

Respondent Names
Sequim City Council
Complainant Name
Mark Klinke
Complaint Description
<u>Mark Klinke</u> reported via the portal <i>4 hours ago (Fri, 7 Feb 2025 at 10:11 AM)</i> The attached Word document contains the entirety of the information I am aware of to file this complaint
What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?
That the Sequim City Council, with respect to a special (open) meeting held by them on January 22, 2025, improperly influenced the Sequim School District levy and bond measures, Propositions 1 & 2, which are currently open for voting.
List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found
The document I am attaching contains all related evidence (mostly hyperlinks) I relied on to submit this complaint.
List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them
No witnesses are listed as all information to form this complaint are contained within the complaint as attached to submission.
Certification (Complainant)
I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Introduction:

On February 2, 2025, I became aware of possible violations of Washington State's Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 42.17a.555, related to a special (open) public meeting the Sequim City Council (SCC) held on January 22, 2025. At that meeting, a vote was taken to suspend their rules to allow for public comment on the current Sequim School District (SSD) levy and bond measures, public comment was taken, and a second vote was taken to support the SSD levy and bond measures.

I am a resident of unincorporated Clallam County (Sequim area, not a resident of the City of Sequim), and live within the boundaries of the SSD affected by the current levy and bond measures being voted on, Proposition 1 (Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy) and Proposition 2 (Bond to Replace and Upgrade Deteriorating Schools and Improve Safety).

Upon reviewing available materials and then discussing them with a representative of the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) during a phone call on February 4, 2025, I was advised that I could submit the information I had using the online portal related to possible violations of RCW 42.17a.555.

I was advised that the PDC does not investigate violations of RCW 42.30 Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). However, I believe that RCW 42.17a.555 cannot be effected without applying the requirements in RCW 42.30.080 (Special Meetings) when it comes to how notice is made for a special meeting to comply with the legislatures intent of RCW 42.30.010. RCW 42.17a.555 is silent on any requirements beyond what a meeting notice shall include with respect to it's title, "Use of public office or agency facilities in campaigns." In lieu of an absolute exemption to not need to comply with RCW 42.30.080, I believe it still applies here with respect to the specificity of the special meeting events, as well as the related notices made available for the public.

Details:

Here are the events as I understand them to be.

January 13, 2025, Sequim City Council public meeting -

Pursuant to a regular public meeting (Exhibit 1) of the SCC on January 13, 2025, the SCC took a vote to hold a special meeting to support the current SSD levy and bond measures after the SSD requested their support. In order to do so the special (open) meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2025. Discussion on this topic starts at time mark 2:04:10 in the meeting link to provide context about the SCC's focused concerns to ensure compliance with RCW 42.17a.555, as well as state of mind that they were pressured due to the tight timeline the SSD had given them. Support for the SSD request was already formed at this meeting based on comments made to provide support. The special meeting was a matter of formality so that they would not run afoul of requirements in RCW 42.17a.555 to get to that objective.

One of the council members, Deputy Mayor Rachel Anderson, advised that she had been trying to get answers from the PDC related to complying with RCW 42.17a.555. There was a caveat that the SCC would cancel the special meeting depending on what information was received from the PDC. At the January 22, 2025, special meeting, Anderson made it clear that a response from the PDC had not yet been obtained. Despite this, the special meeting was still convened.

Public Records Request from the City of Sequim -

I requested documentation from the City of Sequim via their public records portal related to this matter (Requests 25-23 & 25-24 [Requests - NextRequest - Modern FOIA & Public Records Request Software](#)). I was advised that the City made notice of the January 22, 2025, special meeting to the

Peninsula Daily News (PDN) for publication (Exhibit 2), that they posted the special meeting notice on their website (Exhibit 3), but they did not post a physical notice at City Hall where the meeting took place (Exhibit 4, request 25-23).

