

MARYLAND COLLECTION AGENCY LICENSING BOARD

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016 – BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

The Collection Agency Licensing Board (the “Board”) Meeting was called to order by Chairman Gordon Cooley at 10:50 am at the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, Baltimore, Maryland. Members in attendance were Eric Friedman, Stephan Hannan, Susan Hayes, and Joanne Young as well as Administrator Michael Jackson and Administrative Officer Kelly Mack. Also present were Assistant Commissioner Jedd Bellman, Assistant Attorney General Kevin McGivern, and Director of Enforcement Randy Kiser. On motion duly made, seconded and adopted, the Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of the May 16, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

State Ethics Commission Training was conducted in conjunction with this quarterly board meeting as scheduled by Chairman Cooley which commenced at 10:50 and finished at 11:45am. State Ethics Representatives Paralegal Jen Whitehead and Staff Counsel William J. Colquhoun presented the training. The training covered many topics including the review of the Appointed Exemption Disclosure form, conflict of issue problems and the continuous changes with State Ethics laws and exceptions. There was lengthy discussion about honorary/cash board service, prohibition performing state duties for compensation and the Board members were also provided for review the “gift law/solicitation” pursuant to Public Ethics Law (General Provisions, Title 5) to assure compliance.

LICENSEE REPORT

Mr. Jackson delivered a report regarding the number of licensees and changes since the previous Board meeting. There are currently 1604 licensed collection agency licensees operating in Maryland, an increase of 55 since last period, and which total includes 396 branch offices and 42 new applications approved since September 16, 2016.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

Ms. Mack presented the change of control report that consisted of eight licensees requesting changes. The board had no questions or concerns about the eight applications.

Ms. Mack reported that the new MCALB website page was updated to one page and was provided to the Board for review. There was discussion about the new page and it was suggested that we ascertain how many hits there have been to the page which has been revised to be more consumer digestible. Website analytics will be provided at the next scheduled meeting.

There was also discussion about outreach resources from the Commissioner’s office. Mr. Cooley explained that a new Director of Outreach, Janelle Lawrence was recently appointed who will work to expand educational opportunities providing more valuable information as an agency consumer outreach effort.

Ms. Hayes presented some information relating to a recent call to her office, Alacrity Collections Corporation, wherein the CFPB representative was identified as a debtor’s financial advisor. There was discussion on this matter and

Mr. Hannan indicated the bureau cannot perform an undercover investigation and perhaps the representative was acting as a financial coach which may be inappropriate. Mr. Hannan agreed to share a copy of an issue for review and follow-up with Mr. Bellman.

Mr. Cooley briefed the Board on the invitation of industry that will immediately follow the adjourning of this meeting which will provide an opportunity for interested industry members to attend our "open forum" to voice/discuss their opinions relating to any regulation concerns.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Mr. Bellman reported on enforcement activity conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulation on behalf of the Board since the previous meeting. He indicated there are currently 12 active cases, three investigations, four cases referred to the AG's office and 5 pending cases awaiting final orders. It was also reported that former Litigation Attorney W. Thomas Lawrie moved to the Attorney General's Office and his replacement would be made soon. Thereafter the Board voted to go into closed session to discuss litigation and multi-agency debt collection supervision.

After the closed session ended, the Board discussed scheduling its next meeting in Baltimore to be determined.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kelly Mack*

Kelly Mack  
Administrative Officer, MCALB