

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

ERICH FREIBERGER
CHAIR



WILLIAM MAULE
VICE CHAIR

ROBYN BLANK
SUNNY GETTINGER
JUDGE LINDA MCCALLUM

SEAN MULHOLLAND
LEAH PALESTRANT
SCOTT SIMPSON
DAVID THOMPSON

ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

City Hall, Mezzanine Floor, Exam Room 1
Tuesday, May 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Dr. Freiberger. Attendees: Chair Erich Freiberger, Vice Chair William Maule, Robyn Blank, Scott Simpson, Sean Mulholland (departed 5:02 p.m.), David Thompson (departed 4:48 p.m.), Sunny Gettinger, and Judge Linda McCallum via phone.

Excused Absence: Leah Palestrant

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) departed 4:52 p.m.

Public In Attendance: John Nooney, Walette Stanford, David Johnston

Confirmation of Quorum-Extraordinary Circumstance:

Dr. Freiberger confirmed the quorum. Judge McCallum requested to attend the meeting telephonically due to extraordinary circumstances preventing her from attending the meeting in person. Judge McCallum explained she is in Colorado on a previously planned vacation and could not fly back for the meeting. Mr. Thompson made a motion that Judge McCallum be able to attend the meeting telephonically due to her extraordinary circumstance. Ms. Gettinger seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the vote was 7-0 in favor (vote by Ethics Commission members physically present in the room).

Minutes Approval:

Nominating Committee Meeting – November 18, 2024

Ethics Commission Meeting – November 18, 2024

Ethics Commission Meeting – January 15, 2025

Complaints Committee Meeting – March 26, 2025

Mr. Mulholland made a motion for approval of all the minutes listed above. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Reports:

ECO Office: Ms. Oberdorfer stated the Ethics Office has been very busy. The Ethics Office staff is working on trainings, conflicts of interest, gifts questions and travel questions.

Office of General Counsel: No report

Complaints Committee: Mr. Maule stated there are no pending complaints.

Old Business: Approval of Ethics Commission Strategic Plan: Ms. Oberdorfer referred to the strategic plan document. Ms. Oberdorfer added additional measures at the end of row two and the committee restructure in row five. A discussion occurred regarding the modifications. Mr. Simpson made a motion for approval of the strategic plan with the modifications listed above. Mr. Mulholland seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

New Business: Approval of Recommended Revisions to Ethics Commission Complaint Procedures Rules 5(d), 6(a) and 15:

Ms. Oberdorfer referred to the document titled “Proposed Changes to Ethics Commission Complaint Procedures Complaints and Referrals Committee Recommendations” and reviewed the following proposed changes:

- (a) In Rule 5(d), change the method required for delivering a Complaint or Referral to the Respondent. Changed provision that authorized delivery of Complaint or Referral only through hand delivery or certified mail to allow delivery through the method requested by the Respondent. Eliminate requirement that the Respondent submit a written request to the Ethics Office for delivery of a Complaint or Referral by means other than hand delivery or certified mail. Delete “by certified mail” language in Rule 5(d).

Add a provision to require delivery of sworn amendments to the Complaint to the Respondent in the same manner that the Complaint or Referral was served.

Authorize the Ethics Office to select a method of delivery for a Complaint or Referral to the Respondent in the event the Respondent does not specify a delivery method, or the Ethics Office is unable to confirm the delivery method with the Respondent.

- (b) In the second paragraph of Rule 6(a), insert after the first sentence a new sentence reading: “If the Ethics Director, with approval of the Chair of the Complaints and Referrals Committee, returns a Complaint under this subsection (a), service to the

Respondent as outlined in Rule 5(d) above is not required; however, the Ethics Director shall inform the Complaints and Referrals Committee of the decision to return the Complaint.”

- (c) Add an additional paragraph at the end of Rule 15(a), to read: “If the Complaints and Referrals Committee or the Commission dismisses a Complaint or Referral under subsections (1) or (2) above, the Commission shall issue a public report stating with particularity its reasons for the dismissal per section 602.934 of the Code. The Ethics Director shall notify the Complainant that submitted the Complaint or the agency that submitted the referral and the Respondent that no investigation or additional action will be taken by the Commission based on the reasons as applicable.”

A discussion occurred regarding the proposed changes. Judge McCallum made a motion for approval of the recommended revisions to the Ethics Commission Complaint Procedures. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Mr. Reingold asked the Ethics Commission to think about reviewing a current procedure where a complaint or referral against a candidate within sixty days of an election will be returned and whether it should be extended to non-candidates as well. A discussion occurred. Mr. Maule would like to know the number of complaints or referrals received against a candidate for each election year. Judge McCallum would like to know how many elections occur in one year. The Ethics Office will gather this information for the next Ethics Commission meeting.

Approval of Recommended Revisions to Ethics Commission Complaint Form:

Ms. Oberdorfer referred to the document titled “Ethics Complaint Form and Instructions” and the two draft complaint forms based on the Complaints and Referrals Committee’s prior input at the last meeting. A discussion occurred. The Ethics Commission members chose form Option 1A and wanted to add to the top of the form the email ethics@coj.net. Also, under number three, the Ethics Commission members wanted to add an instruction (Please check one or more boxes) and an additional reference to post-employment after secondary employment.

Judge McCallum made a motion to approve the instructions and Complaint form Option 1A with the corrections listed above. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed with a vote of 8-0.

Ethics Office Budget FY 2025-2026: Ms. Oberdorfer was asked to reduce the Ethics Office budget by ten percent. Ms. Oberdorfer declined, and the budget remains at the current service level.

Committee Assignments for 2025: Ms. Oberdorfer referred to tab eight containing the 2025 committee assignments.

Executive Director Performance Appraisal for 2024: Ms. Oberdorfer referred to tab nine containing the 2024 Executive Director Performance Appraisal.

Ethics Commission Annual Report 2024: Ms. Oberdorfer referred to tab 10 and reviewed the draft annual report. The report will also be reviewed by Ms. Dixon as past Chair in 2024. Ms. Oberdorfer thanked Ms. Johnston and Ms. Homrighouse for their work on the annual report. Under item 4 of the annual report, Ms. Oberdorfer will add that her reappointment was approved by City Council.

Filing of Form 1 Limited Financial Disclosure Statement—Deadline July 1, 2025: Ms. Oberdorfer reminded the Ethics Commission to file their 2024 Form 1 on the state portal.

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

Announcements: Ms. Oberdorfer thanked Ms. Myers for working on the complaint form.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Sandy Homrighouse

Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO

9-17-25

Date of Approval

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>.