

## **Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting**

**December 4, 2024**

The December 4, 2024, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) Regular Meeting convened in Seattle Municipal Tower Conference Room 4080 and remotely. Chair Kristin Hawes, Vice-Chair Susan Taylor, and Commissioners Jonathan Schirmer, Richard Shordt, and Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima participated via Webex. Commissioners Bobby Forch and Zach Pekelis were absent. Executive Director Wayne Barnett and staff members Fedden Amar, Cliff Duggan, Randal Fu, Polly Grow, and Renée LeBeau were present. Staff Chrissy Courtney and Marc Mayo participated via Webex as well as Assistant City Attorneys Joe Levan and Gary Smith.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

### **Discussion of Written Public Comment**

No written comments were received as of December 3 concerning the Revised Elections Code Rules and the Revised Lobbying Rules. The Chair acknowledged a November 26 email from Josh Wiechman to Seattle Ethics and Elections Commissioners regarding “Follow-Up Request for Review of Dismissal and Oversight of SEEC Director’s Conduct”.

### **Final Action Items**

#### **1. Adoption of November 6, 2024, Commission Regular Meeting minutes**

Hearing no comments or questions from the Commissioners, the motion to adopt the November 6, 2024, SEEC Commission Regular Meeting minutes was made by Vice-Chair Taylor and duly seconded. The motion passed unanimously with four ayes.

Final Action Items on the Revised Lobbying Rules (2.), Revised Elections Code Rules (3.), and the Election of the 2025 Chair and Vice-Chair (4.) were moved to later on the agenda until a quorum of five became available for the promulgation of rules.

**5. Merit Leave and Annual Wage Increase Determination**

After the Commission’s review of the Annual Merit Leave calculus and the City’s 2025 proposed annual wage increase, the Chair queried the Commissioners for comments. The Commissioners declined use of an executive session for discussion purposes.

Commissioner Schirmer made the motion to award the Director six days of merit leave based on performance over the last year and an annual wage increase of four percent applicable to 2025. The motion was duly seconded. The motion was passed with four ayes.

**Discussion Items**

**1. Democracy Voucher Program report**

Ms. LeBeau presented the SEEC Democracy Voucher Program Update. 2025 Democracy Voucher Outreach Funds were awarded to 11 Community-Based Organizations (CBO) for a total of \$305k. Training for all of the CBOs will begin in late January.

Ms. LeBeau informed the Commission that a Special Election will be held for the upcoming Councilmember District 2 position vacancy in addition to the regular 2025 Election Cycle. The District 2 election will be included in the 2025 communications and outreach materials.

[It was noted that Commissioner Stallings-Ala’ilima joined the meeting.]

**2. Executive Director's report**

The Director spoke with Mayor Harrell regarding the upcoming term expiration of Commissioner Stallings-Ala'ilima, and with the Council President about the upcoming term expiration of Commissioner Shordt. The Commission will be required to fill the Commission-appointed vacancy when Vice-Chair Taylor rotates off the Commission.

The Director will be attending the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Annual Conference in Los Angeles December 7-11.

### **Final Action Items**

#### **2. Adoption of Revised Lobbying Rules**

The Director stated that the revised Lobbying Rules have been updated to reflect changes in the City's software. The Vice-Chair made the motion to adopt the revised Lobbying Rules as proposed, and it was duly seconded. The motion passed with five ayes.

#### **3. Adoption of Elections Code Rules**

##### **a. Rule 7.C (Payments – Cash Equivalents)**

Rule 7.C was revised to prohibit campaign payments using currency and cash equivalents. The Vice-Chair made the motion to adopt revised Elections Code Rule 7.C as proposed, and it was duly seconded. The motion passed with five ayes.

##### **b. Rule 9.B (Political Advertising – Sponsor ID)**

Rule 9.B was revised to inform City of Seattle candidates that the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission requires Sponsor ID on campaign yard signs. Commissioner Shordt made the motion to adopt revised Elections Code Rule 9.B as proposed, and it was duly seconded. The motion passed with five ayes.

##### **c. Rule 16.D (Democracy Voucher Program – Use of Proceeds)**

Rule 16.D was revised to prohibit the use of Democracy Voucher proceeds for campaign payments in currency and cash equivalents. Commissioner Shordt made the motion to adopt revised Elections Code Rule 16.D as proposed, and it was duly seconded. The motion passed with five ayes.

#### **4. Election of 2025 Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Director stated that in a previous communication, Commissioner Pekelis agreed to serve as Commission Chair for 2025 if elected. Commissioner Shordt made the motion to nominate Commissioner Pekelis as the 2025 Chair. The motion was duly seconded. The motion passed with five ayes.

The election of the 2025 Commission Vice-Chair will be moved to the January 8, 2025, Commission Special Meeting. Chair Hawes verified that Vice-Chair Taylor will continue to serve until a successor is appointed. Commissioner Shordt inquired about the process of interviewing candidates for the Commission-appointed position. The Director said a slate of interested candidates to date will be reviewed by the Commission at the January meeting.

Hearing no further comments for the good of the order, the December 4, 2024, SEEC Commission Regular Meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.