Date: April 5, 2021

To: Members of the Ethics Commission

From: Pat Ford, Senior Policy and Legislative Affairs Counsel

Re: AGENDA ITEM 7 – Discussion of Staff Policy Report

Summary: This memorandum provides updates on ongoing policy projects, pending local legislation, and other operational projects involving the Policy Division to assist the Commission, the public, and Staff in engaging with the Commission’s policy work.

Action Requested: That the Commission review the updates provided in this report. No action is required as this report is provided for informational purposes only.

Section I of this memorandum provides status reports about ongoing policy projects that the Commission has identified as policy priorities as part of its Policy Prioritization Plan (PPP). Section II provides information about ongoing operations and projects that, while not a part of the Commission’s Policy Prioritization Plan, regularly require ongoing attention and resources of the Policy Division.

I. Policy Prioritization Plan – Summary of Current Projects

This section describes policy projects that the Commission identified as priorities in the Policy Prioritization Plan.

A. Review of Conflict-of-Interest Code and Regulations

At its September 9, 2020 meeting, the Commission identified a review of the City’s conflict-of-interest rules as a policy priority. This project addresses the serious issues raised by the ongoing investigations into alleged corrupt activity by City officials and contractors. The project involves the review of various ethics rules, such as those regarding gifts, behested payments, recusals, incompatible activities, and post-employment restrictions.

As discussed in prior Policy Reports, Staff is undertaking this project in at least two phases. The first phase focuses on behested payments, which are payments made by someone at the request of a public official or employee, usually to a nonprofit organization. The second phase focuses on gift rules and closely related laws.
Phase I: Behested Payments

At its November 2020 meeting, the Commission unanimously approved staff’s recommendation to amend the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code to prohibit all City officers and designated employees (those who file the Form 700) from soliciting behested payments from interested parties. This recommendation is similar to, but goes further than, legislation sponsored by Supervisor Matt Haney (File No. 201132).

Since the Commission’s March meeting, Supervisor introduced substitute legislation brought the legislation closer in line with the recommendation made by the Commission in November. A copy of the substitute legislation is attached as Attachment 1. In addition to Supervisor Peskin, Supervisor Chan has also joined as a cosponsor of the legislation.

Presently, the ordinance is pending before the Rules Committee of the Board of Supervisors, whose members are Supervisor Peskin (Chair), Supervisor Mandelman (Vice-Chair), and Supervisor Chan. The City must meet and confer with employee bargaining units about the impacts of the ordinance prior to the ordinance being considered at committee. Policy will support the meet-and-confer process and will continue to keep the Commission updated on the legislation’s progress.

Phase II: Gifts

Phase II of the project will focus on gift rules. State and local laws restrict gifts made to City officials and employees. The ongoing corruption investigations have brought to light potential issues with these gift laws and have underscored the importance of gift limits and visibility into when gifts are received.

To carry out Phase II, Policy will follow the same process as undertaken in Phase I. Policy will first initiate interested persons meetings to seek guidance and feedback from stakeholders. The first interested persons meetings are scheduled for April 13th at 4pm and April 15th at 1pm. The meetings will be publicized to the Commission’s interested persons mailing list, and Policy will additionally conduct outreach to various community groups to invite them to the meetings.

Following the initial stakeholder engagement, Policy will then conduct research into ethical issues involved with gifts, including analysis of available public disclosure data, reviews of laws in other jurisdictions, and analysis of the practical implications of implementing and enforcing and revised rules. Policy will then draft a report containing findings and recommendations following this review.

At this point, Policy has identified several questions about existing gift laws that Policy will seek to address through Phase II. This is an initial list and is subject to future review and change following meetings with interested persons and further research. The initial questions that Phase II will seek to address include:

- For purposes of San Francisco’s gift rules (including the restricted source rule), should state-law gift exceptions continue to apply?

---

1 More information about the meetings, including how to participate, is available at [https://sfethics.org/](https://sfethics.org/).
o These exceptions apply to many types of gifts, including gifts from close personal friends, reciprocal exchanges of gifts, gifts given in a dating relationship, gifts of home hospitality, wedding and bereavement gifts, and “acts of human compassion,” among others.

- Should local exceptions to the restricted source rule continue to apply?
  o These exceptions allow officials and employees to accept unlimited food and drink to be shared in the office, as well as low value, non-cash gifts of any type, from restricted sources.

- Does the restricted source rule need to be clarified in that it applies to directors, officers, and shareholders of a business entity (and not solely to the entity itself)?

