

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

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ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

City Hall, Third Floor, Conference Room C
Tuesday, October 21, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Erich Freiburger. Attendees: Erich Freiburger, William Maule, Robyn Blank, Linda McCallum, Sean Mulholland, David Thompson, Sunny Gettinger (via phone), and Leah Palestrant.

Excused Absence: Scott Simpson

Others in attendance: Kirby Oberdorfer, Director of the Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight (OECO); Paige Johnston, Ethics Attorney (OECO); Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant (OECO); and Dylan Reingold, Office of General Counsel (OGC).

Public In Attendance: Angella Beckom, Brittany Norris, Alison Russell

Confirmation of Quorum and Determination of Extraordinary Circumstance for Ms. Gettinger:

Dr. Freiburger confirmed the quorum with 7 Commission Members present. Ms. Gettinger requested to attend the meeting telephonically due to extraordinary circumstances preventing her from attending the meeting in person. Ms. Gettinger explained she is in North Carolina due to her mother's surgery. Judge McCallum made a motion that Ms. Gettinger be able to attend the meeting telephonically due to her extraordinary circumstance. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the vote was 7-0 in favor (vote by Ethics Commission members physically present in the room).

September 17, 2025, Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes Approval:

Mr. Mulholland made a motion for approval of the minutes from the September 17 Ethics Commission Meeting. Ms. Palestrant seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Reports:

ECO Office: Ms. Oberdorfer stated the Ethics Office has been exceptionally busy and reported on the work of the Ethics Office since the last Ethics Commission meeting in September. The Ethics Office has worked on trainings, secondary employment questions including JFRD employees and the CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance, conflicts of interest and voting conflicts, and travel authorization requests among other things. The trainings include Boards and Commissions members, JEA employees filing financial disclosures, Accounting Department employees, and contract administrators. The Ethics Commission has also been very busy. Seventeen applicants applied for the Ethics Commission vacancy and fourteen applicants were interviewed by the Nominating Committee. The Ethics Office and OGC performed a conflict of interest review for five or six of the applicants. The Ethics Office also has worked on legislative matters including changes proposed by the Ethics Commission to Ordinance 2025-658 and reviewed Ordinance 2025-775 that would add an additional section to the Jacksonville Ethics Code. Ms. Oberdorfer attended a meeting with Council Member Miller and Inspector General Lascell regarding the work of both offices. It was a great meeting and there will be a follow-up meeting.

Office of General Counsel: Mr. Reingold mentioned there was nothing additional to report. OGC and the Ethics Office work on many things together and the matters he would report on overlap with the ECO Office report from Ms. Oberdorfer.

Open Government Committee: Ms. Gettinger stated the Open Government Committee met and worked on a media and social media plan outreach campaign regarding the Ethics Commission work and duties and what citizens should know about recent changes to the process for filing a complaint with the Ethics Commission due to additional restrictions to complaints enacted in SB 7014 last year. The plan will soon be presented to the Ethics Commission. Ms. Gettinger credited Mr. Maule for initiating the plan.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Gettinger stated the Nominating Committee met to interview applicants for a forthcoming vacancy on the Ethics Commission. She thanked the members of the Nominating Committee and the Ethics Office staff for their work preparing for the meeting and participation during the meeting. Ms. Gettinger reported that there were many good candidates, and the Committee reached a consensus to recommend Chief Angella Beckom for appointment to the Ethics Commission and also recommend Brandon Cooper as the alternate. Judge McCallum made a motion to approve the appointment of Chief Beckom to the Ethics Commission to fill the forthcoming vacancy. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. No public comment was provided. The motion passed 8-0 in favor. Chief Beckom introduced herself to the Ethics Commission and provided a brief summary of her background. Chief Beckom stated she looks forward to serving on the Ethics Commission.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to appoint Mr. Cooper as the alternate for the Ethics Commission vacancy. Judge McCallum seconded the motion. No public comment was provided. The motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Ms. Oberdorfer advised Mr. Maule is being reappointed to a second term by Public Defender Charlie Cofer and the Chief Judge is still considering his appointment for Judge McCallum's position when she completes her term at the end of the year.

Complaints Committee: Mr. Maule stated there is one pending complaint that will be returned.

Legislative Committee: Ms. Blank stated the Legislative Committee will meet on Monday, October 27 to consider potential legislation regarding the use of City resources by first responders in campaign advertisements. Ms. Oberdorfer advised she has notified both JSO and JFRD of the Legislative Committee meeting and requested their participation during the meeting on behalf of the Committee.

Old Business:

Mr. Reingold posed a question regarding whether the Ethics Commission preferred to approve at this meeting or the next meeting the Open Government Committee's outreach plan Ms. Gettinger referenced in her report of the recent Open Government Committee meeting. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the Open Government Committee's recommendation regarding the outreach plan. Mr. Maule and Mr. Mulholland seconded the motion. No public comment was provided. The motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Ordinance 2025-658: Ms. Oberdorfer referenced a copy of the final version of the bill approved by City Council and explained some of the minor changes to the legislation that differed from the Ethics Commission's recommendations. Ms. Oberdorfer advised Ordinance 2025-658 will take effect by the next Council meeting.

Ethics Office Budget FY 2025-2026: Ms. Oberdorfer stated that City Council adopted the recommended budget for the Ethics Office presented by the Mayor without any changes to the budget.

New Business:

Ordinance 2025-775: Ms. Oberdorfer stated this legislation introduced by Council Member Carlucci will potentially add a new section to the Jacksonville Ethics Code under the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission. Ordinance 2025-775 would prohibit lobbyists and principals of lobbyists from giving gifts to elected officials for the purposes of lobbying. Council Member Carlucci has agreed to defer the bill. Ms. Oberdorfer will do additional research to understand the impact of the bill on the current gift restrictions in state and local ethics laws. Dr. Freiburger referred Ordinance 2025-775 to the Legislative Committee.

Election of Officers: Ms. Homrighouse will send out an email polling Ethics Commission members regarding their interest in serving as Chair or Vice Chair of the Commission in 2026. If an Ad Hoc Committee is needed to provide a recommendation to the Ethics Commission for officer elections, Judge McCallum and Ms. Palestrant expressed interest in serving on the committee.

Holiday Celebration: Mr. Maule, Judge McCallum and Dr. Freiburger expressed interest in having a holiday celebration at Orsay restaurant. The Ethics Office will follow up with additional information.

Schedule Date for Next Ethics Commission Meeting: The Ethics Commission members scheduled the next Ethics Commission meeting for Wednesday, November 12 at 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment: Dr. Freiburger asked for public comment. Ms. Russell offered public comment.

Announcements: Ms. Oberdorfer announced with great sadness that Paige Johnston is leaving the Ethics Office. Members of the Ethics Commission congratulated and thanked Ms. Johnston for her service and stated she will be missed.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO	Date of Approval
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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>.