

**CITY OF PHOENIX
ETHICS COMMISSION
Summary Minutes
April 17, 2025**

Phoenix City Hall
12th Floor, Central Conference Room
200 W Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Committee Members Present

Jose Samuel (Sam) Leyvas III, Chair
Patricia Sallen, Vice Chair
Cheryl Pietkiewicz
Peter Schirripa
Ann Hart

Committee Members Absent

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Sam Leyvas called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. with Vice Chairwoman Patricia Sallen, Commissioner Peter Schirripa and Commissioner Ann Hart present. Chairman Leyvas and Commissioner Cheryl Pietkiewicz joined virtually.

Chairman Leyvas introduced Commissioner Hart as a new Commissioner and asked her for an introduction. Each Commissioner provided their own introduction after.

2. Commission Attorney Explains Public Comment

Elizabeth Nillen, Commission Attorney, stated members of the public may speak for up to two minutes on agenda items and gave direction on appropriate decorum when providing comments.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2025

Vice Chairwoman Sallen made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2025, Ethics Commission Meeting. Commissioner Schirripa seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5-0.

4. Updates from City Staff

Chairman Leyvas introduced the item and requested staff provide updates.

Ms. Inger Erickson, Assistant City Manager, stated staff will provide updates about the website and the various City handbooks and policies for ethics and discuss options for next steps.

Ms. Rebecca McCarthy, Special Projects Administrator, stated staff met with the departments who are responsible for sections of the City's ethics webpage. She shared initial recommendations to improve the layout based on discussions with the website designers. The recommendations included adding subsections for navigation at the top of the page, allowing easier navigation for residents, and included adding a more visual prompt for residents to submit a request for inquiry.

Chairman Leyvas explained the Commission previously discussed how to improve transparency and access of information about the Ethics Commission overall and about how to file an ethics inquiry. He discussed the need to make a clear distinction between the work of the Ethics Commission, who oversee inquiries against City Council, Board and Commission members, versus the City Departments, who oversees inquiries against employees and volunteers. He emphasized the need improve the visibility of the "how to submit a complaint" section.

Vice Chairwoman Sallen and Commissioner Schirripa agreed with the recommendations provided by staff.

Chairman Leyvas agreed with the overall direction and will provide additional feedback once the website recommendations have been implemented.

Ms. McCarthy referenced the Commission's discussion during the last meeting on how the Commission could recommend changes to the City's handbooks on ethics and if the Commission could recommend changes to the City Codes relating to ethics. She stated any recommended changes to the City Code would need to be approved by the City Council at a Formal Council meeting. She stated any recommended changes to the handbooks would need to be approved by the City Manager and remain in line with the current City Code.

Chairman Leyvas provided background on the discussion. He noted a recently reviewed complaint referenced one of the three City ethics handbooks, which provides examples of ethical and nonethical behavior and provides references to the City Code. He asked staff how the Commission could begin providing recommendations on the handbooks and take more ownership of the handbook content, now that the Commission is seated.

Ms. Erickson summarized the changes to City Code would need to be recommended to City Council for approval, but any situational examples could be included in the handbook.

Chairman Leyvas asked if the ethics handbooks, relating to elected and appointed officials, could be owned by the Ethics Commission.

Ms. Erickson stated she will discuss the topic with the City Manager.

The Commission unanimously agreed with the direction relating to the discussion of the ethics handbooks.

Chairman Leyvas referenced the City Code discussion and provided additional clarification. He explained the Commission wanted to explore the option of issuing advisory opinions about policies. He stated while the City Code permits the Commission to issue advisory opinions when asked, he asked for future legal guidance from Ms. Nillen if the Commission may issue advisory opinions at any time.

Vice Chairwomen Sallen stated the previous discussion was about making changes to the City Code as well.

Chairman Leyvas asked for guidance from Ms. Nillen on how to structure the future conversation. He asked the Commission to review the City Code in detail in preparation for a discussion at the next meeting.

Chairman Leyvas introduced the public speaker, Mr. Jeremy Thacker.

Mr. Thacker stated he had no comments.

5. Review of Current Complaints

Chairman Leyvas stated to preserve the integrity of an investigation and pursuant to the City Code, all information relating to an ethics inquiry is required to remain confidential until there is a final action by the Commission in open session.

Vice Chairwoman Sallen made a motion to convene in Executive Session to obtain legal advice on EC-23-01. Commissioner Schirripa seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5-0.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 3:30 p.m.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 4:38 p.m.

No action was taken.

6. Call to Public

Chairman Leyvas introduced the public speaker, Mr. Jeremy Thacker.

Mr. Thacker stated he had no comments.

7. Future Agenda Items and Meeting Dates

Chairman Leyvas opened the floor to discussion.

Ms. Erickson reminded Chairman Leyvas that with a full Commission of five members, they could reconsider the one tabled inquiry.

Chairman Leyvas asked to place the tabled inquiry back on the agenda.

8. **Adjournment**

Chairman Leyvas adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.