- Should the restricted source rule also prohibit the giving of a gift by a restricted source?
  o Currently, the rule only prohibits the solicitation or receipt of a restricted source gift by a City official or employee.

- Should the restricted source rule apply to gifts to City departments?
  o Currently, the rule only applies to gifts made to individual officers and employees.

- Should the City’s rule against bribery continue to be limited only to bribes that meet the state-law definition of gift, or should it cover all things of value that are given with the intent to influence official action?

- Do the City’s rules regarding gifts of travel need to be improved?
  o Currently, officials can accept gifts that would otherwise be prohibited if the gift consists of payments for certain travel expenses. Elected officials must typically disclose gifts of travel.

II. Miscellaneous Policy Administrative Projects

Policy has been engaged on a number of items during the last month that do not fall within the policy projects identified under the Policy Prioritization Plan. This work includes: research and advice to Staff and the regulated community regarding the laws administered by the Commission, legislative affairs, media relations, and general program administration.

A. Hiring

In recent weeks, much of the Policy Division’s time has been devoted to the hiring process for the 1822 Policy Analyst. As detailed further in this month’s Executive Director’s report, Michael Canning joins the Commission staff on April 5th as our new Policy Analyst. Michael brings an impressive depth of experience in policy, campaign finance, and election politics. We look forward to him joining the Staff and to introducing him to the Commission at the April 9th meeting.

B. Waiver Request – Compensated Advocacy Ban

As more fully laid out under Agenda Item 5, Policy has analyzed a waiver request received from the Mayor’s office and a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Ruchira Nageswaran. Policy worked with the Mayor’s office to identify the facts needed to evaluate the request and prepared the memo attached to Item 5.
C. Waiver Request – Post-Employment Restrictions

As more fully laid out under Agenda Item 6, Policy has analyzed a waiver request received from a former member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Aaron Hyland. Policy worked with Mr. Hyland to identify the facts needed to evaluate the request and prepared the memo attached to Item 6.

D. Public Financing Report

Following any election featuring a Mayoral or Supervisorial contest, the Ethics Commission must submit a report to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors that contains certain data about the use of the City’s public campaign financing program during the election. The report is an opportunity to present useful data that can help readers understand the role of the program in elections. Policy has been collaborating with Lead Auditor Robb Hodge to prepare the report for the November 2020 election based on campaign disclosures reported on January 31, 2021 for the period ending December 31, 2020. We anticipate presenting the report to the Commission at the May meeting.

---

2 Campaign & Gov. Conduct Code § 1.156. “The report shall state the amount of public funds used to pay for election campaigns in that election and such other information as the Ethics Commission deems useful, including the number of candidates who received public funds; the number of nonparticipating candidates; the amount of qualified campaign expenditures made by all candidates in that election; and the amount of independent expenditures made in connection with the election.”
ATTACHMENT 1
Ordinance amending the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code to expand the definition of interested party, to include City contractors and persons seeking to influence City officers and employees, and to prohibit appointed department heads, commissioners, and designated employees from soliciting behested payments from interested parties.

NOTE: Unchanged Code text and uncodified text are in plain Arial font. Additions to Codes are in single-underline italics Times New Roman font. Deletions to Codes are in strikethrough italics Times New Roman font. Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font. Board amendment deletions are in strikethrough Arial font. Asterisks (*) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. The Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code is hereby amended by revising Sections 3.600, 3.610, 3.620, 3.630, and 3.640, and adding Section 3.605, to read as follows:

SEC. 3.600. DEFINITIONS.

Whenever in this Chapter 6 the following words or phrases are used, they shall have the following meanings:

“Affiliate” shall be defined as set forth in Section 1.126 of this Code.

“Agent” shall mean any person who represents a party in connection with a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use be defined as set forth in Title 2, Section 18438.3 of the California Code of Regulations, as amended from time to time.
“Appointed department head” shall mean any department head who is required to file a Statement of Economic Interests as set forth in Section 3.1-103(b)(1) of this Code, except for the Assessor-Recorder, City Attorney, District Attorney, Mayor, Public Defender, Sheriff, and Treasurer.

* * * *

“City Contractor” shall be defined as set forth in Section 1.126 of this Code, except only with respect to contracts with any department of the City and County of San Francisco.

“Commissioner” shall mean any member of a City board or commission, excluding the Board of Supervisors, who is required to file a Statement of Economic Interests as set forth in Section 3.1-103(a)(1) of this Code.

