

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on
October 8, 2025*

6. Advancing Recommendations and Remedies to Improve Operation and Application of Vancouver's Code of Conduct By-law

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. Public trust in local governance is built on a foundation of clear rules, transparent processes, and accountable leadership;
2. Vancouver City Councillors' Oath of Office commits to abide by conflict of interest rules under the Vancouver Charter, to carry out duties with integrity, to be accountable for decisions and actions in the course of duties, and to perform the duties of the office in accordance with the law;
3. The City of Vancouver established the Office of the Integrity Commissioner in 2022 to provide independent oversight, education, and advice on ethical conduct for Council;
4. The Integrity Commissioner's 2023 and 2024 Annual Reports^{1 2} identified key areas for improvement in the Code of Conduct By-law, including compulsory education, public reporting of non-attendance, clarity in investigative procedures, the gap in governance of political employees, and sanction provisions for reduction in remuneration and/or roles that enhance remuneration;
5. The independent review conducted by Reece Harding (2025)³ recommended ten substantive amendments to enhance the Code's clarity, independence, and effectiveness, including the need for structural protections for the Integrity Commissioner and clearer complaint procedures;
6. The BC Ombudsperson has repeatedly called for provincial legislation to mandate enforceable municipal codes of conduct, citing Vancouver's experience as evidence of the risks of relying solely on local by-laws⁴;

¹ Lisa Southern, City of Vancouver 2023 Annual Report – Integrity Commissioner
<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/integrity-commissioner-annual-report-2023.pdf>

² Lisa Southern, City of Vancouver 2024 Annual Report – Integrity Commissioner
<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2024-annual-report.pdf>

³ Reece Harding, City of Vancouver Code of Conduct By-law No. 12886 Review and Recommendations
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20250311/documents/icre-ReleaseofCityofVancouverCodeofConductBy-lawNo.12886ReviewandRecommendations-RTS17852.pdf>

⁴ BC Ombudsperson Statement on Municipal Integrity
https://bcombudsperson.ca/news_release/two-recent-vancouver-municipal-integrity-reports-highlight-need-for-provincial-legislation-bc-ombudsperson-says/

7. A recent August 22 ruling⁵ by the Integrity Commissioner found a majority of Council (current/former members of ABC) were in breach of the Code of Conduct and Vancouver Charter. However the report was ineligible of consideration for debate, discussion, or disciplinary action because the respondents numbered more than quorum and would otherwise recuse in conflict ruling on themselves; and
8. The current Code lacks a robust and enforceable framework for sanctions, particularly in cases where Council or Board Members hold authority over disciplinary outcomes, undermining public accountability.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council endorse the recommendations contained in the 2023 and 2024 Annual Reports of the Integrity Commissioner, including:
 - a) Clarification of confidentiality obligations during investigations; and
 - b) Amending the Code of Conduct By-law to include sanction provisions for reduction in remuneration and/or restriction from holding roles that enhance remuneration in appropriate circumstances.
- B. THAT Council directs staff to report back on ways to address the recommendations from Reece Harding's independent review, along with any necessary draft amendments to the Code of Conduct By-law No. 12886 as applicable, to address the recommendations, including:
 - a) Enhanced independence and structural protections for the Integrity Commissioner;
 - b) Creation of an investigative roster to separate advisory and investigative functions;
 - c) Public Release of Investigation Reports;
 - d) Limiting public complaints to City residents and considering a refundable filing fee;
 - e) Clear sanctions for breaches of confidentiality and misuse of the complaint process;
 - f) Removal of Advisory Board Members from the investigative scope.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to work with the Integrity Commissioner and Legal Services to report back within 90 days with draft amendments to the Code of Conduct By-law No. 12886 in order to:
 - a) Establish a graduated sanctions regime for breaches, including:

⁵ City of Vancouver Integrity Commissioner Report COVIC-010
<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/covic-010-investigation-report-complaint-mayor-sim-councillors-aug-2025.pdf>

- i. Formal reprimands;
 - ii. Suspension of committee appointments;
 - iii. Public censure;
 - iv. Temporary loss of voting privileges on non-statutory matters; and
 - v. Referral to external legal or regulatory bodies where appropriate.
 - vi. Ensure sanctions are enforceable regardless of the composition of Council or Boards.
 - b) Recommendations for implementation and public communication.
- D. THAT Council request the Mayor to write to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs urging the Province to:
- a) Introduce legislation mandating municipal codes of conduct;
 - b) Provide statutory protections for local integrity commissioners;
 - c) Align BC with other provinces (e.g., Ontario, Manitoba, New Brunswick) in establishing enforceable ethical standards.

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