

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

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ETHICS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

City Hall, First Floor, Lynwood Roberts Room

Monday, April 20, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Dr. Erich Freiberger.

Attendees: Dr. Erich Freiberger, William Maule, Katherine Moore, Sean Mulholland, Sunny Gettinger (via phone), Deena Bateh Wallace, David Thompson, Angella Beckom and Leah Palestrant.

Others in attendance: Kirby Oberdorfer, Director of the Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight ("Ethics Office"); Andrea Myers, Ethics Office Program and Training Manager; Sandy Homrighouse, Ethics Office Executive Assistant; and Dylan Reingold, Office of General Counsel ("OGC").

Public In Attendance: John Nooney.

Confirmation of Quorum and Extraordinary Circumstance of Ms. Gettinger:

Dr. Freiberger confirmed a quorum was present, with eight (8) Ethics Commission members attending in person. He welcomed Kate Moore, the newest member of the Ethics Commission. Dr. Freiberger also recognized Mr. Reingold for his service, noting May 11 is his last day with the City.

Ms. Gettinger requested permission to attend the meeting telephonically due to her extraordinary circumstance of an illness that prevented her from attending in person. Mr. Mulholland made a motion to waive the Ethics Commission Internal Operating Procedures Rule IV(A)(b) that requires members at least 24 hours in advance of a meeting to request permission to participate and vote by Communications Media Technology due to extraordinary circumstances, and also to allow Ms. Gettinger to attend the meeting telephonically due to her extraordinary circumstance. Mr. Maule seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the vote was 8-0 in favor by the Ethics Commission members physically present in the room.

January 21, 2026, Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes Approval and February 25, 2026, Open Government Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Mr. Mulholland moved to approve the minutes of the January 21 Ethics Commission meeting and the February 25 Open Government Committee meeting. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of 9-0.

Reports:

Ethics Office: Ms. Oberdorfer provided an update on the hiring process for the Ethics Attorney position, which became vacant when Paige Johnston left in the fall. The hiring process has not been completed due to several time-sensitive priorities requiring immediate resolution. Ms. Oberdorfer and Mr. Reingold will work together to select applicants for interviews. Ms. Oberdorfer confirmed funding for the Ethics Attorney position has been included in next year's budget.

Turning to Ethics Office operations, Ms. Oberdorfer reported that the office remains exceptionally busy, and the current staffing shortage has created some challenges. Ms. Oberdorfer expressed special appreciation for Ms. Myers handling some of Ms. Johnston's former responsibilities while continuing to perform her own duties, including overseeing financial disclosure filings, handling travel authorization requests and managing some secondary employment reviews. Ms. Oberdorfer also recognized Ms. Homrighouse for taking on additional projects and assisting Ms. Myers with the financial disclosure process. She noted that both employees have gone above and beyond in supporting the Ethics Office during this period.

Ms. Oberdorfer then discussed how the Ethics Commission's website has been affected by the City's ongoing efforts to comply with the U.S. Department of Justice's mandate requiring all City websites to meet ADA accessibility standards. The website links to the Commission's prior meeting agendas and minutes have been deactivated because these documents are noncompliant. They cannot be read by accessibility software because they contain the City's and/or the Ethics Commission's seal. Members of the public are being advised to contact the Ethics Office to request copies of these documents. Although the compliance deadline had originally been scheduled for this Friday, the City received a one-year extension. Mr. Reingold added that all jurisdictions within the City's category and smaller municipalities also received this extension.

Ms. Oberdorfer relayed that she received a call earlier in the day from a citizen seeking access to prior Ethics Commission meeting agendas and minutes, and she explained to the citizen the updated process for obtaining those records. Ms. Oberdorfer emphasized that Ms. Myers and Ms. Homrighouse have completed most of the work associated with this extensive accessibility project, investing a significant amount of time to meet the City's compliance obligations.

