

ATTACHMENT 8



James E.T. Jackson, Chair
Nayeli Maxson Velázquez, Vice-Chair
Jill M. Butler
Michael B. MacDonald
Janani Ramachandran
Joe Tuman
Jerett Yan

Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director

TO: Public Ethics Commission
FROM: Suzanne Doran, Lead Analyst
Jelani Killings, Ethics Analyst
Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director
DATE: January 24, 2020
RE: Disclosure and Engagement Report

This memorandum provides a summary of major accomplishments in the Public Ethics Commission's (PEC or Commission) Disclosure and Engagement program activities since the last monthly meeting. Commission staff disclosure activities focus on improving online tools for public access to local campaign finance and other disclosure data, enhancing compliance with disclosure rules, and conducting data analysis for PEC projects and programs as required. Engagement activities include training and resources provided to the regulated community, as well as general outreach to Oakland residents to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and to provide opportunities for dialogue between the Commission and community members.

Filing Officer - Compliance

Contribution and Voluntary Expenditure Limits Adjustment – On January 14, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics released the 2019 CPI data used for the annual contribution and voluntary expenditure limit adjustment pursuant to the Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA). Staff calculated the annual adjustment and published the new limits as required by OCRA. The adjustment also increased the individual contribution limit for candidates that voluntarily accept expenditure limits from \$800 to \$900 per election.

Campaign finance disclosure – Two Oakland elections are scheduled this year, a special election on March 3 and the general election on November 3, 2020. Three local measures are certified for Oakland's March 3, 2020 Special Election, Measures Q, R and S. As a result, there are two additional pre-election deadlines for campaign statements this year. Oakland committees engaging in campaign activity to support or oppose measures on the March 3 ballot are subject to pre-election filing deadlines. The first pre-election deadline falls on January 23 and covers the period from January 1 through January 18. All Oakland registered committees must submit semi-annual campaign statements by January 31 for the period from July 1 through December 31, 2019. Outreach to filers this month included email notices of the upcoming deadlines and reminders via our social media accounts.

Commission staff also distributed an advisory to City staff and officials and campaign filers explaining the new disclosure requirement in effect for City officials and staff who solicit contributions to political campaigns. Effective July 1, 2019, any Oakland public servant required to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) who successfully solicits a political contribution of \$5,000 or more from any

ATTACHMENT 8

person or entity that contracts or proposes to contract with the official's department must disclose the solicitation to the Public Ethics Commission within 30 days.

In line with staff efforts to digitize and streamline disclosure reporting, Commission staff implemented digital forms for reporting solicited contributions ([OCRA Form 303](#)) and for candidates to accept voluntary campaign spending limits ([OCRA Form 301](#)).

Lobbyist Registration and Reporting Program – The Oakland Lobbyist Registration Act (LRA) requires any person that qualifies as a lobbyist to register annually with the Public Ethics Commission before conducting any lobbying activity. It also requires lobbyists to submit quarterly reports disclosing their lobbying activities to ensure that the public knows who is trying to influence City decisions. January 31 is the deadline for annual lobbyist registration renewal and January 30 is the deadline for quarterly lobbyist activity reports covering the period from October 1 through December 31, 2019. Outreach to lobbyists this month included email notices of the upcoming deadline and reminders via our social media accounts.

Commission staff also published a new brochure outlining the rules for lobbying Oakland City officials to increase awareness of the Lobbyist Registration Program among potential lobbyists as well as City staff. Staff emailed City elected officials and their staff members regarding the new brochure and provided copies of the brochure to the City Council office. Staff will also provide the brochure to City departments as a resource to share with individuals that are conducting lobbying activities and may need to register with the Commission.

Illuminating Disclosure Data

Lobbyist e-filing – During 2019, Commission staff successfully submitted a proposal to the City of Oakland's Information Technology Department (ITD) to build an online lobbyist e-filing system and public portal to increase efficiency in processing lobbyist registration and disclosure reports and to improve internal and public access to the data contained within the reports. Commission staff continues to collaborate with IT to refine the lobbyist reporting app utilizing the [OakApps](#) portal.

