

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, First Floor, Lynwood Roberts Room
Wednesday, September 17, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by William Maule. Attendees: Erich Freiburger via phone, William Maule, Robyn Blank, Scott Simpson, Sean Mulholland, David Thompson (departed 6:25 p.m.), Sunny Gettinger, and Leah Palestrant.

Excused Absence: Linda McCallum

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

Public In Attendance: John Nooney, David Johnston, Angella Beckom, Michael Wilson, Fareeha Abrar, O. Everett, J.J. Dixon, Cory Armstrong, Council Member Matt Carlucci and LaTonya Lipscomb Smith

Confirmation of Quorum-Extraordinary Circumstance:

Mr. Maule confirmed the quorum with 7 Commission Members present. Dr. Freiburger requested to attend the meeting telephonically due to extraordinary circumstances preventing him from attending the meeting in person. Dr. Freiburger explained he is in Texas due to his mother's illness and could not fly back for the meeting. Mr. Thompson made a motion that Dr. Freiburger be able to attend the meeting telephonically due to his 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).

May 13, 2025, Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes Approval:

Mr. Mulholland made a motion for approval of the May 13, 2025 minutes. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Recognition of Former Ethics Commission Chair J.J. Dixon and Member LaTonya Lipscomb Smith and Presentation of Appreciation Awards:

The Ethics Commission presented Ms. Dixon and Ms. Lipscomb awards of appreciation in recognition of their valuable and distinguished years of service on the Commission.

Reports:

ECO Office: Ms. Oberdorfer summarized the main activities and work of the Ethics Office since the Ethics Commission meeting in May. The Ethics Office has provided numerous trainings for City employees and Board and Commission members, including the JTA Board & members of the JTA Executive team, new DIA Executive Director & JFRD Chief, and City-wide Contract Administrator Level 1 training. Additionally, the Ethics Office has committed to providing several future trainings, including the City-wide Contract Administrator Level 2 training, JEA staff regarding financial disclosure filings, Accounting Department employees, and numerous City and independent agency boards. In addition to trainings, the Ethics Office managed the Post-Employment Appeals Committee meeting in early August, during which the Committee granted a waiver of Jacksonville Ordinance Code section 602.412 for a JEA employee. The Ethics Office also has provided extensive advice and guidance regarding prohibitive conflicts of interest for Board appointees and members, City elected officials, employees, and Evaluation Committee Members, as well as voting conflicts for elected officials, travel authorizations for City employees and engaged in extensive budget preparation and process. Finally, the Ethics Office is also in the process of preparing a written request to the State Ethics Commission for an advisory opinion on behalf of members of the City's Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Grants Committee.

Ms. Myers then provided a data dashboard and corresponding chart infographics encapsulating a rough estimate of the significant matters the Ethics Office has worked on over the last 2 years. Ms. Myers explained the top activities of the Ethics Office include issuing advice, reviewing travel authorizations, training activities, engaging with Department Ethics Officers, supporting the Ethics Commission and ensuring compliance with financial disclosure filing requirements. The most common inquiries received by the Ethics Office include prohibitive conflicts (over 180), voting conflicts, gifts (over 108) and travel authorizations. The agencies/departments that account for the majority of the Ethics Office work include City Council with the most usage, followed by Boards and Commissions, Mayor's Office and JFRD, which all total approximately 50% of the Ethics Office work. The Ethics Commission ranks as #16 in the list of agencies/departments utilizing the Ethics Office. Additionally, close to 2,000 people attended or completed training in the last 2 years.

Office of General Counsel: Mr. Reingold mentioned the upcoming Downtown Development and Review Board training requested on Sunshine Law and ethics matters.

Complaints Committee: Mr. Maule stated there are no pending complaints/referrals and referred to the finalized Ethics Commission Complaint Form and Complaint Procedures previously revised and approved by the Ethics Commission at its meeting on May 13, 2025. Mr. Maule advised the

Complaints Committee had previously dismissed a referral from the Office of Inspector General because the Ethics Commission did not have any jurisdiction over the matter.

