



**Minutes for Meeting of  
Thursday, March 12, 2020**

**Item 1: Call to Order**

Commission Chair Voorakkara called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Item 2: Roll Call**

**Present** – Commission Chair Sid Voorakkara and Commissioners Bill Baber, Tom Hebrank, Dave Potter, and Caridad Sanchez

**Absent** – Commission Vice Chair Alex Kreit and Commissioner Fred Kosmo

**Staff** – Executive Director Stacey Fulhorst, General Counsel Christina Cameron, Investigative Program Manager Kristina Gagné, Audit Program Manager Rosalba Gomez, and Program Coordinator Victoria Velasquez

**Item 3: Approval of Commission Minutes of February 13, 2020**

Motion:	Approve Minutes
Moved/Seconded:	Potter/Hebrank
Vote:	Carried Unanimously
Absent:	Kreit/Kosmo

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

None

**Item 5: Commissioner Comment**

None

**Item 6: Executive Director Comment**

Ms. Fulhorst reminded the Commissioners that the deadline to file their 2019 annual Statements of Economic Interests with the City Clerk is April 1, 2020.

In response to Commissioner Hebrank's question regarding the City's COVID-19 protocol, Ms. Fulhorst stated that the staff will very likely be telecommuting in the near future. She added that Commission Chair Voorakkara will likely cancel Commission meetings in the coming months, although the ad hoc subcommittee may meet telephonically regarding the Executive Director recruitment and hiring.

**Item 7: General Counsel Comment**

None

**Item 8: Campaign Voucher Program**

Edward Chaplin and Amy Tobia with The Voters' Voice Initiative provided an overview of their Democracy Dollars Program as reflected in a handout.

Commissioner Hebrank asked if the City of San Diego is considering this program and why the Ethics Commission was receiving this presentation. Ms. Fulhorst responded that the Commission might consider supporting the program. Commission Chair Voorakkara added that it was an opportunity to learn more about the proposal.

Commissioner Potter asked about a recent court ruling in New York concerning public financing. Although he was not aware of this case, Mr. Chaplin reported that the Seattle voucher program has survived a court challenge. Additionally, Mr. Chaplin and Ms. Tobia noted that the matching funds programs in New York City and San Francisco have survived various court challenges.

In response to questions from Commissioner Baber, Ms. Tobia advised that only a few candidates in Seattle have declined to participate in the voucher program and that 53 out of 55 prevailing candidates participated.

Commissioner Baber asked about the spending limits attached to the voucher program given the increasing influence of groups making independent expenditures. Mr. Chaplin replied that candidates who participate in the program receive a non-monetary benefit. Ms. Tobia added that Seattle's website includes information regarding voucher participation and independent expenditures under each candidate's profile, which informs voter choice.

Commissioner Sanchez inquired about tying the vouchers to the population instead of registered voters for purposes of equity and engaging new voters. Mr. Chaplin acknowledged that there is a gap because the funding is based on population but registered voters receive the vouchers; however, he pointed out the logistical difficulties in distributing vouchers to individuals who are not registered to vote.

Commission Chair Voorakkara asked about funding options for a voucher program. Mr. Chaplin responded that the options are limited to the agency's general fund or a special tax assessment.

In response to concerns expressed by Commissioner Hebrank, Ms. Cameron explained that the proposed voucher program implicates the City's campaign laws and therefore falls within the Commission's jurisdiction. Both Ms. Cameron and Ms. Fulhorst added that it is not uncommon for the Commission to hear presentations regarding proposed changes to the City's campaign, lobbying, and ethics laws, and for the Commission to decide whether it wants to recommend such changes to the City Council.

Commission Chair Voorakkara thanked Mr. Chaplin and Ms. Tobia for their presentation.

**Item 9: Presentation of Final Audit Report Regarding the Cate for Council 2018 Committee**

Motion: Accept Audit Report  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

**Item 10: Proposed Amendments to Ethics Commission Audit Manual**

Commission Chair Voorakkara thanked the staff for conducting the additional research that was part of the meeting backup materials. Commissioner Hebrank commented that he is ready to make a decision and move forward with proposed amendments. In response, Commission Chair Voorakkara explained that there is no urgency and that he would prefer to wait until all Commissioners are present to participate in the decision.

**Item 11: Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report Regarding Executive Director Recruitment and Hiring**

Commission Chair Voorakkara reported that the ad hoc subcommittee met with a representative of the City's Purchasing and Contracting department to discuss hiring a recruiter to conduct the search for Ms. Fulhorst's successor.

Motion: Approve the Use of a Recruiter and the Issuance of an RFQ to Obtain Bids for Consultant Services  
Moved/Seconded: Baber/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

Motion: Authorize the Executive Director to Prepare RFQ Documents in Consultation with City Staff  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

Motion: Authorize the Executive Director to: (1) Review and Score Bids and Select Recruiter in Consultation with Ad Hoc Subcommittee, and (2) Prepare Contract Documents in Consultation with City Staff  
Moved/Seconded: Baber/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

## **Item 12: Adjourn to Closed Session**

Commission Chair Voorakkara adjourned the meeting to closed session at approximately 6:00 p.m. He stated the Commission would reconvene into open session following the conclusion of closed session in order to report any action taken during the closed session portion of the meeting.

## **Reconvene to Open Session**

Commission Chair Voorakkara called the meeting back into open session at approximately 6:35 p.m.

## **Reporting Results of Closed Session Meeting of March 12, 2020**

Ms. Cameron reported the results of the closed session meeting of March 12, 2020:

### **Item-1: Conference with Legal Counsel (4 potential matters)**

#### **Case No. 2020-11 – Campaign Ads**

Motion: Dismiss  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

#### **Case No. 2020-12 – Campaign Ads**

Motion: Authorize Investigation  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Failed 2-3 (Baber, Sanchez and Voorakkara voted nay)  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

#### **Case No. 2020-14 – Contribution Limits: Individuals**

Motion: Dismiss  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

**Case No. 2020-15 – Failure to Timely File Campaign Statements**

Motion: Authorize Investigation  
Moved/Seconded: Hebrank/Potter  
Vote: Carried Unanimously  
Absent: Kreit/Kosmo

**Item-2: Conference with Legal Counsel** (1 potential matter)

No reportable action.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.

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Sid Voorakkara, Chair  
Ethics Commission

[REDACTED]

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Victoria Velasquez, Program Coordinator  
Ethics Commission

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

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