

**CITY OF PHOENIX  
ETHICS COMMISSION  
Summary Minutes  
January 15, 2026**

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

Commission Members Present

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

Commission Members Absent

Cheryl Pietkiewicz

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chairwoman Patricia Sallen called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. with Vice Chairman Peter Schirripa and Commissioners Ann Hart present. Commissioner Sam Leyvas attended virtually. Commissioner Cheryl Pietkiewicz did not attend.

Chairwoman Patricia Sallen thanked the former Chairman, Commissioner Leyvas, for his work and leadership.

Commissioner Leyvas expressed gratitude for the Commission's and staffs' efforts over the last two years and expressed confidence in the new leadership.

**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, aside from agenda items on the pending complaints, and gave direction on appropriate decorum when providing comments.

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 18, 2025**

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2025, Ethics Commission Meeting. Vice Chairman Schirripa seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 4-0.

**4. Staff Update**

Rebecca McCarthy, Special Projects Administrator, informed the Commission that the Ethics Handbook for the Board and Commissions has been revised and posted to the Ethics Website.

Vice Chairman Schirripa asked if the previous version would be available online.

Ms. McCarthy responded that the previous version could be added.

Vice Chairman Schirripa opened the discussion up to the Commission. He noted that transparency about the revisions would be fair.

Chairwoman Sallen agreed and noted it would be important to note the substantive or high-level changes on the website.

Deputy City Manager David Mathews commented that staff can provide a draft to the Commission.

**5. Discussion of Inquiry Review Process and Citizen Petition**

Chairwoman Sallen summarized the agenda item and noted the action by the Council was to refer the Citizen Petition to the Commission for further action as part of the Commission's planned review of the procedures and other governing policies.

Deputy City Manager Mathews added that any recommendations made by the Commission would be sent to the City Manager, who would then make the recommendation to City Council to be voted upon.

Chairwoman Sallen asked Deputy City Manager Mathews about the best course of action regarding these recommendations.

Deputy City Manager Mathews stated that staff would take any recommendations provided by the Commission and draft them as a formal recommendation from the Commission to the City Manager's Office.

Commissioner Leyvas asked staff to verify in the procedures if any recommendations would need to go back to the City Manager or if this requirement was only for the initial Rules of Procedure.

Deputy City Manager Mathews referenced Rules of Procedure Section III E. stating the Commission may refer changes to the Rules of Procedures to the City Manager and must be approved by an affirmative vote of seven Councilmembers.

Commissioner Leyvas asked if that dynamic changes since the Council referred the Citizen Petition directly to the Commission.

Deputy City Manager Mathews responded no. He noted that since the Commission was already planning to review the procedures, the Council referred the Citizen Petition to the Commission to be included in this planned discussion and review. He stated the process per the Rules of Procedure still applies.

Commissioner Leyvas thanked staff for clarifying.

Chairwoman Sallen suggested the Commission begin with a discussion regarding topics requiring attention and offer recommendations to the City Manager's Office for potential changes to language or other provisions. She mentioned having a brief list of topics to discuss, including the initiation of the procedures for inquiries, as referenced in the Citizen Petition. She requested clarification on whether the inquiry must be hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office, as stated in the Citizen Petition.

Deputy City Manager Mathews clarified the City Clerk would require the original wet signature to comply since it is a notarized document. He stated the inquiry could be accepted via email originally and then could be followed up by either hand delivering or mailing the original signed copy.

Chairwoman Sallen stated she would want to follow-up on this topic. She requested to review the process for withdrawing a complaint, including when a request can be made. She stated a discussion is also needed on the issue of confidentiality and how the Commission can fulfill their responsibilities while balancing confidentiality with transparency. She noted the Commission needs to consider how the rules might be changed to achieve this balance, including how this would be presented to the Council.

Vice Chairman Schirripa recommended a discussion of the financial penalties.

Deputy City Manager Mathews clarified the reference about financial penalties in the Citizen Petition. He noted that according to the Rules of Procedure and City Code, the Commission can recommend a fine for submitting a frivolous or fictitious complaint.

Commissioner Leyvas noted the Commission previously discussed reviewing the defined procedures and how the Commission operationalizes the processes overall. He referenced editing the flow chart process. He asked about the former ethics Task Force recommendations and noted they could be beneficial to review as part of this conversation. He asked if staff could provide these documents for their review.