New Business: Proposed Ordinance 2025-658 Regarding Sunshine Law, Public Records and Ethics Training for Council Members and Executive Council Assistants: Mr. Maule acknowledged Council Member Carlucci. Council Member Carlucci provided his remarks regarding proposed Ordinance 2025-658. Council Member Carlucci shared that he is in favor of keeping the current training requirements in Jacksonville Ordinance Code section 15.108 intact. He said classroom ethics training is essential to maintaining high standards of accountability and credibility in Jacksonville government and the current training allows focus on local, existing issues that are relevant to the Council Members. Mr. Maule thanked Council Member Carlucci for his comments and attendance. Mr. Maule also thanked Council Member Carlucci for his work on Ordinance 2025-612 and advised that during the New Business portion of the Agenda, the Ethics Commission will consider a Resolution thanking City Council and Council Member Carlucci for passing Ordinance 2025-612.

Mr. Maule asked Ms. Oberdorfer to provide a summary of Ordinance 2025-658 for the Ethics Commission members. Ms. Oberdorfer briefly reviewed the materials in Tab 6 in the Commission members' notebooks and advised of Council Member Miller's request for input from the Commission into the legislation. She explained that Council Member Miller, the bill sponsor, graciously deferred the legislation at the Rules Committee meeting on September 15 to obtain input from the Ethics Commission. She gave a historical overview regarding the initial and continuing training requirements of Council Members and Executive Council Assistants ("ECAs") while referencing documents in Tab 6. A lengthy discussion occurred regarding the purpose of Ordinance 2025-658, the impact of the proposed changes in Ordinance 2025-658 on the current training requirements and process for Council Members and ECAs, and the interplay of the provisions in the City of Jacksonville Charter, City's Ethics Code, current Ordinance Code section 15.108 and state law as to training requirements.

Ms. Oberdorfer and Ms. Myers also provided data regarding the method by which Council Members and their Executive Council Assistants have received the annual training over the last several years and results from surveys completed by training attendees that illustrated a high level of satisfaction with the training provided by the Ethics Office. Ms. Oberdorfer and Ms. Myers also shared recommendations for proposed changes to Ordinance 2025-658 that would provide Council Members and ECAs additional and more flexible training opportunities, such as providing additional training on a quarterly basis that would be in 1-hour segments with targeted information geared directly to matters affecting the Council or other hot topics in ethics that would fulfill the Council training requirements. Ms. Myers and Ms. Oberdorfer shared limitations on the external trainings currently provided by the State Ethics Commission and Florida Attorney General's Office, including many of the trainings dating back to 2017 or 2021.

Upon consideration and thorough review of Ordinance 2025-658, the materials and data provided by the Ethics Office on existing training requirements and thoughtful debate, the Commission

reached a consensus that it did not recommend any changes to the current training requirements in section 15.108. Based on qualitative and quantitative data considered at the meeting, the Commission concluded that the current training requirements in section 15.108 ensure the high quality and effectiveness of the ethics training provided by the Ethics Office and the Office of General Counsel including tailored, updated and scenario-based training on matters affecting City Council and ECAs.

The Ethics Commission acknowledged that Council Member Miller stated that the legislation was intended to offer greater flexibility in the completion of the ethics training requirements. The Ethics Commission debated further what, if any, recommendations to offer to the City Council if City Council wanted to enact Ordinance 2025-658. After several recommendations were considered, the Ethics Commission reached consensus and unanimously approved the following recommended changes to Ordinance 2025-658 to provide to City Council:

Ethics Commission Recommended Changes to Ordinance 2025-658 and Ordinance Code section 15.108:

1. One (1) annual in-person/live training totaling 4 credit-hours that meets the criteria outlined in the 2008 Grand Jury Report and Federal Sentencing Guidelines, and satisfies all state and local training requirements.

*This session is geared toward those who prefer to complete training in one session.
2. Four (4) additional in person/live-trainings of 1 credit-hour each, such as lunch and learns or webinars, that provide updates on ethics issues and laws and satisfy the state and local training requirements when all are completed.

