

City of Pomona

505 S. Garey Ave
Pomona, CA 91766

Regular Meeting Minutes

ETHICS COMMISSION



Chairperson John Clifford (D6)
Vice-Chairperson Lidia Manzanares (Mayoral Appointee)
Commissioner Sandra Christensen (D1)
Commissioner Derek Engdahl (D2)
Commissioner Wayne Schmidt (D3)
Commissioner Bernice Stillions (D4)
Commissioner Lucille Lyon (D5)

VISION STATEMENT

Pomona will be recognized as a vibrant, safe, beautiful community that is a fun and exciting destination and the home of arts and artists, students and scholars, business and industry.

Thursday, October 23, 2025

6:30 P.M.

Council Chambers

6:30 P.M. Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, John Clifford called the Ethics Commission Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Stillions led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Sandra Christensen
Commissioner Bernice Stillions
Commissioner Lucille Lyon
Chair John Clifford

Absent: Vice-Chair Lidia Manzanares
Commissioner Derek Engdahl
Commissioner Wayne Schmidt

STAFF PRESENT

René Anderson, Human Resources Director/Staff Liaison
Chris Munoz, Human Resources Manager/Staff Liaison
Rosalia Butler, City Clerk
Astrid Lamers, Senior Administrative Assistant/Commission Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Commissioner Lyon stated that a couple of days ago in the LA times, there was a LA City Council candidate that was charged \$17,500 for ethics violations. Printed copies of the article were passed out (document is attached as Exhibit A).

Chair Clifford shared that he attended the re-opening of the library, a local authors event, and the Pink Patch event at Old Stump brewery. Upcoming events include the State of the City event on November 13, 2025, at the Fox Theatre, and the Christmas Parade on December 13, 2025.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Staff requested that the Commission consider rescheduling the December 18th meeting due to an all-employee event occurring on that date.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STILLIONS CARRIED 4-0 (VICE-CHAIR MANZANARES, COMMISSIONER ENGDAHL, AND COMMISSIONER SCHMIDT ABSENT), to place rescheduling of the December meeting on the next meeting agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

It is recommended that the Commission members approve the following Ethics Commission Meeting minutes.

September 25, 2025

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER STILLIONS, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN CARRIED 4-0 (VICE-CHAIR MANZANARES, COMMISSIONER ENGDAHL, AND COMMISSIONER SCHMIDT ABSENT), to approve the September 25, 2025, meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION CALENDAR

2. Report from the City Clerk: Ethics Policy Review

City Clerk, Butler reported that the review is taking longer than expected. Her and her team are going through the document with a fine-tooth comb. The goal is to have the document ready by the November meeting, however, a more realistic timeline would be December.

Chair Clifford had some concerns with the timeline since the deadline was established by the Recommendations that were approved by Council in May 2025.

Staff recommended providing an update to Council in January 2026 if the deadline was not going to be met.

3. Report from the Ad-Hoc Scope of Work Sub-Committee

There was no update provided at this time due to sub-committee member absences.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STILLIONS CARRIED 4-0 (VICE-CHAIR MANZANARES, COMMISSIONER ENGDAHL, AND COMMISSIONER SCHMIDT ABSENT), to move this item to the next special meeting on November 20, 2025.

4. Continued Discussion Regarding Candidate Training

The current table of contents was provided to Commissioners as a baseline.

Chair Clifford recommended that next month the Commission think about a sub-committee that will work with the City Clerk to create the syllabus, training materials, and schedule.

No action was taken on this item.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Clifford adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m. to the special meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

ASTRID LAMERS
Senior Admin Assistant/Commission
Secretary to the Ethics Commission

JOHN CLIFFORD
Chair of the Ethics Commission

CALIFORNIA

L.A. City Council candidate to be fined \$17,500 for ethics violation



Jose Ugarte is running to represent Los Angeles City Council District 9.
(Courtesy of Jose Ugarte)



By Noah Goldberg
Staff Writer | [X](#) Follow

Oct. 21, 2025 3 AM PT

After 12 years on the Los Angeles City Council,

Curren Price will be termed out of the legislative body this coming year.

