

**CITY OF PHOENIX
ETHICS COMMISSION
Summary Minutes
March 19, 2026**

Phoenix City Hall
12th 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
Cheryl Pietkiewicz

Commission Members Absent

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairwoman Patricia Sallen called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. with Vice Chairman Peter Schirripa, Commissioner Ann Hart, Commissioner Sam Leyvas, and Commissioner Cheryl Pietkiewicz present.

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.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 19, 2026

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2026, Ethics Commission Meeting. Vice Chairman Schirripa seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the public speaker, Tamara Weaver.

Ms. Weaver requested the Commission clarify why a Republican is required to fill the vacancy, noting that City Council is intended to be non-partisan and asking for more information about the party affiliation.

Commission Attorney Nillen explained the rules for appointments to the Commission are delineated by party.

The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

3. Staff Update

Deputy City Manager David Mathews noted there are a few updates from staff and introduced Special Projects Administrator Rebecca McCarthy to provide updates on the website.

Special Projects Administrator McCarthy provided an update on the status of the recruitment. She stated the application deadline is March 20 and no eligible applicants have been received. She confirmed the application will be extended through April 20.

Chairwoman Sallen noted the applicant must be a Republican and confirmed the individual can reside in any of the City Council Districts.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the public speaker, Tamara Weaver.

Ms. Weaver stated it is important to ensure whoever fills the position is independent from the City, such as they do not have corporate affiliations or financial ties to the City.

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

Chairwoman Sallen noted this item is an ongoing discussion from previous meetings and introduced Special Projects Administrator McCarthy to provide the update.

Special Projects Administrator McCarthy reported that staff were asked to review ethics oversight boards in other jurisdictions and have drafted a scope for the Commission's review based on prior discussions. The scope covers areas such as identifying similar-sized jurisdictions, referencing governing documents, submission processes, confidentiality and transparency practices, conflict of interest language, withdrawal procedures, and sanctions or fines for both Complainants and Respondents. She asked for feedback from the Commission.

Commissioner Leyvas suggested to review the scope of sanctions generally, not just for frivolous complaints. He asked why we are highlighting if a jurisdiction's board reviews complaints against employees.

Special Projects Administrator McCarthy explained that, since the City of Phoenix Ethics Commission only reviews complaints against elected and appointed officials, this is an important distinction to note when staff are asked to report annual complaint numbers from other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Leyvas asked for staff to review the jurisdiction's staffing support and resources, noting that Philadelphia has general counsel and investigators.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the public speaker, Tamara Weaver.

Ms. Weaver stated it is important to include the public in the review process. She indicated she will submit written feedback.

5. March 4, 2026, Alleged Open Meeting Law Violations Investigation

Chairwoman Sallen stated the Commission received an open meeting law complaint, sent from the Attorney General's Office. She summarized the two allegations in the complaint. She noted the first allegation stated that, during the December 2024 meeting, the Commission took substantive action while in executive session and the second allegation stated that, during the January 2025 meeting, the Commission entered into executive session for improper purposes. She noted the complaint was dated March 4, 2026, and the deadline for response is 30 days.

Chairwoman Sallen stated the Commission needs to discuss the item in executive session to receive advice from the Commission's Attorney on how to respond. She indicated that both Agenda Items 5 and 6 are matters that may warrant entering executive session for consultation with legal counsel.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the first public speaker, Jeremy Thacker.

Mr. Thacker noted this is his complaint from last year. He believes there is a misunderstanding of what executive session and legal advice is for. He stated executive session is for legal advice, not discussion amongst the Commission, and it is not only the formal action that needs to occur outside of executive session.

Chairwoman Sallen stated she is inclined to enter executive session to get advice from the Commission Attorney on how to respond.

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the next public speaker, Tamara Weaver.

Ms. Weaver asked if the Commission plans to enter into executive session, could they provide an estimated time of when the public should rejoin the Webex.

Chairwoman Sallen stated they are unable to provide an estimated time as it depends on the length of discussion needed.

Commissioner Leyvas noted that while he is disappointed it took a year, he sees the value in this process. He explained that if the Commission's actions are assessed as being out of alignment, the information will be useful for ensuring they serve the public interest properly. He also stated it is important to get opinions on what is acceptable or not acceptable, especially from those responsible for these decisions.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if there was a motion to enter into executive session to receive legal advice on Agenda Items 5 and 6.

Commissioner Leyvas made a motion to move into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.03(A)(2) or (A)(3) for discussion as it relates to the complaints and for the purpose of receiving legal advice from the Commission Attorney related to Agenda Items 5 and 6. Commissioner Pietkiewicz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5-0.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 3:19 p.m.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 4:35 p.m.

Chairwoman Sallen asked if there was a motion on Agenda Item 5 on how the Commission proceeds with this letter.

Commissioner Pietkiewicz made a motion to request the Commission Attorney to address the matter.

Commission Attorney Nillen asked Commissioner Pietkiewicz if she would like the motion to include that the Commission Attorney to proceed with filing a response to the investigative demand letter.

Commissioner Pietkiewicz responded yes.

Commissioner Leyvas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5-0.

6. Review of Current Complaints

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the item and noted there are three inquiries on the agenda.

Chairwoman Sallen stated the respondent in EC-25-18 submitted a request for reconsideration of the decision from last month's meeting, when the Commission voted to move forward with the investigation.

Commissioner Leyvas made a motion to table the request for reconsideration from the Respondent in EC-25-18 and instruct the Commission Attorney to prepare written legal advice for the questions raised in the request. Commissioner Pietkiewicz seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Sallen called for the roll call vote. The motion passed 5-0 by the following roll call vote.

Yes: 5 – Chairwoman Sallen, Vice Chairman Schirripa, Commissioner Hart, Commissioner Leyvas, and Commissioner Pietkiewicz

No: 0

The request for reconsideration from the Respondent for EC-25-18 will be tabled and the Commission Attorney will prepare written legal advice.

Chairwoman Sallen stated there is no action to take on EC-25-01 and EC-25-06.

7. Call to Public

Chairwoman Sallen introduced the public speaker, Tamara Weaver.

Ms. Weaver was unavailable to comment.

8. Future Agenda Items and Meeting Dates

Commissioner Hart requested a future agenda item to discuss a withdrawal timeline and define how the Commission will handle withdrawn complaints.

Commission Attorney Nillen asked if this topic would be appropriate to add to the discussion on the review process.

Commissioner Hart agreed to either option, provided there is an opportunity for further discussion.

Special Projects Administrator McCarthy stated she will add the topic to the scope of research to identify if other jurisdictions have a timeline for withdrawal.

Chairwoman Sallen confirmed the next meeting date is April 16.

Chairwoman Sallen checked again if Ms. Weaver was available to provide her public comment.

Ms. Weaver was still unavailable.

9. Adjournment

Chairwoman Sallen adjourned the meeting 4:47 p.m.