

Item 11 - Disclosure and Engagement Report



Ryan Micik, Chair
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Suzanne Doran, Acting Executive Director

TO: Public Ethics Commission
FROM: Jelani Killings, Ethics Analyst
Ana Lara Franco, Commission Analyst
Suzanne Doran, Acting Executive Director
DATE: March 28, 2023
RE: Disclosure and Engagement Monthly Report for the April 12, 2023, Meeting

This memorandum provides a summary of major accomplishments in the Public Ethics Commission's (PEC or Commission) Disclosure and Engagement program activities since the last monthly meeting. Commission staff disclosure activities focus on improving online tools for public access to local campaign finance and other disclosure data, enhancing compliance with disclosure rules, and conducting data analysis for PEC projects and programs as required. Engagement activities include training and resources provided to the regulated community, as well as general outreach to Oakland residents to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and to provide opportunities for dialogue between the Commission and community members.

Filing Officer – Compliance

Lobbyist Registration and Reporting Program – The Oakland Lobbyist Registration Act (LRA) requires any person that qualifies as a lobbyist to register annually with the Public Ethics Commission before conducting any lobbying activity. It also requires lobbyists to submit quarterly reports disclosing their lobbying activities to ensure that the public knows who is trying to influence City decisions. April 30, 2023, marks the deadline for first quarter lobbyist activity reports. The Lobbyist Registration portal, which was taken offline due to the ransomware attack in February, is back online and available. Lobbyist registration and activity reports may be viewed online at the [PEC's Lobbyist Dashboard and Data webpage](#).

Advice and Engagement

Advice and Technical Assistance – Staff continues to respond to requests for advice and technical assistance regarding campaign finance, ethics, Sunshine law, or lobbyist issues. Due to restoration efforts related to the February ransomware attack, the staff was unable to access the contact database from the City server to provide our regular monthly stats and charts by the agenda posting deadline this month.

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New Employee Orientation – Staff continues to make presentations at the City’s monthly New Employee Orientation (NEO) providing new employees with an introduction to the PEC and overview of the Government Ethics Act (GEA). In the months of February and March, Staff trained a total of 86 new employees on GEA provisions.

Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers – On March 23, PEC staff conducted a live Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers via Zoom. The training was hosted by the Department of Human Resources (HR) and served as an alternative for employees that have not completed the PEC’s mandatory online training. A total of 24 employees attended the training.

City Council Check-In – On March 17, Staff met with Councilmember Reid and her staff for an ethics check-in. Staff provided an overview of the Commission and its work and shared about recent changes in both local and state ethics and transparency laws. Topics covered included the gift rules, the Fair Elections Act, SB 1439 regarding limitations on campaign contributions to local elected officials from certain parties and disqualifications based on past campaign contributions, and future outreach opportunities. These informal meetings allowed PEC staff to better understand the support needs of councilmembers and their staff in complying with local ethics and transparency laws.

Board and Commissions Staff Liaison Training – On March 20, PEC staff participated in a joint effort with the Mayor’s office, City Clerk, and City Attorney to provide a comprehensive training for City Boards and Commissions staff liaisons. The training covered all relevant laws and responsibilities, including Sunshine and GEA requirements, pertaining to boards and commissions to ensure understanding and compliance. Staff shared about PEC resources, highlighted the PEC’s online training for Form 700 filers, and reminded liaisons of online agenda posting requirements.

SB 1439 Advisory – On March 20, staff published an advisory regarding a new statewide law aimed at further combatting “pay-to-play” politics. SB 1439 imposes new obligations upon Oakland elected officials, including the possibility of fines for noncompliance. The new law places limitations on soliciting or accepting campaign contributions from certain parties and also prohibits elected officials from voting on certain matters if the official received a contribution of more than \$250 in the prior 12 months from a party with a financial interest in the proceeding. The advisory was sent to all City Councilmembers.