* * * *

“Designated employee” shall mean any employee of the City and County of San Francisco required to file a Statement of Economic Interests under Article III, Chapter 1 of this Code.

“Elected official” shall mean Assessor-Recorder, City Attorney, District Attorney, Mayor, Public Defender, Sheriff, Treasurer, or member of the Board of Supervisors.

* * * *

“Interested party” shall mean:

(a) any party, participant or agent of a party or participant involved in a proceeding regarding administrative enforcement, a license, a permit, or other entitlement for use, before an officer or any board or commission (including the Board of Supervisors) on which the officer sits, (1) an officer, (2) any board or commission (including the Board of Supervisors) on which the officer sits, (3) the department of the officer, or (4) the department of the designated employee;

(b) any City Contractor contracting with or seeking to contract with the designated employee’s or officer’s department, or any affiliate of such a City Contractor; or

(c) any person who attempted to influence the employee or officer in any legislative or administrative action.
“License, permit, or other entitlement for use” shall mean professional, trade, or land use licenses, permits, or other entitlements to use property or engage in business, including professional license revocations, conditional use permits, rezoning of property parcels, zoning variances, tentative subdivision and parcel maps, cable television franchises, building and development permits, private development plans, and contracts (other than labor or personal employment contracts and competitively bid contracts where the City is required to select the highest or lowest qualified bidder), be defined as set forth in California Government Code Section 84308, as amended from time to time.

“Officer” shall mean any commissioner, appointed department head, or elected official, the Mayor, City Attorney, District Attorney, Treasurer, Sheriff, Assessor-Recorder, Public Defender, a Member of the Board of Supervisors, or any member of a board or commission who is required to file a Statement of Economic Interests, including all persons holding positions listed in Section 3.1-103(a)(1) of this Code.

“Payment” shall mean a monetary payment or the delivery of goods or services.

“Participant” shall mean any person who is not a party but who actively supports or opposes (by lobbying in person, testifying in person, or otherwise acting to influence) a particular decision in a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use and who has a financial interest in the decision, be defined as set forth in California Government Code Section 84308 and Title 2, Section 18438.4 of the California Code of Regulations, as amended from time to time.

“Party” shall mean any person who files an application for, or is the subject of, a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use, be defined as set forth in California Government Code Section 84308, as amended from time to time.

“Payment” shall mean a monetary payment or the delivery of goods or services.

“Person” shall be defined as set forth in Section 1.104 of this Code.

* * *
SEC. 3.605. PROHIBITING APPOINTED DEPARTMENT HEADS, COMMISSIONERS, 
AND DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES FROM SOLICITING BEHESTED PAYMENTS FROM 
INTERESTED PARTIES.

(a) PROHIBITION. Appointed department heads, commissioners, and designated employees 
shall not directly or indirectly solicit any behested payment from any interested party in the following 
circumstances:

(1) Administrative proceedings. If the interested party is a party, participant, or agent 
of a party or participant in a proceeding before the appointed department head’s, commissioner’s, or 
designated employee’s department regarding administrative enforcement, a license, a permit, or other 
entitlement for use, the prohibition set forth in this subsection (a) shall apply:

(A) during the proceeding; and

(B) for six months following the date on which a final decision is rendered in the 
proceeding.

(2) Contracts. If the interested party is a City Contractor, or an affiliate of a City 
Contractor, who is a party to or is seeking a contract with the appointed department head’s, 
commissioner’s, or designated employee’s department, the prohibition set forth in this subsection (a) 
shall apply from the submission of a proposal until the later of:

(A) the termination of negotiations for the contract; or

(B) the end of the contract’s term.

(3) Persons seeking to influence. If the interested party is a person who attempted to 
influence the appointed department head, commissioner, or designated employee in any legislative or 
administrative action, the prohibition set forth in this subsection (a) shall apply for 12 months 
following the date of each attempt to influence.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.
(1) **Elected department heads.** This Section 3.605 shall not apply to elected department heads.

(2) **Public appeals.** This Section 3.605 shall not apply to public appeals.