Chairwoman Sallen added that the ethics policy does not discuss the appearance of impropriety and recommended adding this to the list of discussion topics.

Commissioner Leyvas referenced this review process could take longer than a few meetings and could also include public input and discussions.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if the Commission would recommend any other discussion topics to add to the list to further review and investigate. She asked staff about recommended next steps.

Deputy City Manager Mathews suggested staff find and share any reports from the former ethics Task Force with the Commission. He advised the Commission to review all topics and submit one comprehensive list of recommendations to the City Manager and Council, rather than providing updates individually.

Chairwoman Sallen asked staff to find the final report from the former ethics Task Force and include it on the next meeting agenda for further discussion. She recommended the Commission review the former ethics Task Force's recommendations to identify other items to adopt as part of this process.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced Jeremy Thacker for public comment and stated she looked forward to his comments on the topic.

Mr. Thacker mentioned he had previously submitted best practices to the Commission for their review and consideration during their first meetings. He inquired whether the complaints mentioned in the City Council Meetings and referenced in the Citizen Petition would also remain confidential and on what basis. He asked how decisions were made about what information remains confidential.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if the Commission has any active inquiries that have been discussed at City Council Meetings.

Commission Attorney Nillen noted he may be referring to the action taken by City Council recently that was relating to the 21 inquiries. She stated she was not sure if the names were discussed during the meeting, as she was not in attendance.

Deputy City Manager Mathews noted he did not recall the names of individuals being discussed at the meeting. He noted that complaints are referenced in the Citizen Petition but specifics about the inquiries are not provided.

Chairwoman Sallen stated the Commission would not be making decisions on recommendations today. She asked staff about the documents Mr. Thacker mentioned.

Ms. McCarthy stated she will share the documents mentioned by Mr. Thacker.

Chairwoman Sallen thanked Mr. Thacker for his comments.

## **6. Review of Current Complaints**

Chairwoman Sallen noted there are seven active inquiries left of the 21 submitted in November. She noted EC-25-01 and EC-25-06 are under investigation and asked the Commission Attorney for an update.

Commission Attorney Nillen stated the Commission's procedures allow the Respondent 20 days to provide a response; as indicated in the letter sent on December 31, the Respondent has until January 20 to provide a response. She noted the investigation does not begin until a response has been provided or the date has passed. She stated there would be a more substantive update during the February meeting.

Chairwoman Sallen noted there are four inquiries that the Complainants have requested to withdraw. Regarding EC-25-08, EC-25-09, and EC-25-10, she stated the Complainant has requested these inquiries to be withdrawn. She stated the procedures do not clarify a process on how to handle inquiries that have been requested to be withdrawn by the Complainant. She stated the Commission needs to decide how to process this request. She asked Commission Attorney Nillen if there is anything in the procedures that may address or impact this process.

Commission Attorney Nillen confirmed there is not a documented process for how to handle complaints that have been withdrawn.

Commissioner Leyvas noted that even when a complaint is withdrawn, he may have additional questions beyond the information provided in the initial inquiry and would need more details from an investigation. If the Commission is considering a frivolous filing, he stated he would factor in the Complainant's request to withdraw but may request to proceed with our investigation. He stated the Commission should consider the withdrawal of the inquiry as part of the overall situation rather than automatically halting all actions. He stated he is willing to motion for an executive session to obtain legal guidance on this matter.

Chairwoman Sallen confirmed the Commission did not take action on these items during the last meeting, and they are not currently under investigation.

Commissioner Leyvas clarified that this distinction changes his thoughts. He noted his previous philosophy was based on the understanding that the Commission had already voted to investigate. He recommended that if the inquiry is withdrawn before consideration by the Commission, the inquiry should be dismissed and closed. He recommended that, if the Commission has voted to investigate, they should continue their investigation until they are ready to vote.

Chairwoman Sallen agreed that once the Commission has voted to investigate the inquiry, there are additional considerations. She reiterated that no action had been taken by the Commission on EC-25-08, EC-25-09, and EC-25-10.

Commissioner Leyvas asked for clarification on the language if he were to make a motion to close the matter.

Commission Attorney Nillen recommended language to accept the Complainant's request to withdraw and vote to close the matter.

Commissioner Leyvas motioned to accept the Complainant's request to withdraw EC-25-08, EC-25-09, and EC-25-10 and close the matters. Vice Chairman Schirripa seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Sallen opened the floor to discussion.

