

CITY OF OAKLAND  
PUBLIC ETHICS COMMISSION  
One Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Hall)  
Regular Commission Meeting  
Hearing Room 1  
Wednesday, April 10, 2024  
6:30 p.m.



Commissioners: Ryan Micik (Chair), Francis Upton IV (Vice-Chair), Alea Gage, Charlotte Hill Vincent Steele, and Karun Tilak.

Commission Staff to attend: Nicolas Heidorn, Executive Director; Suzanne Doran, Program Manager; Simon Russell, Enforcement Chief; and Alex Van Buskirk, Compliance and Disclosure Lead Analyst

Legal Counsel: Christina Cameron, Partner, Devaney Pate Morris & Cameron, LLP

## **PUBLIC ETHICS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

### **PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

#### **1. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Members present: Vice Chair Upton IV, Gage, Steele, and Tilak.

Members absent: Chair Micik, Hill

Staff present: Nicolas Heidorn, Suzanne Doran, Simon Russell, and Alex Van Buskirk

Legal Counsel: Christina Cameron

#### **2. Staff and Commission Announcements.**

There were no announcements.

Public Comment: none.

#### **3. Open Forum.**

Public Comment: Seneca Scott.

A full recording of public comments is available in the meeting video. Video recordings are posted on the meeting webpage, which may be found at [www.oaklandca.gov/pec](http://www.oaklandca.gov/pec).

### **ACTION ITEM**

#### **4. Approval of Commission Meeting Draft Minutes.**



Tilak moved, and Steele seconded, to adopt the March 13, 2024, regular meeting minutes.

Ayes: Upton IV, Gage, Steele and Tilak.

Noes: None.

Vote: Passed 4-0.

Public Comment: None.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **5. Oakland Fire Department (OFD) Public Records Presentation.**

Chief of Staff and Assistant to the Director Michael Hunt, and OFD Operations Administrative Aid Randy Stukes of the Oakland Fire Department provided information on the Department's process, successes, and challenges in responding to public records requests, and answered Commissioners' questions.

Public Comment: An anonymous written public comment was received prior to the meeting.

Written public comments are posted on the meeting webpage, which may be found at [www.oaklandca.gov/pec](http://www.oaklandca.gov/pec).

### **6. Disclosure and Engagement.**

Lead Analyst Alex Van Buskirk provided a summary of compliance with disclosure requirements, education and advice, general outreach, and data illumination activities since the last regular Commission meeting.

Public Comment: None.

### **7. Democracy Dollars Implementation.**

Program Manager Suzanne Doran provided a summary of significant developments in the implementation of the Democracy Dollars Public Financing Program, which will be used in the 2026 election.



Public Comment: None.

### **8. Enforcement Program.**

Enforcement Chief Simon Russell provided a summary of the Commission's enforcement process, caseload, enforcement-related litigation, and case closures or dismissals, as well as an update on enforcement work since the last Commission meeting.

Public Comment: None

### **9. Executive Director's Report.**

Executive Director Nicolas Heidorn reported on overall priorities and PEC activities, such as budget, staffing, and PEC legislative and policy initiatives not covered in other staff reports.

Public Comment: None.

### **10. Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) Guide 2024.**

Executive Director Heidorn presented the updated guide to the Oakland Campaign Reform Act, including new content explaining recent amendments to the Act enacted with the passage of Measure W (2022).

Public Comment: None.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **11. Oakland City Auditor Salary Adjustment.**

Executive Director Heidorn presented on, and Commissioners discussed, adjusting the salaries of the Oakland City Auditor as required by the City Charter.

Tilak moved, seconded by Upton IV, to approve the proposed resolution adopting the Public Ethic Commission staff's recommendation to increase the City Auditor salary to



\$226,612.19.

Ayes: Upton IV, Steele, and Tilak.

Noes: Gage.

Vote: Passed 3-1.

Public Comment: None

### **12. Oakland City Attorney Salary Adjustment.**

Executive Director Heidorn presented on, and Commissioners discussed, adjusting the salaries of the Oakland City Attorney as required by the City Charter.

Steele moved, seconded by Gage, to approve the proposed resolution adopting the Public Ethic Commission staff's recommendation to increase the City Attorney salary to \$320,958.84.

Ayes: Upton IV, Gage, Steele, and Tilak.

Noes: None.

Vote: Passed 4-0.

Public Comment: None

### **13. Review and Recommend Amendments to the City Charter and/or OMC Relating to the Ethics Commission.**

Executive Director Heidorn presented on, and Commissioners considered recommending to the City Council that it place a measure on the ballot amending the City Charter and the Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) to change the Commission's structure, processes, powers, and responsibilities, and laws the Commission enforces.

8:53 p.m. – Upton IV called for a recess.

9:00 p.m. – The meeting returned from recess.



Upton IV moved, seconded by Steele, to approve the Public Ethic Commission staff's recommendation to endorse the policy recommendations listed in Table 1 of the staff memo and the Draft Amendment Language attached to the staff memo and to direct staff, in coordination with the Chair, to request that the City Council place a measure on the November 2024 ballot that includes one or more of the policy recommendations listed in Table 1 and using the language in the Draft Amendment Language, or substantially similar language.

Ayes: Upton IV, Gage, Steele, and Tilak.

Noes: None.

Vote: Passed 4-0.

Public Comment: An anonymous written public comment was received prior to the meeting. A written public comment from David Shor was received prior to the meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Reports on Subcommittees and Commissioner Assignments.**

#### **a. Public Outreach 2023 Commissioner Recruitment, Enforcement Resources, Ethics Complaints, and Campaign Finance Subcommittee.**

Steele shared there were no updates.

Public Comment: None.

#### **b. Charter Review Subcommittee.**

Tilak noted the Subcommittee's updates were included in Agenda Item 13, Review and Recommend Amendments to the City Charter and/or OMC Relating to the Ethics Commission.

Public Comment: None.

## **INFORMATION ITEM**

### **14. Future Meeting Business.**

Tilak asked about the timing of future steps in the process of adopting the Charter

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reform proposals.

Gage asked if the Goldman students currently assisting the Public Ethics Commission will present at a future meeting.

Public Comment: None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.