**SEC. 3.610. REQUIRED FILING OF BEHESTED PAYMENT REPORTS BY ELECTED OFFICIALS.**

(a) **FILING REQUIREMENT.**

(1) **Administrative proceedings.** If an officer elected official directly or indirectly requests or solicits any behested payment(s) from an interested party that is a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant involved in a proceeding before the elected official’s department regarding administrative enforcement, a license, a permit, or other entitlement for use, the officer elected official shall file the a behested payment report described in subsection (b) with the Ethics Commission in the following circumstances:

(1A) if the interested party makes any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more during the pendency of the matter involving the interested party proceeding, or during the six months following the date on which a final decision is rendered, the officer shall file a behested payment report within 30 days of the date on which the behested payment was made, or if there has been a series of behested payments, within 30 days of the date on which the behested payment(s) total $1,000 or more; or

(2) if the interested party makes any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more during the six months following the date on which a final decision is rendered in the matter involving the interested party, the officer shall file a behested payment report within 30 days of the date on which the behested payment was made, or if there has been a series of behested payments, within 30 days of the date on which the behested payment(s) total $1,000 or more; and

(3A) if the interested party made any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more in the 12 months prior to the commencement of a matter involving the interested party.

...
party proceeding, in which case the officer elected official shall file a behested payment report within 30 days of the date the officer elected official knew or should have known that the source of the behested payment(s) became an interested party.

(2) **Contracts.** If an elected official directly or indirectly requests or solicits any behested payment(s) from any City Contractor contracting with or seeking to contract with the elected official’s department, or any affiliate of such City Contractor, the elected official shall file a behested payment report in the following circumstances:

   (A) the interested party makes any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more after the submission of a proposal and before either the termination of negotiations for the contract or the end of the contract’s term;

   (B) the interested party makes any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more during the six months after either the termination of negotiations for the contract, or the end of the contract’s term, or

   (C) the interested party made any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more in the 12 months prior to the submission of a proposal, in which case the elected official shall file a behested payment report within 30 days of the date the elected official knew or should have known that the source of the behested payment(s) became an interested party.

(3) **Persons seeking to influence.** If an elected official directly or indirectly requests or solicits any behested payment(s) from any interested party who attempted to influence the elected official in any legislative or administrative action, the elected official shall file a behested payment report if, within the 12 months following the date of any attempt by the interested party to influence the elected official, the interested party made any behested payment(s) totaling $1,000 or more.

(b) **BEHESTED PAYMENT REPORT.** The behested payment report shall include the following:

(1) name of payor;
(2) address of payor;
(3) amount of the payment(s);
(4) date(s) the payment(s) were made;
(5) the name(s) and address(es) of the payee(s);
(6) a brief description of the goods or services provided or purchased, if any, and a description of the specific purpose or event for which the payment(s) were made;
(7) if the officer elected official or the officer’s elected official’s relative, staff member, or paid campaign staff, is an officer, executive, member of the board of directors, staff member, or authorized agent for the recipient of the behested payment(s), such individual’s name, relation to the officer elected official, and position held with the payee;
(8) if the payee has created or distributed 200 or more substantially similar communications featuring the officer elected official within the six months prior to the deadline for filing the behested payment report, a brief description of such communication(s), the purpose of the communication(s), the number of communication(s) distributed, and a copy of the communication(s); and
(9) if in the six months following the deadline for filing the behested payment report, the payee has created or distributed 200 or more substantially similar communications featuring the officer elected official, the officer elected official shall file an amended payment report that discloses a brief description of such communication(s), the purpose of the communication(s), the number of communication(s) distributed, and a copy of the communication(s).

(c) DEADLINE FOR FILING A BEHESTED PAYMENT REPORT. Unless otherwise provided under this Section 3.610, when an elected official is required to file a behested payment report, the elected official shall file the behested payment report described in subsection (b) with the Ethics Commission within 30 days of the date on which the behested payment was made, or if there has
been a series of behested payments, within 30 days of the date on which the behested payments total $1,000 or more.

(c) (d) AMENDMENTS. If any of the information previously disclosed on a behested payment report changes during the pendency of the matter involving the interested party, or within six months of the final decision in such matter, the officer elected official shall file an amended behested payment report.

(d) (e) PUBLIC APPEALS. Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (d), no officer elected official shall be required to report any behested payment that is made solely in response to a public appeal.

(e) (f) NOTICE. If an officer elected official solicits or otherwise requests, in any manner other than a public appeal, that any person make a behested payment, the elected official or his the elected official’s agent must notify that person that if the person makes any behested payment in response to the solicitation or request, the person may be subject to the disclosure and notice requirements in Section 3.620.

(f) (g) WEBSITE POSTING. The Ethics Commission shall make available through its website post on its website all behested payment reports it receives from officers elected officials.

SEC. 3.620. FILING BY DONORS.