On January 17, 2025, the City of Sequim submitted to the PDN a request to publish a special (open) meeting notice (Exhibit 2). It stated:

CITY OF SEQUIM NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Sequim, Washington, shall hold a special , meeting to take limited public comment regarding the Sequim School District Proposition 1 (Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy) and Proposition 2 (Bond to Replace and Upgrade Deteriorating Schools and Improve Safety), on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, starting at 6 p.m. at the Civic Center, 152 W. Cedar Street, Sequim. Any person may appear and be heard. Interested persons may participate in this meeting online at [https://www.sequimwa.gov/319/Attending-a-Council](https://www.sequimwa.gov/319/Attending-a-Council-Meeting) -Meeting. People may also join by calling (253) 363-9585 and using Webinar ID# 496912152#. Individuals wishing to provide remote public comment must register at <https://sequimwa.gov/1219/Submit-Public-Comments>. Written public comment can be sent to clerk@sequimwa.gov and will be distributed to the Council before the meeting. Any person needing special accommodation to at- tend 'should contact the Sequim City Clerk by send- ing an email to clerk@sequimwa.gov.calling (360) 681-3428, or by regular mail addressed to the Sequim City Clerk, Sequim Civic Center, 152 W. Cedar St., Sequim, WA 98382 PDN.: January 18, 2025 Legal No. 1008020 This legal notice was published in the Peninsula Daily News four days before the special meeting.

The City also posted its intent to hold the special meeting on their website calendar (Exhibit 3) 25 hours prior to the meeting date/time with the following description:

City Council will hold a Special Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Limited public comment will be taken.

To view the agenda, please visit: <https://sequimwa.civicweb.net/document/25999/?printPdf=true>

To view the interactive agenda, please visit: To view the interactive agenda packet, please

visit: <https://sequimwa.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Id=228> (Click on “Splitscreen” to view items next to the agenda on one screen).

January 22, 2025, Sequim City Council special meeting -

The events that took place during the special meeting on January 22, 2025, were not limited to what the public notice in Exhibits 2 or 3 stated would take place. The notices failed to provide sufficient detailed information for citizens to know what the meeting would cover. As such, the voters affected by the SSD levy and bond measures were not wholly informed to inform the people's public servants of their views. Anyone who may have read the special meeting notice in the PDN, or on the City's website could not have understood the totality of the business transactions the SCC would be deciding on to make an informed decision whether to attend, or rallye support/opposition.

The SCC first engaged in a business transaction when they took a vote to suspend their own rules so that they could accept the SSD request for support, and to support the ballot measures. Later, a second business transaction (vote) took place to officially support the current SSD levy and bond measures.

Both special meeting notices (Exhibits 2 & 3) failed to identify these two business transactions would not only be discussed, but would also be voted on. In this situation no citizen was informed or provided the opportunity to inform the people's public servants of their views.

Anyone who attended this meeting based on the PDN public notice was not afforded sufficient notice what their comments were intended for, given the SCC has no authority over the SSD. Of interesting note is that of the people who provided public comment at the Special Meeting, all were for the levy and bond measure. No one spoke in opposition. It's reasonable to believe that the attendees in attendance were likely there as a result of attendance of the January 13, 2025, meeting, or privately learning of that meeting by like-minded citizens.

Following the web link to the special meeting agenda in Exhibit 3, there's a stark difference from the notice the City had the PDN publish (Exhibit 2). The title(s) and number(s) of the ballot proposition they would be taking public comment on, or that public comment would be taken, were missing. Similar to the notice in Exhibit 2, there was no mention about the other business transactions that would be taking place.

The PDN notice (Exhibit 2) also described that "limited public comment" would be taken without identifying what that means, which Mayor Brandon Janisse explicitly called for in the meeting on January 13, 2025. The noted non-specific nature of this notice, coupled with the "limited public comment" term devoid of definition could easily be construed as having a chilling effect by any citizen reading the special meeting notice that public comment might not be possible.

Conclusion -

It is reasonable to believe that based on the information I have provided that the actions taken by the SCC, with respect to the special (open) meeting held by them on January 22, 2025, improperly influenced the SSD levy and bond measures, Propositions 1 & 2, which are currently open for voting.

If there is credibility that the SCC violated RCW 42.17a.555, I ask that the PDC use the corrective action mechanisms they would normally use in any other situation they review if a finding of wrongdoing is determined.

Exhibits / Links / Documents:

All of the documents listed below can be found on the City's website and their public disclosure website.

