of Corporate Compliance & Ethics. This training equipped us with essential knowledge and ignited thought-provoking discussions that inspired new ideas for enhancing our ethics office. Furthermore, I had the privilege of serving as a panelist at DeKalb County's inaugural ethics forum, which provided opportunities for partnership and community engagement.

While we have made great progress, we acknowledge that challenges remain, particularly with implementing SB22. We are actively assessing the issues arising from this bill and prioritizing communication with our local legislators. Our goal is to work collaboratively to craft the best Code of Ethics for our county.



OUR GOAL IS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO CRAFT THE BEST CODE OF ETHICS FOR OUR COUNTY.

The Board of Ethics plays a vital role in promoting transparency in Henry County. We are dedicated to making our processes open and accessible to everyone. Through continuous education, advisory opinions, and comprehensive investigations, we aim to keep ethical conduct central to our county's operations.

As we move forward, I want to thank you—the Board of Ethics, employees, officials, and citizens—for your steadfast support and commitment to ethical governance in Henry County. I also want to express my gratitude to Gloria Banister, the Ethics Administrator, who works hard behind the scenes to ensure that the board's functionality is efficient and seamless. Together, we will continue to foster a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Thank you for your continued dedication.

Sincerely,

Obieziah L. Bullard, Esq.

Ethics Officer, Henry County Board of Ethics

2024 YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

Community Involvement



Henry's Night Out
Trunk or Treat

**WINNER of the
2024 Halloween
Spookiest Costume
Contest!!**

**Spookiest: Gloria
Banister (Don't run
with scissors)**



Education Through Training



Ethics training is crucial for fostering a culture of integrity and accountability within our county. It equips employees with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate complex ethical dilemmas, make informed decisions, and promote transparency in their interactions. By reinforcing the values of honesty, respect, and responsibility, ethics training not only helps prevent misconduct but also enhances teamwork and trust among colleagues.

IN-PERSON TRAINING

In 2024, the Board of Ethics unanimously approved a plan to conduct in-person ethics training for all employees and officials every other year. Notwithstanding this, the Board collaborated with Human Resources to incorporate in-person training for all new employees during their orientation, ensuring that a robust ethical foundation is established from day one. As a result, 429 Henry County employees and officials received this important training, reinforcing our commitment to ethical conduct throughout the county.

VIRTUAL TRAINING PLATFORM LAUNCHED



NAVEX[®]

In 2024, the Board of Ethics partnered with NAVEX to launch a virtual training program designed to facilitate ethics training for larger departments and county boards. This initiative aimed to ensure that all individuals have accessible and effective resources for ethical training. This

collaboration will significantly enhance our commitment to ethical standards and support ongoing professional development.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



To help our employees navigate gift-giving during the holiday season, we provided a holiday gift guide outlining what is permissible and not in accordance with our Code of Ethics. This guide served as a valuable resource to ensure that everyone understands the guidelines surrounding gifts and gratuities.

Accountability Through Investigations



The Board of Ethics conducts investigations to uphold the integrity and accountability of ethical standards within our county. These investigations are essential for addressing allegations of unethical behavior or misconduct and ensuring that individuals adhere to the Code of Ethics. Ultimately, these investigations help maintain public confidence in the county's ethical governance, deter future misconduct, and support the overall mission of upholding ethical principles. In 2024, the Board handled six ethical complaints, conducted four evidentiary hearings, and responded to one appeal.

Prevention Through Counsel



The Board of Ethics plays a crucial role in preventing ethical dilemmas by offering guidance and advice to individuals seeking clarity on ethical issues. This advisory function provides accessible resources, such as guidelines, best practices, and ethical frameworks, to help employees and officials navigate complex situations. The Board encourages proactive communication, allowing individuals to consult with the Ethics Officer before undertaking actions that could lead to potential conflicts or ethical concerns. By fostering a culture of openness and encouraging ethical decision-making, the Board empowers individuals to make informed choices, thereby reducing the likelihood of ethical dilemmas and promoting a healthy ethical climate within the county. In 2024, the Board received five hotline calls, processed three website inquiries, and provided four ethical advice sessions.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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 <https://henrycountyethics.com/>