

CITY OF  
**LONG BEACH**  
ETHICS COMMISSION

# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
23



CITY OF  
**LONG BEACH**  
Office of Ethics and Transparency



# Commissioners

The Commission comprises seven Commissioners. Two Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor, representing local civic organizations with a demonstrated history of involvement in local governance. Two Commissioners are appointed by the City Auditor who have a background in public policy or public law, governmental ethics or open government matters, campaign finance, auditing of compliance with ethics laws, protection of whistleblowers, or technology related to open government. The final three Commissioners are appointed by the Commission, following a public recruitment and application process, by the affirmative vote of at least three members of the Commission.



**Margo Morales**  
*Chair*



**Barbara Pollack**  
*Vice Chair*



**Raul Añorve**  
*Commissioner*



**Lani De Benedictis**  
*Commissioner*



**Johnathan 'Chief' Coleman**  
*Commissioner*  
*Appointed November 2023*



**J. P. Shotwell**  
*Commissioner*



**Susan Wise**  
*Commissioner*



**Luke Fiedler**  
*Commissioner*  
*Resigned October 2023*



# Overview

Calendar Year 2023 marked the fourth full year of activity for the Ethics Commission (Commission). As adopted by voters in 2018, Measure CCC created the Commission to monitor, administer, and implement government ethics in the City. The Commission continued work throughout the year to fulfill the voters' mandate. This report will provide an overview of the activities undertaken by the Commission to meet that mandate. It is recommended that the Ethics Commission continue its work.

During 2023, the Commission conducted the following meetings:

- 12 regular monthly meetings.
- 1 study session was conducted in February to review the Ethics Action Plan and prioritize future deliverables.
- 1 public hearing was conducted on October 25 to solicit input regarding proposed changes to the Lobbyist Ordinance (Long Beach Municipal Code Chapter 2.08).
- A special meeting was held on November 15 to interview candidates and appoint a member to fill one at-large commissioner vacancy.

Support for the Commission's work is budgeted in the Office of Ethics and Transparency (OET) within the City Manager's Office. The OET also oversees the Ethics Education Program and the City's Public Records Act (PRA) program. In Fiscal Year 2023, the OET was budgeted \$453,092 and expended \$430,714.



# Meeting Attendance

In addition to attending meetings of the full Commission, assigned members also participated in the work of one of the established ad hoc advisory committees. On average, each ad hoc met approximately once a month. Each commissioner's attendance record for the regular meetings, study session, public hearing, and special meeting, a total of 15 meetings, is as follows:

Meeting Date	Raul Añorve	Lani De Benedictis	Luke Fiedler	Margo Morales	Barbara A. Pollack	J. P. Shotwell	Susan Wise
1/11	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
2/8	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
2/22	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
3/8	P	P	P	E	P	P	P
4/12	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
5/10	E	P	P	P	P	P	P
6/14	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
7/12	P	E	P	P	P	P	P
8/9	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
9/13	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
10/11	P	P	P	P	P	P	E
10/25	P	P	*	P	P	P	P
11/8	P	P	*	P	P	P	P
11/15	P	P	*	P	P	P	P
12/14	P	P	*	P	P	P	P

P = Present E = Excused Absence

\* Commissioner Fielder resigned from the Commission. His last meeting was October 11, 2023.



## 2023 Areas of Focus

Not all work activities undertaken by the Commission result in reports and/or recommendations to the City Council. Recommendations may also be submitted to the City Manager regarding actions that can be taken to strengthen the City's existing policies. The Commission also makes recommendations to the City Auditor and City Clerk. During the calendar year 2023, the Commission undertook the following activities:



### Code of Conduct

Approved by the City Council in December 2022, the City's updated Code of Conduct and Ethics (Code) was formally codified into the Long Beach Municipal Code on January 10, 2023. The Ethics Program officially launched the Code's annual training on June 26, 2023. Since the launch, 4279 employees and officials have taken the required training. The Commission's 2022 Annual Report indicated that work was underway on developing a Vendor Code of Conduct (Vendor Code). In July, the Commission adopted the recommendation of the Vendor Code of Conduct Ad Hoc Committee and forwarded the recommendation to the City Manager for implementation. The Vendor Code applies to any vendor, contractor, subcontractor, or any person or entity providing goods or services to or on behalf of the City. The Vendor Code is a companion document to the City Code of Conduct and Ethics.