SCC regular meeting, January 13, 2025:

Exhibit 1: Recording of the SCC January 13, 2025, meeting - [LINK](#)

[City of Sequim - Meeting Information](#)

[CC 01132025 Minutes](#)

SCC Special Meeting documents (agenda, letter of support, meeting recording) January 22, 2025:

Exhibit 2 – Special Meeting Notice to the PDN and email correspondence (attached)

[Exhibit 3 - Calendar • City Council - Special Meeting](#)

[City of Sequim - Meeting Information](#)

[City Council - Special Meeting - Jan 22 2025 - Agenda - Html](#)

[01-22-2025 Letter of Support for Sequim School Dis.pdf](#)

[CC 01222025 Minutes](#)

Exhibit 4 - Request 25-24 - NextRequest - Modern FOIA & Public Records Request Software

From: [Heather Robley](#)
To: [Linda Clenard](#)
Subject: Notice of Special Meeting
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 10:54:00 AM
Attachments: [2024-01-22 SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE - 2025 Sequim School District Levy.docx](#)

Hi Linda,

Please see the attached Notice to be published in the January 18, 2025, PDN.

Thank you,
Heather

Heather Robley, CPRO
City Clerk
360-681-3428
hrobley@sequimwa.gov



NOTICE: This communication, including attachments and any reply, is subject to the Public Records Act, RCW 42.56.

From: [Heather Robley](#)
To: [Linda Clenard](#)
Subject: FW: Classified Proof (Order #1008020) (Notice of Special Meeting (SSD))
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:20:00 AM
Attachments: [REP PROOF 1209 0117 11084790.PDF](#)

The proof looks good.

Thank you, Linda. Have a good weekend!
Heather

Heather Robley, CPRO
City Clerk
360-681-3428
hrobley@sequimwa.gov

NOTICE: This communication, including attachments and any reply, is subject to the Public Records Act, RCW 42.56.

-----Original Message-----

From: Clenard, Linda <linda.clenard@soundpublishing.com>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:09 AM
To: Heather Robley <hrobley@sequimwa.gov>
Subject: Classified Proof (Order #1008020)

EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Heather,

This notice has been scheduled to run in the Peninsula Daily News January 18, 2025 as requested. Please review.

Best,
~Linda

Linda Clenard
Classified Ad Supervisor
Direct: 360-683-5810
Internal: 15549
175 W. Washington Street, Sequim, WA 98382 New Email linda.clenard@soundpublishing.com My hours are 7AM - 4PM M-F

From: [Clenard, Linda](#)
To: [Heather Robley](#)
Subject: Classified Proof (Order #1008020)
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:09:48 AM
Attachments: [REP PROOF 1209 0117 11084790.PDF](#)

EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Heather,

This notice has been scheduled to run in the Peninsula Daily News
January 18, 2025 as requested. Please review.

Best,
~Linda

Linda Clenard
Classified Ad Supervisor
Direct: 360-683-5810
Internal: 15549
175 W. Washington Street, Sequim, WA 98382
New Email linda.clenard@soundpublishing.com
My hours are 7AM - 4PM M-F

CITY OF SEQUIM
NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Sequim, Washington, shall hold a special meeting to take limited public comment regarding the Sequim School District Proposition 1 (Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy) and Proposition 2 (Bond to Replace and Upgrade Deteriorating Schools and Improve Safety), on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, starting at 6 p.m. at the Civic Center, 152 W. Cedar Street, Sequim. Any person may appear and be heard. Interested persons may participate in this meeting online at <https://www.sequimwa.gov/319/Attending-a-Council-Meeting>. People may also join by calling (253) 363-9585 and using Webinar ID# 496912152#. Individuals wishing to provide remote public comment must register at <https://sequimwa.gov/1219/Submit-Public-Comments>. Written public comment can be sent to clerk@sequimwa.gov and will be distributed to the Council before the meeting. Any person needing special accommodation to attend should contact the Sequim City Clerk by sending an email to clerk@sequimwa.gov, calling (360) 681-3428, or by regular mail addressed to the Sequim City Clerk, Sequim Civic Center, 152 W. Cedar St., Sequim, WA 98382.