



**Minutes for the Meeting of  
Thursday, September 12, 2024**

**Item 1: Call to Order.**

The Commission Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**Item 2: Roll Call.**

**Present** – Commission Chair Paul Cooper, Vice Chair Jimmie Slack, and Commissioners Hon. Laura W. Halgren, James Hauser, Tom Lincoln, Caridad Sanchez, and Deval Zaveri

**Staff** – Executive Director Sharon Spivak, General Counsel Christina Cameron, Audit Program Manager Rosalba Gomez, Investigative Program Manager Kristina Gagné, Legislative Program Manager Megan Curran, Education Program Manager Ryan O'Connor, and Program Manager of Administration and Training Victoria Velasquez

**Item 3: Approval of Commission Minutes of August 8, 2024**

Motion:	Approve Minutes
Moved/Seconded:	Halgren/Slack
Vote:	Carried Unanimously

**Item 4: Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None.

**Item 5: Commissioner Comment**

None.

## Item 6: Executive Director Comment

The Executive Director reported:

Charter amendment ballot measure: The Executive Director provided an update on the ballot measure that would update the Ethics Commission's governing laws. She noted that: (1) the League of Women Voters is supporting the measure, (2) thanked former Chair Sanchez for signing the ballot argument, and (3) said there is no known opposition, as no one filed an argument opposing the measure. She reminded Commissioners that they are free to campaign for the measure, as it involves the Commission's operations and thus falls into an exception to the restrictions on Commissioners' campaign activities.

Adding Classified Filers to the Commission's Jurisdiction: The Audit Committee recommendation to expand the Commission's jurisdiction to include classified employees who file Forms 700 was scheduled to be discussed at the September 18, 2024 Audit Committee meeting. The Executive Director noted that current estimates show this could add more than 1,000 additional employees to the Commission's jurisdiction.

She said she expects the Commission to take over responsibility for the related legislative work that needs to occur. Previously, the City's Compliance Department was overseeing implementation of this recommendation. The process will be lengthy, as it is expected to involve a meet-and-confer process between City management and City labor unions.

Training: The Executive Director noted the following training updates:

(1) Staff will teach a tailored ethics course to the Historical Resources Board on September 26.

(2) Program Manager for Administration and Training Victoria Velasquez already has scheduled staff to teach individual training courses on the Ethics Ordinance to each Councilmember, the Mayor, and their staffs to ensure they meet compliance requirements. Staff will teach 10 separate "live" Ethics Ordinance classes, many of them in person, to the elected officials and their staffs within 8 weeks in early 2025. Staff will also be teaching the separate, quarterly Ethics Ordinance course for unclassified employees during that time.

(3) The Executive Director thanked Victoria for her work on a project to update the online ethics and lobbying course modules, which are not as "modernized" as the live courses taught by staff. The Commission finally has required resources to complete this work and expects City staff to have it ready in several months. Victoria and the Executive Director are also working with City staff to update an educational video for use on the website.

Election: The Executive Director thanked staff for all of their work during the busy election season, especially in advice and enforcement.

Scheduling: Finally, she noted that she would be in touch with the board regarding scheduling issues related to the selection of the next Executive Director.

**Item 7: General Counsel Comment**

None.

**Item 8: Presentation of Final Audit Report Regarding the *San Diegans Against Discrimination, Opposing Measure D, sponsored by the Associated General Contractors of America San Diego Chapter, Inc.* Committee.**

Motion: Accept Audit Report  
Moved/Seconded: Hauser/Zaveri  
Vote: Carried Unanimously

**Item 9: Consideration of Municipal Code Language Related to Ethics Commission Fines**

The Executive Director presented an updated draft of the Strikeout Ordinance to amend Municipal Code section 26.0440. This legislation seeks to increase the maximum amount that the Ethics Commission can fine for a violation of the City's governmental ethics laws. If approved by the City Council, the legislation would increase the maximum fine per count from \$5,000 to \$15,000, add a treble damages provision for certain cases, and add a provision that allows the \$15,000 limit to be adjusted every two years in conjunction with changes to the Consumer Price Index. The current draft has been approved by the City Attorney's Office and is advancing to a Council committee.

No action was taken.

**Item 10: Informational Item – Audit Program Training for Ethics Commission**

The Executive Director and the Audit Program Manager provided an overview and training session regarding the Ethics Commission's Audit Program.

**Item 11: Informational Item – Legal and Procedural Training for Ethics Commission**

The Executive Director provided an overview and training session on the Ethics Commission's governing laws, along with consideration of the hierarchy of laws that govern the City. This included discussion of the Charter, Municipal Code, ordinances, resolutions, and policies.

**Item 12: Announcement of Closed Session Items / Adjourn to Closed Session.**

Commission Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting to closed session at 6:27 p.m. He stated the Commission would reconvene into open session following the conclusion of closed session to report any action taken during the closed session portion of the meeting.

**Reconvene to Open Session**

Commission Chair Cooper called the meeting back into open session at approximately 7:00 p.m.

**Reporting Results of Closed Session Meeting of September 12, 2024**

Ms. Cameron reported the results of the closed session meeting of September 12, 2024:

**Item 1: Conference with Legal Counsel**

**Case No. 2024-04 – Campaign Advertisement Disclosures**

Motion: Approve Stipulation  
Moved/Seconded: Hauser/Halgren  
Vote: Carried Unanimously

**Item 2: Conference with Legal Counsel (one potential matter)**

**Case No. 2024-17 – Failure to Maintain Campaign Records**

Motion: Authorize Investigation  
Moved/Seconded: Lincoln/Zaveri  
Vote: Carried Unanimously

**Item 3: Conference with Legal Counsel (one potential matter)**

**Case No. 2024-18 – Disclosure of \$10,000 Donors**

Motion: Take no further action and Accept Audit Report  
Moved/Seconded: Slack/Lincoln  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Recused: Hauser

**Item 4: Conference with Legal Counsel (one potential matter)**

**Case No. 2024-19 – Deposit of Contribution**

Motion:	Authorize Investigation
Moved/Seconded:	Lincoln/Halgren
Vote:	Carried Unanimously
Recused:	Cooper, Spivak

**Adjournment**

The meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

Paul Cooper, Chair  
Ethics Commission

---

Victoria Velasquez, Program Manager  
Ethics Commission

***THIS INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS  
UPON REQUEST.***

###