Open Disclosure – Commission staff continues to act as product manager for the campaign finance website www.opendisclosure.io, produced in partnership with Open Oakland volunteers. The project team began working to update the site for both the March and November Oakland elections this month. The team plans to have a beta version ready to test when the March 2020 campaign finance data becomes available.

Advice and Engagement

New Employee Orientation – Staff continues to make presentations at the City's monthly New Employee Orientation (NEO) providing new employees with an introduction to the PEC and overview of the Government Ethics Act (GEA). On January 15, staff trained a total of 45 new employees on GEA provisions.

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) – On January 8, Staff presented at the Department of Human Resources Management's (DHRM) Single Point of Contact (SPOC) meeting. SPOCs are designated individuals within each department of the City that serve as liaisons to the DHRM to disseminate information to City departments. Staff's presentation was part of an ongoing coordination with DHRM to identify all Form 700 filers and communicate their filing and training responsibilities under the Government Ethics Act. Staff presented on Form 700 and the importance of identifying all filers for

ATTACHMENT 8

education and compliance purposes. Staff continues working with the DHRM to identify all Form 700 filers to ensure that they take the PEC's online ethics training.

Boards and Commissions – PEC staff will be conducting an ethics training for the City's board and commission members on January 30 and 31. The in-person training mirrors the PEC's online Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers currently offered to employee Form 700 filers. The training will cover key provisions of the Government Ethics Act (GEA) including Form 700 filing, conflicts of interests, gift restrictions, misuse of City resources, and revolving door rules. PEC staff worked with board staff liaisons to share the mandatory training information with their respective board members. Both training dates quickly filled as over 100 board and commission members have RSVP'd. PEC staff has informed board staff liaisons that another training will be provided in the spring for board members that were not able to attend one of the scheduled January trainings.

Oakland Campaign Reform Act Guide – Commission staff made substantial revisions to the PEC's comprehensive guide to the Oakland Campaign Reform Act, designed to assist the regulated community in complying with local law. The guide provides a summary of the Oakland Campaign Reform Act provisions and was updated and amended to incorporate new disclosure requirements added to the ordinance in June 2019.

Online Engagement

Website – Over the past several months, Commission staff collaborated with the City's Digital Services department to gain deeper insight into user activity on our webpages and improve discoverability of key information. Based on the user research, Digital Services implemented a [service menu page](#) to improve the navigability of the City website. Website users can now find key PEC services categorized with all City services without navigating from the PEC home page or having prior knowledge that the PEC is the service provider. The user research project showed which PEC content users are engaging with and which content is passed over or escaping notice. Staff began utilizing new website features to re-label and re-organize content based the results. Staff also started revisions to improve accessibility, such as ensuring content can be read by screen readers, simplifying vocabulary, and labeling images with alt text.

Lastly, staff updated the Commission's mailing list subscription form as part of our goal to upgrade our communications processes. Now interested persons can select from lists to receive updates relevant to specific client groups or issue areas.

Social Media – Each month Commission staff post social media content to highlight specific PEC policy areas, activities or client-groups. In January, our posts focused on campaign finance disclosure deadlines, lobbyist registration and disclosure deadlines, introducing the new Commission chair, vice chair, and new members.

General Outreach

Community Roundtable with City Auditor – On January 16, PEC staff accompanied Commissioners Smith and Tuman to a joint community presentation with the City Auditor's office for the Oakmore Community Group. Commissioners Smith and Tuman shared the Commission's background and key accomplishments and informed attendees about the current work of the Commission. Commissioners and PEC staff answered questions related to public records requests, open meeting requirements, and the disclosure and education programs and provided attendees with several ethics resources to learn more about the Commission and our services.