Vice Chairman Schirripa requested to add the following topic to the list discussed in Agenda Item 5: add verbiage on how to properly submit a withdraw request.

Commissioner Leyvas asked if the Commission closes the matter, does this action still permit the Commission to recommend sanctions to the City Council for frivolous filings.

Commission Attorney Nillen asked for time to review.

Commissioner Hart expressed her desire to understand the reasons behind their withdrawal. She remarked that it is challenging to determine what qualifies as frivolous and suggested that it would be beneficial for the Commission to understand their reasons. She believes this approach would help the Commission gain clarity and take these considerations into account.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if Commissioner Hart envisions this to be a requirement in the withdrawal process.

Commissioner Hart responded yes and believes it will provide the Complainant ownership of the withdrawal.

Commissioner Leyvas asked if this should be added to the list of future discussion topics.

Commissioner Hart responded yes.

Commissioner Leyvas clarified that he is not recommending these complaints be deemed frivolous, but he believes this should be addressed as a separate consideration.

Commission Attorney Nillen stated she needs to review the current procedures further prior to giving a response to the Commission on this topic.

Chairwoman Sallen asked Commissioner Leyvas to repeat his motion.

Commissioner Leyvas repeated his motion to accept the Complainant's request to withdraw EC-25-08, EC-25-09, and EC-25-10 and close the matters.

Vice Chairman Schirripa agreed that this was the motion he seconded.

Chairwoman Sallen called for the roll call vote. The motion passed 4-0 by the following roll call vote:

**Yes:** 4 – Chairwoman Sallen, Vice Chairman Schirripa,  
Commissioner Leyvas, and Commissioner Hart  
**No:** 0

EC-25-08, EC-25-09, and EC-25-10 are closed.

Chairwoman Sallen noted the Commission voted to investigate EC-25-18 during the December meeting, and the Complainant requested to withdraw the inquiry. She opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Leyvas stated he is interested in the results of the investigation. He asked for clarification if only the names of the inquiries are confidential.

Commission Attorney Nillen stated the entire inquiry, including the facts, are to remain confidential.

Chairwoman Sallen clarified he could discuss how he wants to review the answers.

Commissioner Leyvas began to discuss the inquiry and a potential conflict of interest.

Commission Attorney Nillen recommended to stop his discussion.

Chairwoman Sallen clarified and stated he could discuss how to address the issues in a complaint, without itemizing them.

Commissioner Leyvas made a motion to convene in Executive Session to discuss inquiries listed under Agenda Item 6 and to receive legal advice, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes Section 38-431.03, as noticed on the agenda. Vice Chairman Schirripa seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 4-0.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 3:44 p.m.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 4:23 p.m.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if there was a motion on EC-25-18.

There was no motion. The Commission did not take action on EC-25-18.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if there was a motion on EC-25-12.

Commissioner Leyvas motioned to dismiss EC-25-12 because the complaint is facially insufficient to pursue. Vice Chairman Schirripa seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Sallen called for the roll call vote. The motion passed 4-0 by the following roll call vote:

**Yes:** 4 – Chairwoman Sallen, Vice Chairman Schirripa,  
Commissioner Leyvas, and Commissioner Hart  
**No:** 0

EC-25-12 was dismissed.

**7. Call to Public**

Chairwoman Sallen stated to preserve the integrity of the investigation process and pursuant to the City Code, all information related to an ethics inquiry is required to remain confidential until there is final action by the Commission; therefore, the Commission will not take public comment on agenda items regarding pending ethics inquiries.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced Jeremy Thacker for public comment.

Staff confirmed Mr. Thacker was no longer online, and there were no other individuals signed up to speak.

**8. Future Agenda Items and Meeting Dates**

Chairwoman Sallen asked to keep the agenda item to discuss the inquiry review process and Citizen Petition. She asked to include the former ethics Task Force recommendations and include Mr. Thacker's document submitted about best practices. She stated the Commission can continue the discussion about topics to propose for revisions.

Commission Attorney Nillen asked if the Chairwoman wants to include an agenda item to discuss the active inquiries.

Chairwoman Sallen asked to add EC-25-01, EC-25-06 and EC-25-18 to the next agenda.

**9. Adjournment**

Chairwoman Sallen adjourned the meeting 4:28 p.m.