The candidate he hopes will replace him comes from his staff, Jose Ugarte, his deputy chief of staff who has been referred to in the past as Price's "right-hand man."

But with many months to go before ballots are cast, Ugarte is already in hot water with the city's Ethics Commission.

According to documents released by the commission, Ugarte has agreed to pay a \$17,500 fine for repeatedly failing to disclose outside income he made from his lobbying and consulting firm while also working as a council staffer.

A commission investigation found that Ugarte failed to report outside income from his consulting firm, Ugarte & Associates, for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023, according to the documents.

The proposed settlement is set to go before the Ethics Commission on Wednesday.

"This was an unintentional clerical reporting error on my part. As soon as I was made aware, I took full responsibility and corrected them," Ugarte said in a

statement emailed to The Times. "I take disclosure seriously. Moving forward, I have implemented steps to ensure nothing is missed."

Ugarte said his work with Ugarte & Associates never overlapped with his time in Price's office. He started working for Price in 2013, but left the office in 2019. He returned in 2021. Ugarte & Associates was formed in 2018 and still conducts business. He co-owns the company with his sister.

The settlement comes as Ugarte's boss faces his own ethics issues.

Price was indicted two years ago on 10 counts of grand theft by embezzlement after his wife's consulting firm received payments of more than \$150,000 between 2019 and 2021 from developers before Price voted to approve projects.

Prosecutors also said Price failed to list his wife's income on his ethics disclosure forms.

Prosecutors have since filed additional charges against Price, saying his wife, Del Richardson, was paid hundreds of thousands of dollars by the city housing authority while Price voted in favor of millions in grants to the agency. He also wrote a motion to give \$30 million to the L.A. County

Metropolitan Transportation Authority from 2020 to 2021, a time frame in which Richardson was paid more than \$200,000 by the agency.

Price said he supports Ugarte despite the ethics violation.

“This matter dates back to 2021, when he was not employed by the city, and is clerical in nature,” Price said in a statement texted to The Times. “I wholeheartedly support Jose Ugarte, alongside an unprecedented coalition of elected officials, labor groups, and community leaders who stand behind his character, leadership and proven record of results.”

Ugarte is one of the leading candidates running to represent Council District 9, which covers South Los Angeles. He raised \$211,206 in the first reporting cycle of the election, far outpacing his rivals.

One of Ugarte’s opponents, Estuardo Mazariegos, called the Ethics Commission findings “very disturbing.”

The Ethics Commission also alleged that Ugarte’s documents about outside income, known as Form 700s, failed to report clients who gave \$10,000 or more to Ugarte & Associates.

Those client payments were mostly independent expenditures for local candidates.

His firm was paid \$128,050 to help with the reelection campaign of Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Los Angeles). It was also paid \$222,000 by Equality California to help with the reelection campaign of former Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, among other clients.

"This proposed settlement raises more questions than it answers: Are these the only payments Ugarte hid? Why was he concealing them from the public? And above all, how did these massive payments in outside interests affect Jose Ugarte's work as a city employee?" Mazariegos said in a statement to The Times.

More to Read

Ethics panel rejects \$17,500 fine for L.A. City Council candidate; 2 members say it's not enough

Oct. 22, 2025

L.A. County prosecutors tried to make city councilman's wife testify to grand jury

Aug. 14, 2025

L.A. City Councilman Curren Price to face new corruption charges

Aug. 12, 2025



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Noah Goldberg

Noah Goldberg covers Los Angeles City Hall for the Los Angeles Times.

He previously worked on its breaking news team and has also written an array of offbeat enterprise stories. Before joining The Times in 2022, Goldberg worked in New York City as the Brooklyn courts reporter for the New York Daily News and as the criminal justice reporter for the Brooklyn Eagle. He graduated from Vassar College.