



TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Public Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2025, 12:05 p.m.
Capitol Extension, Room E1.014
Austin, Texas 78701



COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chris Flood, Chair; Patrick W. Mizell, Vice Chair, Randall H. Erben, Sean Gorman, Geanie W. Morrison, Richard S. Schmidt, Joseph O. Slovacek, and Mark Strama, Commissioners.

COMMISSIONERS NOT PRESENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Neha Abhyankar, Amanda Arriaga, Brandon Barrett, Margie Castellanos, Carmen Dalpiaz, Desirae Gonzalez, David Guilianelli, Jessie Haug, Cristina Hernandez, Jordan Hunn, Natalie McDermon, David Onyike, Amy Padilla, Lindsay Powers, Marie Primm, Meredith Rasmussen, Margaret Sanchez, Patti Shannon, Seth Smith, James Tinley and Bill Wilson.

MINUTES

These minutes are a summary record of the Commission's actions at the meeting. For a detailed record of discussions and statements made by persons speaking at the meeting, please consult the video recording located on the Texas House of Representatives' audio/video website here: <https://house.texas.gov/video-audio/capitol-events/>.

The minutes reflect the order in which the items were heard.

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order; Roll Call.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Flood. James Tinley, Executive Director, called the roll. All Commissioners were present except Commissioner Gorman. Chair Flood introduced new TEC staff David Onyike (Computer Services), Meredith Rasmussen (Enforcement attorney) and Amanda Arriaga (General Counsel).

Agenda Item 2: Presentation of certificates recognizing the contributions to the TEC by former Commissioners Chad Craycraft, Mary "Katie" Kennedy, and Steven D. Wolens.

This presentation occurred during Agenda Item 1 of the Executive Session.

Agenda Item 3: Discussion and possible action related to outside counsel contracts for certain lawsuits filed against either the Texas Ethics Commission and/or commissioners.

Amanda Arriaga, General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to approve the outside counsel contract with Butler, Snow and to renew the Request for Proposal; second by Commissioner Strama. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 4: Discussion and possible action related to a maintenance service contract for the Texas Ethics Commission Electronic Filing System.

Amanda Arriaga, General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to approve the contract with RFD & Associates; second by Commissioner Strama. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 5: Discussion regarding dates for next quarterly Commission meeting.

Chair Flood led the discussion on the next Commission meeting dates. Chair Flood, Commissioners Schmidt and Slovacek and James Tinley, Executive Director, responded with questions and comments. The tentative dates for the next Commission meetings are February 11, 2026 and May 13, 2026. **No action was taken.**

Agenda Item 6: Approve minutes for the following meetings:

- **Executive Session on September 17, 2025; and**
- **Public Meeting on September 17, 2025.**

Chair Flood briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Erben to approve the minutes in Agenda Item 6; second by Commissioners Slovacek. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 7: Discussion and possible action on the closing the rule review and the adoption, or proposal and publication in the Texas Register regarding re-adoption with amendments of Chapter 22 of the TEC rules, related to restrictions on contributions and expenditures.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to adopt Agenda Item 7; second by Vice Chair Mizell. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 8: Discussion and possible action on closing the rule review and the adoption, or proposal and publication in the Texas Register regarding re-adoption with amendments of Chapter 24 of the TEC rules, related to restrictions on contributions and expenditures applicable to corporations and labor organizations.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to adopt Agenda Item 8; second by Commissioner Erben. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 9: Discussion and possible action on the proposal and publication in the Texas Register regarding re-adoption of Chapter 34 of the TEC rules, related to regulation of lobbyists.

James Tinley, Executive Director, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Andrew Cates addressed the Commission. Commissioner Erben and Mr. Tinley responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Erben to publish Agenda Item 9 for public comment; second by Commissioner Morrison. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Agenda Item 10: Discussion and possible action on the proposal and publication in the Texas Register re-adoption with amendments of Chapter 20 of the TEC rules, related to reporting political contributions and expenditures, including an amendment to §18.10 (Guidelines for Substantial Compliance for a Corrected/Amended 8-day Pre-election Report) which is affected by this re-adoption.

Chair Flood and Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to publish Agenda Item 10 for public comment; second by Vice Chair Mizell. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes.**

Commissioner Gorman appeared virtually during this agenda item.

Agenda Item 11: Discussion and possible action regarding the implementation of SB 293 (89R) related to the methodology by which the TEC may make equitable adjustments to the dollar amount on which the standard service retirement annuity is computed for the elected class of pension recipients. Possible action includes the proposal and publication in the Texas Register of 1 Tex. Admin Code § 50.3 regarding the equitable adjustments of pensions.

Chair Flood and Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Chair Flood, Vice Chair Mizell, Commissioners Schmidt and James Tinley, Executive Director, responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to publish Agenda Item 11 for public comment, as amended; second by Vice Chair Mizell. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Agenda Item 12: Discussion and possible action regarding TEC's comprehensive review of its rules.

