

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor



RUNAKO KUMBULA ALLSOPP, ESQ.,
CHAIR
KAREN R. CALMEISE, ESQ.
ANDREW G. WHITE, ESQ.

STATE OF MARYLAND
OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE
BOARD

19 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 296 (2025)

October 24, 2025

Washington County Board of County Commissioners

Under the Open Meetings Act (the “Act”), “the general public is entitled to attend” any open sessions of a public body. § 3-303(a).¹ A public body may remove an individual “if the presiding officer determines that the behavior of [the] individual is disrupting an open session.” §3-303(c). But the Act does not permit a public body to prospectively ban someone from a future meeting “based on the belief that a particular person *might be* disruptive.” 19 *OMCB Opinions* 178, 183 (2025).

Here, the Complainant alleges that the Washington County Board of County Commissioners (the “County Board” or “Board”) violated the Act by preventing an individual who was removed from a morning meeting on June 3, 2025, from attending a different meeting later that evening. The Complainant asserts that an officer with the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, on orders from the County Board, told the individual that he would be arrested if he attended the evening meeting.

The County Board responds that the evening session, following a recess of several hours, was a continuation of the morning meeting from which the individual was removed.² But regardless, the County Board “vehemently denies” that “any of the County Commissioners” ordered the officer to tell the individual that he could not attend the evening session.

Given this limited record—including a factual dispute about whether the officer spoke on the County Board’s behalf—we find ourselves unable to resolve this complaint.

¹ Statutory references are to the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.

² The County Board points us to an agenda which indicates that the body planned to convene at 8 a.m. June 3 to take public comment, recess at 8:30 a.m., reconvene at 9 a.m., recess around 12:30 p.m., and reconvene at 6 p.m., at a different address. The individual was removed during the 8 a.m. public comment period. The meeting agenda is available at <https://www.washco-md.net/wp-content/uploads/06032025-Open-Agenda-PACKET-SFS-1.pdf> (last visited Oct. 24, 2025).

19 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 296 (2025)

October 24, 2025

Page 297

See § 3-207(c)(2) (recognizing that “[a]n opinion of the [Compliance] Board may state that the [Compliance] Board is unable to resolve the complaint”). Even if we assume that the evening session was, as the Complainant asserts, a new meeting distinct from the morning session, it is not clear from the record that the *County Board* banned the individual from attending the evening session. After all, the Complainant and the County Board dispute whether the officer who told the individual he could not attend the session was acting on orders from the County Board. Because we are not a fact-finding tribunal equipped to resolve such disputes, *see* 19 *OMCB Opinions* 139, 139 (2025), we are unable to resolve this complaint.

Open Meetings Compliance Board

Runako Kumbula Allsopp, Esq.

Karen R. Calmeise, Esq.

Andrew G. White, Esq.