### Ad Hoc Committee on Lobbyist Ordinance

The Ad Hoc Committee assigned to review Long Beach Municipal Code Chapter 2.08 (Lobbyist Ordinance) continued the work started in 2022. In March, an initial report on possible revisions was provided to the full Commission. Additional public input was presented during the Commission's May meeting. In August, the Commission developed a plan to secure additional public input via an electronic survey and a public hearing. Throughout this process, the Ad Hoc Committee continued to study the lobbyist ordinances in other jurisdictions and modify the recommendations to address the public's concerns. The Commission will continue its work to identify recommended revisions to the existing ordinance that will enhance decision-making transparency for the public. The Commission hopes to have a final recommendation to the City Council by Summer 2024. Members of the Ad Hoc are Commissioners Morales, Pollack, and Wise.



## 2023 Areas of Focus



### Ad Hoc Committee on Updated Policy

The Ad Hoc Committee on Policy is undertaking a review of various ethics-related policies, such as gifts, meals, gratuities, and ticket acceptance; outside employment; and conflict of interest. The Ad Hoc members are working with staff to develop a recommendation as to where to codify these policies to facilitate the ongoing management of what will be very robust policies. Members of the Ad Hoc are Commissioners De Benedictis and Shotwell. The Commission is targeting the submission of recommendations to the City Council in the latter portion of 2024.



### Action/Strategic Roadmap

In February, the Commission conducted a study session to review its Action Plan and prioritize work on the remaining action items. The Action Plan was developed in 2020 and based upon items identified in an audit conducted at the request of City Auditor Laura Doud. During the meeting, it became apparent that the Commission had made significant progress in completing the action items and needed to start working to address additional areas. The Commission requested funding to hire a consultant to develop a strategic plan. The City Council allocated \$75,000 to fund the project, and the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics has been chosen as the consultant to work with the Commission on the plan.



## 2023 Areas of Focus



### Presentation by City Auditor

City Auditor Laura Dowd and her staff attended the March Commission meeting to provide a report on the Fraud Hotline. During her annual review with the Commission of the Fraud Hotline, Auditor Dowd provided information on the types of fraud cases investigated and case management.



### Public Records Act Response

At the Commission's request, April Walker presented a review of the volume and number of outstanding Public Records Act requests processed by City staff. The Commission expressed concern about the number of requests outstanding and provided feedback to Ms. Walker. The Commission has received ongoing updates on efforts to reduce response time and reinforce the need for timely responses. The Commission will continue to monitor these efforts in 2024.



### Collaboration with the City Clerk

In collaboration with the City Clerk's Office, a letter from the Commission was included in the 2024 Candidate Handbook. Additionally, the Chair and Vice Chair gave a presentation during the Candidate Workshop on ethics in the City. The Commission also received regular updates from the City Clerk on compliance with Form 700 filing requirements. The Commission strongly believes in the importance of the timely filing of Form 700 by all elected officials, staff, and commissioners. We will continue our efforts in 2024 to spread the message regarding the importance of timely filings. Lastly, the Commission began working with the City Clerk to review Conflict of Interest Codes, starting with the Long Beach Continuum of Care Board and Golf Advisory Committee in August 2023 and the Police Oversight Commission and Commission for Women and Girls in September 2023.





## 2023 Areas of Focus



### Transition

Commissioner Luke Fiedler resigned from the Commission on October 12, 2023. He was one of the three inaugural commissioners selected at large by the appointed commissioners. Pursuant to the Commission's charter, a new commissioner was to be selected within 60 days. Upon Commissioner Fiedler's departure, the Commission opened the recruitment period immediately, and 19 individuals submitted applications. On November 15, the Commission conducted public interviews of the six candidates. Chief Coleman was selected that evening to fill the vacant Commissioner position.