James Tinley, Executive Director, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. **No action was taken.**

Commissioner Slovacek was absent from the dais briefly during this agenda item.

Agenda Item 13: Advisory Opinion No. AOR-731: Whether members of the State Employee Charitable Campaign are appointed officers required to file a Personal Financial Statement.

Amanda Arriaga, General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Commissioner Erben and James Tinley, Executive Director, responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Erben to adopt AOR-731; second by Commissioner Schmidt. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-731 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 14: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-734: Whether a current State Board of Education (SBOE) member can provide continuing professional development to educators in return for compensation during their SBOE service.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Vice Chair Mizell to adopt AOR-734; second by Commissioner Schmidt. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-734 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 15: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-735: Whether the TEC has authority to assess a civil penalty for a late personal financial statement filed by a director of the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to adopt AOR-735; second by Commissioner Gorman. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-735 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 16: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-736: Whether an officeholder may use political contributions to pay for the purchase of business or formal attire typically associated with official duties.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Erben to adopt AOR-736; second by Commissioner Schmidt. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-736 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 17: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-737: Whether a former state employee may accept a job with a company when he participated in a procurement involving that same company during his state service without violating Section 572.069 of the Government Code if he recuses himself from state projects.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to adopt AOR-737; second by Commissioner Slovacek. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-737 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 18: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-738: Whether a public servant may accept admission to the Microsoft Most Valuable Professionals Program.

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Dr. LaTanya Lowery addressed the Commission. Motion by Commissioner Slovacek to adopt AOR-738; second by Commissioner Erben. **Motion passed unanimously. AOR-738 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 19: Advisory Opinion Request No. AOR-739: Whether representing a party before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) in a contested matter against a state agency of previous employment constitutes an appearance before that state agency for the purposes of Texas Government Code § 572.054(a).

Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. Chair Flood and Commissioner Schmidt responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to adopt AOR-739, as amended; second by Commissioner Erben. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes; Vice Chair Mizell recused himself. AOR-739 is adopted.**

Agenda Item 20: Discussion and possible action on appeals of determinations made under 1 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 18.11, 18.25 and 18.26 relating to administrative waiver or reduction of a fine, for the following filers:

Staff Recommendation: Waiver

- A. Carpenter, Shaun D. (00081984)
- B. El Paso Apartment Association Better Government Fund (00016829)
- C. Laird, Curtis (00088303)
- D. Moreno, Alex, Jr., Campaign Treasurer, Texas Democratic Alliance PAC (00088657)
- E. Mullins, Dee Howard (00088386)
- F. Thoman, Esme Elizabeth (00067347)

Staff Recommendation: Reduction

- G. Meza, Thresa A. (00069649)

Staff Recommendation: No Further Reduction or Waiver

- H. Ballengee, Billie, Campaign Treasurer, Citizens for Cedar Hill PAC (00084630)
- I. Biedermann, Kenneth K. (00080113)
- J. Caesar, Rosalind (00088147)

Chair Flood and Natalie McDermon, Deputy General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item.

#A through F: Motion by Commissioner Schmidt to accept staff recommendations of waiver for Agenda Item 20, Nos. A through F; second by Commissioner Erben. **Motion passed unanimously.**

#G: Rep. Thresa Meza addressed the Commission. Chair Flood, Vice Chair Mizell and Commissioner Schmidt responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Slovacek to accept staff recommendations on Agenda Item 20, No. G; second by Commissioner

Schmidt. **Motion passed unanimously.**

#H: Billie Ballengee addressed the Commission. Commissioner Strama and Ms. McDermon responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Mizell to waive the late-filing penalty on Agenda Item 20, No. H; second by Commissioner Slovacek. **Motion passed by a vote of six ayes; Commissioners Erben and Morrison voted no.**

#I: Rep. Kyle Biedermann addressed the Commission. Ms. McDermon responded with questions or comments. Motion by Commissioner Erben to adopt staff recommendations on Agenda Item 20, No. I; second by Commissioner Morrison. **Motion passed by a vote of seven ayes; Commissioner Slovacek voted no.**

#J: Rosalind Caesar addressed the Commission. Chair Flood and Vice Chair Mizell responded with questions or comments. **No action was taken.**

Agenda Item 21: Briefing and discussion of legislation in the 89th Regular and Special Legislative Sessions and actions taken or in-progress to implement recommendations made in the Sunset Advisory Commission report on the TEC.

James Tinley, Executive Director, and Amanda Arriaga, General Counsel, briefed the Commission on this agenda item. **No action was taken.**

Agenda Item 22: Adjourn.

Commission meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.

Meeting adjourned at 1:17 pm.