Ms. Oberdorfer also highlighted an initiative led by Ms. Myers in collaboration with the Procurement Division's Department Ethics Officer and Employee Services to modernize the secondary employment and conflict of interest disclosure form into an electronic form. Ms. Oberdorfer reported the Ethics Office has received positive feedback regarding the new process.

Ms. Oberdorfer next discussed the Post-Employment Appeals Committee hearing in February, during which the Post-Employment Appeals Committee considered and granted Dr. Saralyn Grass, former Chief Executive Officer of Kids Hope Alliance (“KHA”), a waiver of the post-employment restriction in Jacksonville Ordinance Code section 602.412. Ms. Oberdorfer noted that processing the waiver request and administering the Post-Employment Appeals Committee hearing required substantial staff resources to obtain contracts, funding documentation, and other supporting materials from KHA, as well as responses to numerous questions. Ms. Oberdorfer thanked Mr. Reingold for his significant assistance throughout the process.

Ms. Oberdorfer further reported that the Ethics Office continues to handle numerous conflict-of-interest inquiries, particularly those involving the Eastside Grants Committee, as well as a variety of nepotism-related questions.

Ms. Oberdorfer also advised that the Ethics Office has received and responded to several significant public records requests. She detailed the status of an extensive request for records relating to City lobbyists, Ethics Commission Complaints and financial disclosure forms for 2015 to the present. She is working with the City’s Technology Services Division and Public Records Center to prepare a cost estimate for fulfilling the request, which she expects to be substantial.

Ms. Oberdorfer concluded her report by providing an update on ethics training. Recent significant training sessions have been conducted for City contract managers, the three (3) new Ethics Commission members, and Dr. Kriznar, the Interim KHA CEO. Upcoming training sessions are scheduled for the JEA Senior Leadership Team, JAXPORT, & JTA. Ms. Myers added that Chief Beckom has expressed interest in attending a future ethics training session. Upcoming training dates will be provided to the Ethics Commission members via email.

Office of General Counsel: Mr. Reingold reiterated Ms. Oberdorfer's statement that the waiver request to the Post-Employment Appeals Committee was a significant issue.

Complaints and Referrals Committee: Mr. Maule reported there is one (1) pending Complaint.

New Business:

Post-Employment Legislation: Ms. Oberdorfer advised that Council Member Miller has requested the Ethics Commission review the post-employment restriction in Ordinance Code section 602.412 to consider prohibiting waivers for former employees who served at the Director’s level.

Mr. Reingold stated that one option would be to eliminate waivers for former Directors. Another option would be to refer the matter to the Legislative Committee to consider codifying the factors the Post-Employment Appeals Committee should utilize in evaluating waiver requests. Following discussion, Dr. Freiburger referred the matter to the Legislative Committee for further review.

Update on Recent Changes in State Ethics Laws Enacted by Legislature: Ms. Oberdorfer reported that more than 100 ethics-related bills were filed during the recent legislative session, with only three (3) ultimately passing.

She advised that Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill 572 into law. Senate Bill 572 expands the definition of "relative" for purposes of the state gift laws to include foster families and foster children and also changes the state nepotism law to allow elected officials that are related and serve on the same governing body to seek office on their governing body. Ms. Oberdorfer further reported on House Bill 905 that addresses improper influence by foreign governments/dignitaries and establishes additional ethics training requirements for elected officials, as well as Senate Bill 1452 that addresses nepotism involving firefighters by requiring a competitive promotion process for related individuals.

Ms. Oberdorfer noted that several ethics related bills did not pass, including proposed whistleblower legislation and legislation that would have waived automatic fines for first time offenders who failed to timely file required financial disclosure forms.

FY 2026-2027 Budget: Ms. Oberdorfer submitted the budget on April 10. It was a flat budget.

Public Comment: Dr. Freiburger asked for public comment. Mr. Nooney provided public comment.

Announcements: None.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Sandy Homrighouse

8/19/2026

Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO

Date Approved

This is a summary of the meeting and not a verbatim transcription. A recording of these proceedings is available at <http://www.coj.net/departments/ethics-office/notices,-agendas-minutes>.

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