

Order No. 2023-11
AN ORDER OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

...to adopt the Port of Seattle Commission’s Board of Ethics’ Findings and Conclusions re: Board of Ethics Complaint No. 2022-01 and to adopt a corrective course of action.

ADOPTED
September 26, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Port of Seattle Commission Board of Ethics (“Board”) received a complaint in October 2022 alleging potential violations of the Code of Ethics for Port Commissioners (“Commissioner Code”) by Commissioner Fred Felleman (Complaint No. 2022-1). Following an independent investigation and pursuant to Section 8(C) of the Commissioner Code, the Board in June 2023 reported its findings and conclusions and recommended corrective actions to the Port Commission.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

In its independent capacity, the Board carried out a careful and thorough investigation and review process, as described in the Board’s Findings and Conclusions. The Port of Seattle Commission concurs with and hereby adopts the Board’s Findings and Conclusions.

The Board concluded that Commissioner Felleman, while attempting to observe or monitor the Quiet Sound Leadership Committee meetings, more likely than not, used his Port Commissioner position in an effort to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself and that he sought special consideration, treatment, or advantage from others, both in violation of the Commissioner Code. The Board did not conclude that his actions were taken for financial or electoral benefit, and also did not conclude that he discriminated based on gender or any other protected status under the applicable Port policies.

The Board also concluded Commissioner Felleman’s actions were not consistent with the Port’s Statement of Values and the Port of Seattle Commission Bylaws.

As a result, the Commission admonishes Commissioner Felleman for his violation of the Commissioner Code and corresponding failure to abide by the Port’s Statement of Values and Bylaws.

The Commission directs Commissioner Felleman to attend remedial and thorough training provided by the Port in, at minimum, (A) conflicts of interest, and (B) appropriate standards for interaction between elected officials and staff, including navigating the respective roles of a Port Commissioner and a Commissioner as private citizen, and maintaining a respectful workplace. The Commission President is authorized, in consultation with the Port of Seattle Human Resources Division and the Commission Chief of Staff, to select and oversee the completion of these trainings. Similar trainings shall be made available to all Commissioners.

The Commission suggests that Commissioner Felleman apologize in writing to the complainants.

The Commission concurs with and adopts the Board's suggestions that the Commission reaffirm its commitment to comply with the Commissioner Code, the Statement of Values and the Bylaws; that the Commission reaffirm its confidence in and appreciation for the professionalism and hard work of Port staff; and that the Commission undertake formal training in conflicts of interest at the outset of future Commission terms. While this Order fully addresses and resolves the issues presented by Complaint No. 2022-1, the Commission, as a whole, will continue its review and update of the Commissioner Code and Port of Seattle Commission Bylaws and will take appropriate steps to maintain public confidence in the proper functioning of the Commission.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT OF THE ORDER

The Port's values are paramount to our role as elected Port Commissioners and apply at – and between – all levels of the organization. We reiterate those values here:

Respect: We uphold the dignity and value of every person.

Anti-Racism and Equity: We commit to dismantling institutional racism and ensuring equitable opportunities for all.

Integrity: We are honest, accountable, and ethical.

Stewardship: We honor and care for the resources entrusted to us for the benefit of future generations.

Excellence: We promote excellence through continuous improvement and innovation.