

CITY OF SPOKANE ETHICS COMMISSION

Ethics Commission's Findings, Conclusions and Decision Regarding Complaint filed by Linda Biel against Mayor Brown, Council President Wilkerson, Council Member Dillon, Council Member Klitzke, Council Member Navarrete, and Council Member Zappone

FINDINGS

The Ethics Commission makes the following findings:

1. On June 24, 2025, Linda Biel filed an ethics complaint against several City of Spokane elected officials, including Mayor Brown, Council President Wilkerson, Council Member Dillon, Council Member Klitzke, Council Member Navarrete, and Council Member Zappone.
2. In her complaint, Ms. Biel alleged that the events of the City Council meeting on June 16th, 2025, led to violations of the Code of Ethics. She recounted the events of the meeting in her complaint and stated that described the alleged violation of the Code of Ethics as "No government official can violate the US Constitution by censoring free speech."
3. On June 24, 2025, Staff Director Megan Kapaun forwarded the complaint to the Ethics Commission.
4. In the time between the complaint being alleged and the next meeting of the Ethics Commission, Staff Director Kapaun reviewed the complaint for jurisdictional issues pursuant to SMC104B.150A to see (1) if the respondents are subject to the Code of Ethics and (2) if the alleged conduct, if found to be true, constitutes prohibited conduct in violation of any provision of SMC 1.04B.050. Staff Director Kapaun determined that the respondents are all subject to the Code of Ethics but that the alleged conduct, if true, is not a violation of SMC 1.04B.050 and recommended to the Ethics Commission that at the July special meeting the complaint be dismissed.
5. On July 23, 2025, the Ethics Commission held a special meeting to review the complaint to determine whether, pursuant to SMC 01.04B, the Commission had jurisdiction to conduct further proceedings and whether the complaint, on its face, alleges facts that, if true, would substantiate a violation. At meeting, the Commission considered the February 28th, 2025 complaint filed by Ms. Biel in conjunction with the Code of Ethics listed in SMC 1.04B.050.
6. At the special meeting on July 23, 2025, the Commission discussed the complaint and voted to move the complaint to an Independent Investigator for review.
7. An Independent Investigator was retained and following the procedures of SMC 1.04B.160, they interviewed witnesses necessary for a review of the alleged conduct. The Independent Investigator sent the completed report to the Commission on October 27th, 2025 and made a recommendation that the complaint be dismissed.
8. On December 17th, 2025, the Ethics Commission moved to dismiss the complaint.

CONCLUSIONS

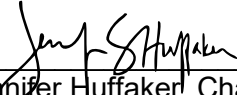
The Ethics Commission makes the following conclusions:

The complaint met the requirement 1.04B.140 with respect to the complaint being submitted on the correct form and by alleging a violation against the respondents as elected officials in the City of Spokane who are subject to the Ethics Code. The allegations in the complaint, if true, warranted review by an Independent Investigator under 1.04B.160. After thorough review by the Independent Investigator, the allegations were not found to be substantiated and a dismissal was recommended.

DECISION

Based upon the Findings and Conclusions set forth above and the review of the Independent Investigator, the Ethics Commission concludes that the complaint by Ms. Biel must be dismissed pursuant to SMC 01.04B.170.

This decision was approved by a vote of 7 to 0 of the Ethics Commission members present for and participating in the meeting.



Jennifer Huffaker, Chairperson

12/17/2025

Date