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# Code of Ethics approved by Long Beach City Council on Tuesday

Rules would apply to employees, and elected and appointed officials.



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A new Code of Ethics, in the works for the last two years, was approved by the Long Beach City Council on Tuesday, Nov. 1.

The code comes from the Ethics Commission, a body voters approved as a charter commission for the city in 2018. Once formed, that commission decided on Dec. 9, 2020, to create an updated code of conduct and ethics.

A first draft was presented in July 2021, and reviewed by city management and stakeholders. After more edits, the code was presented to the city's labor unions through Long Beach's meet-and-confer process, but no further changes were made.

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- **Accountability:** A willingness to accept responsibility and account for one's actions.
- **Equity:** Ensuring fairness and due process.
- **Impartiality:** Loyalty to the public good.
- **Diversity:** Embracing histories, values and ideas from all backgrounds, and recognizing the contributions various communities have made to improve the city's operations.
- **Transparency:** Actions and practices that are open to public observation and scrutiny.
- **Integrity:** Being truthful, seeking truth and adhering to the city's values.

The code goes on to detail ethical behavior by city representatives — elected officials, employees, volunteers and members of boards or commissions. The overriding principle, the code says, is “placing the public's interest above our own.”

The code is phrased in the form of a pledge. While the code itself doesn't detail any punishments for violations, that is addressed elsewhere, according to city spokesman Kevin Lee.

“Violations of ethical standards, as set forth in the Code of Conduct and Ethics, are taken seriously and are addressed through city policies, Civil Service bylaws and applicable laws,” Lee said in an email. “This Code sets expectations and further clarifies what the city expects from its employees, which then would be upheld through the appropriate disciplinary process

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If a potential violation is reported, it would be up to the “appointing authority” to handle it, with help from the Human Resources Department and city attorney’s office. So the mayor’s office would handle complaints against appointed commissioners and elected officials while department heads and the city manager’s office would handle complaints against employees.

City Auditor Laura Doud also has a fraud complaint hotline, but that is not addressed in this code.

“While the process was delayed by COVID,” Ethic Commission Chair Margo Morales said in an email, “we believe it demonstrates a thoughtful, deliberative process by all involved.”

Morales has been on the commission since it was formed.

“The Ethics Commission’s goal was to develop a clear, concise set of ethical standards to be adhered to by everyone involved in city business,” she added. “We believe the Code of Ethics will establish shared principles which will be the bedrock of our work going forward.”

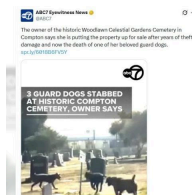
The council is being asked to tell the city attorney to replace the current conduct and ethics code in the Long Beach Municipal Code with this new document. The proposed code is available online as part of the staff report for this agenda item, no. 34, at [bit.ly/3ffc80L](https://bit.ly/3ffc80L).

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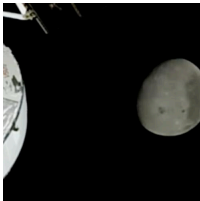
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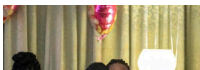
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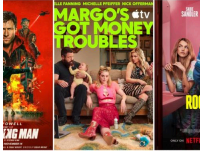


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