

Ordinance amending Section 2-330 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Corpus Christi, Texas to provide for outside representation of City Officials for alleged violations before the Ethics Commission.

WHEREAS, Corpus Christi City Code § 2-326(a)(1) requires the Ethics Commission to review all proposed changes to the City's Code of Ethics and make recommendations to City Council before being placed on a city council agenda for action.

WHEREAS, the Ethics Commission has recommended the following changes to the City's Code of Ethics.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, THAT:

Section 1. Subsection 2-330(e) of the City Code is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-330. - Complaints.

(e) If the commission determines such party's complaint or defense was groundless, legal fees incurred by the complainants, the commission, and the party complained against, in an amount determined reasonable by the commission may be awarded against the unsuccessful party. "Groundless" means: (1) without basis or fact; or (2) not warranted by law or reasonably arguable interpretation thereof. The complainants shall not be liable for such fees if the commission has determined grounds exist for a hearing. The city will pay reasonable fees for legal representation of the respondent through conclusion of a commission hearing from an approved list provided by the City Attorney, subject to the city's right to repayment through salary and/or stipend deductions of the respondent in the event the commission finds a violation has occurred.

Section 2. All provisions of the ordinances of the City of Corpus Christi in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance be, and the same are hereby, repealed, and all other provisions of the ordinances of the City of Corpus Christi not in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 3. Should any sentence, paragraph, subdivision, clause, phrase or section of this ordinance be adjudged or held to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of this ordinance as a whole, or any part or provision thereof other than the part so decided to be invalid, illegal or unconstitutional, and shall not affect the validity of the Code of Ordinances as a whole.

Section 4. This ordinance shall become effective October 1, 2024. Publication shall be made in the official publication of the City of Corpus Christi as required by the City Charter of the City of Corpus Christi.

Introduced and voted on the _____ day of _____, 2024.

PASSED and APPROVED on the _____ day of _____, 2024.

Paulette M. Guajardo, Mayor

Rebecca L. Huerta, City Secretary