**These sessions are geared toward those who find it easier to absorb information in smaller parts and completed on their own pace
3. For those unable to attend the in-person/live training sessions provided by Ethics Office and OGC, recordings of each live training session will be provided to be utilized on an on-demand basis and completed by the end of the calendar year.
4. In-person, one-on-one trainings as needed that count toward the annual state and local training requirements.
5. Council Members and ECAs required to complete at least one hour of local training per year from the options outlined above and may also complete remainder of the training (if local session total less than 4 hours) by outside entities upon concurrence by the Ethics Office and OGC that the outside trainings meet the training requirements in state and local laws and the training standards set forth in the 2008 Grand Jury Report and Federal Sentencing Guidelines.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to send a letter to City Council signed by the Chair, or Mr. Maule as Acting Chair, with the recommendation that no changes in section 15.108 be approved, but if the City Council determined to make changes, it should incorporate the recommendations above

as an amendment to Ordinance 2025-658. Mr. Thompson also requested that specific data discussed regarding the effectiveness of the current training done by the Ethics Office be included as support for no changes to the current training requirements in section 15.108. Mr. Mulholland and Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Mr. Maule asked for public comment. Mr. Nooney provided public comment. With no further discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

New Business: Enacted Ordinance 2025-612-E Restricting Gifts to Elected Officials and Family Members: Ms. Oberdorfer gave background on City Council approving Ordinance 2025-612-E regarding changes to the City's gift policy prohibiting elected officials of the City or their spouse and child(ren) from using City tickets or admission to events for their personal consumption. A discussion followed and the Commission agreed to approve a Resolution recognizing the efforts of the City Council in adopting Ordinance 2025-612-E. Mr. Thompson made a motion to adopt the resolution. Ms. Gettinger seconded the motion. Mr. Maule asked for public comment. There was no public comment. With no further discussion, the motion passed 8-0 in favor.

Old Business: Ethics Office Budget FY 2025-2026: Ms. Oberdorfer referred to the budget reports in the notebooks and reported that the City Council Finance Committee did not recommend any changes to the Ethics Office budget as presented by the Mayor. Salaries increased due to collective bargaining.

New Business: Summary of Ethics Commission Legislative Work, Including Disclosure of Travel and Gifts, Use of City Resources in Campaign Advertisements, and Registration and Reporting for Political Consultants: Ms. Oberdorfer reminded the Ethics Commission of Judge McCallum's request in a prior meeting this year that the Ethics Commission consider being proactive and proposing legislation. Ms. Oberdorfer further advised that Dr. Freiburger requested the following three matters be added to the Agenda for consideration due to prior consideration of these topics by the Ethics Commission Legislative Committee in prior meetings:

Travel and Gift Disclosures

Use of City Resources in Campaigns

Registration and Reporting for Political Consultants

A discussion occurred. Dr. Freiburger suggested the Legislative Committee work on these matters. Ms. Homrighouse will poll the members for a meeting time.

New Business: Community Outreach: Mr. Maule would like more Ethics Commission community outreach done. A discussion occurred regarding the news, radio, social media and Rotary Clubs. Ms. Oberdorfer suggested the Open Government Committee work on this matter. Ms. Homrighouse will poll the members for a meeting time.

New Business: Expiration of Ethics Commission Members' Terms, Selection of Nominating Committee and Process For Upcoming Ethics Commission Vacancy: Mr. Simpson announced he will be resigning when his term is up due to unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Maule's first term is

also set to expire, and Mr. Maule will be reappointed by Judge Cofer. Chief Judge Day will appoint a new member as Judge McCallum will be resigning when her first full term is up. Dr. Freiburger delegated to Mr. Maule the selection of the Nominating Committee in his absence. Mr. Mulholland, Ms. Palestrant and Ms. Gettinger expressed interest in serving on the Nominating Committee. Ms. Gettinger expressed interest in serving as Chair. Acting Chair Maule announced each as members of the Nominating Committee: Mr. Mulholland, Ms. Palestrant and Ms. Gettinger, with Ms. Gettinger being the Chair.

The next Ethics Commission meeting was set for Tuesday, October 21 at 4:00 p.m. The Nominating Committee meeting was set for Friday, October 17 at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Oberdorfer referred to the documents in the notebook regarding the process for the Ethics Commission vacancy and noted the timeframe outlined in the documents provided by staff to the Ethics Commission; she noted that the Rules Committee date needed to be updated. Ms. Gettinger made a motion to accept the documents with the Rules Committee date change. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Mr. Maule asked for public comment. There was no public comment. With no further discussion, the motion passed 7-0 in favor. (Mr. Thompson left the meeting at 6:25 p.m. before this vote was taken).

Public Comment: Mr. Maule asked for public comment. Mr. Nooney offered public comment.

Announcements: Ms. Oberdorfer thanked the Ethics Commission, the Ethics Office staff and Mr. Reingold.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Sandy Homrighouse

Sandy Homrighouse, Executive Assistant, OECO

10-21-25

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>.