(a) REPORT. Any interested party who makes a behested payment, or series of behested payments in a calendar year, of $10,000 or more must disclose, within 30 days following the date on which the payment(s) totals $10,000 or more:

(1) Administrative proceedings. If the interested party is a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant involved in a proceeding regarding administrative enforcement, a license, a permit, or other entitlement for use:
(A) the proceeding(s) the interested party is or was involved in with the
board, commission or department of the elected official who requested or solicited the behested
payment(s);

(2) (B) the outcome(s) the interested party is or was seeking in such
proceedings before or decisions by the board, commission, or department of the elected official who
requested or solicited the behested payment(s); and

(2) (C) any contact(s) the interested party made in relation to such
proceedings before or decisions by the board, commission, or department of the elected official who
requested or solicited the behested payment(s).

(2) Contracts. If the interested party is a City Contractor, or an affiliate of a City
Contractor:

(A) the total value(s), description(s), and date(s) of the contract(s) with or
proposal(s) submitted to the board, commission, or department of the elected official who requested or
solicited the behested payment(s);

(B) the name(s) of the City Contractor(s) or affiliate(s), and the contracting City
department(s); and

(C) any contact(s) the interested party made in relation to the contract(s) with
or proposal(s) submitted to the board, commission, or department of the elected official who requested
or solicited the behested payment(s).

(3) Persons seeking to influence. If the interested party attempted to influence the
elected official in any legislative or administrative action:

(A) the legislative or administrative action(s) in which the interested party
attempted to influence the elected official;

(B) the outcome(s) the interested party is or was seeking in such legislative or
administrative action(s); and
(C) the dates of any contact(s) the interested party made with the elected official in relation to such legislative or administrative action(s).

(b) NOTICE. Any person who makes a behested payment must notify the recipient that the payment is a behested payment, at the time the payment is made.

(c) PUBLIC APPEALS. An interested party has no obligation to disclose a behested payment made in response to an elected official’s public appeal.

SEC. 3.630. FILING BY RECIPIENTS OF MAJOR BEHESTED PAYMENTS.

(a) MAJOR BEHESTED PAYMENT REPORT. Any person who receives a behested payment, or a series of behested payments, received during a calendar year, totaling $100,000 or more from interested parties that was made at the behest of any officer elected official must do the following:

(1) within 30 days following the date on which the payment(s) total $100,000 or more, notify the Ethics Commission that the person has received such payment(s) and specify the date on which the payment(s) equaled or exceeded $100,000;

(2) within 13 months following the date on which the payment(s) or payments total $100,000 or more, but at least 12 months following the date on which the payment(s) total $100,000 or more, disclose:

(i) (A) all payments made by the person that were funded in whole or in part by the behested payment(s) made at the behest of the officer elected official; and

(ii) (B) if the person was an interested party in any City decision(s) involving the officer elected official in the 12 months following the date on which the payment(s) were made:

(A) (i) the proceeding the person is or was involved in;

(B) (ii) the decision(s) the person actively supported or opposed;
(C) (iii) the outcome(s) the person is or was seeking in such
proceedings or decisions; and

(D) (iv) any contact(s) the person made in relation to such
proceedings or decisions.

(b) EXCEPTION. Subsection (a) does not apply if the entity receiving the behested
payment is a City department.

(c) NOTICE REQUIRED. If a recipient of a behested payment does not receive the
notice, as required under Section 3.620, that a particular payment is a behested payment, the
recipient will not be subject to penalties under Section 3.650, as regards that particular
payment, for failure to file pursuant to subsection (a) unless it is clear from the circumstances
that the recipient knew or should have known that the payment was made at the behest of an
elected official.

(d) PUBLIC APPEALS. A recipient of behested payments has no obligation to disclose
payments received due to an elected official’s public appeal.

SEC. 3.640. REGULATIONS.

(a) The Ethics Commission may adopt rules, regulations, and guidelines for the
implementation of this Chapter 6. The Ethics Commission shall adopt rules, regulations or
guidelines defining and illustrating “interested party” and when a payment is made “at the behest of”
a City officer or designated employee.

(b) The Ethics Commission may, by regulation, require persons to electronically submit
information required to fulfill their obligations under this Chapter 6.

Section 2. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
of Supervisors overrides the Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.
Section 3. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles, numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the “Note” that appears under the official title of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By: /s/ Andrew Shen
ANDREW SHEN
Deputy City Attorney

n:\legana\as2021\2100014\01519938.docx