



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

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June 7, 2025

Delivered electronically to bjanisse@sequimwa.gov and knelson-gross@sequimwa.gov

Subject: PDC Case 166825 regarding Sequim City Council Officials (Brandon Janisse, Mayor)

Brandon Janisse, Mayor, Sequim City Council,

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) completed its review of the complaints filed by Jeff Tozzer on Feb. 2, 2025 and Mark Klinke on Feb. 7, 2025. The complaints alleged that Sequim City Council officials may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using facilities of the City of Sequim for the promotion of two Sequim School District ballot propositions on the February 11, 2025 ballot, as follows:

- Sequim School District Proposition 1 - Educational Programs and Operations Levy; and
- Sequim School District Proposition 2 - Bonds to Replace and Upgrade Deteriorating Schools and Improve Safety

Applicable Laws and Rules

[RCW 42.17A.555](#) prohibits elected or appointed officials, their employees, and employees of a public office or agency from using, or authorizing the use of, public office/agency facilities (resources), directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting an election campaign or for the promotion of, or opposition to, any ballot proposition. However, this prohibition does not apply to:

(1) Action taken at an open public meeting by members of an elected legislative body ... to express a collective decision, or to actually vote upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance, or to support or oppose a ballot proposition so long as (a) any required notice of the meeting includes the title and number of the ballot proposition, and (b) members of the legislative body ... or members of the public are afforded an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view.

Background and Findings

- The City of Sequim is managed by the Sequim City Council, in a Council-Manager form of government. There are seven City councilmembers, elected to four-year terms. The Mayor, who is elected by the other councilmembers, is Brandon Janisse, the City Manager is Matthew Huish, and the City Attorney is Kristina Nelson-Gross.

- In addition to the provisions of RCW 42.17A.555, the City Council has made itself subject to a set of adopted Rules of Procedure. The Council stated they believed that the version of Rule 3.9 in effect in January 2025 prohibited the Council from supporting or opposing ballot propositions even though such support or opposition was allowed under RCW 42.17A.555(1).
- At its regular meeting on Jan. 13, 2025, the Council voted to hold a Special Meeting on Jan. 22, 2025 to consider waiving a portion of Council Rule 3.9 to allow discussion of whether to support the two Sequim School District ballot propositions.
- On Jan. 17, 2025, the City Clerk provided notice of the Jan. 22, 2025 Special Meeting to the Peninsula Daily News for publication on Jan. 18, 2025. Also on Jan. 17, a Councilmember stated she contacted the PDC and understood from her conversation with PDC staff that the Council could proceed with the Special Meeting but it would be better if the Council's rules about supporting or opposing ballot measures were changed permanently.
- The Special Meeting notice was timely. It included the names and titles of the two ballot propositions along with notice that limited public comment would be heard. The Special Meeting Agenda was also published on the Council's website.
- The Special Meeting was held Jan. 22, 2025, at which the Council voted to suspend the portion of Rule 3.9 prohibiting support of or opposition to a ballot proposition. The Council allowed public comment and then voted to approve a letter of support for the Sequim School District's two ballot propositions.
- At its Feb. 10, 2025 meeting, the Council voted to amend its Council Rules to include allowing junior taxing districts to request letters of support for ballot measures, in compliance with RCW 42.17A.555.

Summary and Resolution

Under RCW 42.17A.555(1) The City Council was allowed to take "action taken at an open public meeting by members of an elected legislative body ... to express a collective decision, or to actually vote upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance, or to support or oppose a ballot proposition so long as (a) any required notice of the meeting includes the title and number of the ballot proposition, and (b) members of the legislative body ... or members of the public are afforded an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view." The Council complied with the terms of this exception to RCW 42.17A.555.

In the view of PDC staff, the exception in RCW 42.17A.555(1) applies to the officials of the City of Sequim without regard to the city's adopted Rules of Procedure.

Based on this information, the PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with [RCW 42.17A.755\(1\)](#).

If you have questions, you may contact Phil Stutzman at 1-360-753-1111, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828 or by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by Phil Stutzman
Phil Stutzman
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

Electronically signed by ENDORSER NAME
Kim Bradford
Deputy Director
For Peter Frey Lavalley

Executive Director

cc: Jeff Tozzer, Complainant
Mark Klinke, Complainant