

Jackson County, Missouri

Commissioners
Howard Lotven, Chairman
Roger Davis
Mary Shannon
Keith Curnutt
Jacquelyn Eidson



Jackson County Courthouse
415 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
(816)881-3670

Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission

<p>Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 21st, 2025, at 5:15p.m.. Fifth Regular Meeting</p>
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1. Call to Order

Howard Lotven, Chairman, called the first regular meeting of the Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission to order at 5:15p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present 2 – Howard Lotven, Mary Shannon

Absent 2 – Jacquelyn Eidson, Keith Curnutt

Excused – NONE

3. Introduction of OEHRCC Staff and Guests

Present – Director Chris Crawford, Complaint Officer Alexandria Gold-Barnes

4. Approval of Minutes

A quorum was not in place, thus, a vote to approve the minutes of the fourth regular meeting could not be made. The fourth regular meeting minutes will be available to the public in compliance with state law.

5. Director's Report

Budget

At the end of June, the county finally passed the 2025 budget. As previously discussed, prior to the adoption of this new budget, the legislature and county administration were unable to agree, and each department/office was operating on last year's budget with a

directive to only spend funds on necessary operations and maintenance expenses. This also caused annual merit increases to salaries to be delayed and created significant issues with morale and progress within departments. Now that the budget has been adopted, departments are on a tight deadline to get funds dedicated to new contracts and projects before the end of the year. Merit increases that were delayed by the lack of a budget have been paid and retroactive pay has been provided where appropriate, but the effects on county operations are still felt throughout departments. The 2026 budget process is also underway. OEHRCC will finalize our 2026 budget request and present it to the administration by the end of September. Following that process, we will present the budget to the legislature in November and will hope to have it adopted by the end of the year. The 2026 budget request will include new funds for some necessary office furniture and renovations that have been delayed in anticipation of a move to 1300 Washington. The possibility of the move has become uncertain, and these projects must be addressed.

Complainant Protection

The previously discussed complainant protection language that our office has been working on has stalled in the legislative process, and has not yet received approval from the full legislature. The office will continue working with the legislature to try to resolve any concerns they have in an effort to move the legislation forward.

Collection

The collection department has implemented new software that should streamline the user experience for both taxpayers and associates, making it more effective and efficient. The department has also fully implemented the senior property tax credit program.

Assessment/Board of Equalization (BOE)

The 2025 reassessment process was completed, and valuation notices were mailed out around May. The deadline for BOE appeals to be filed was in July. In total, there were 11,396 appeals filed for 2025. The BOE has already worked through just over 3,000 of those, leaving around 8,000 remaining. They will 2 of 2 continue working through the appeals as efficiently as possible, and are generally holding at least three full days of hearings each week.

County Executive

A recall election for the county executive is currently scheduled for September 30th, although the county executive has noted that the court processes have not been exhausted, indicating that he will continue to appeal the decision to hold the election so soon. For the past several weeks, the legislature, the Kansas City and Jackson County election boards, and the county executive have debated the process and timelines for the recall election. Initially, after the 43,000 signatures of the recall petition were certified, the legislature passed an ordinance calling for the recall election to be held on August 26th. Both election boards expressed concerns with this date, stating that it would not afford enough time to organize the election and ensure mail-in and absentee voting could take place as the law requires. With these concerns in mind, they filed a lawsuit against the county requesting that the date be pushed back. The county executive also vetoed the ordinance

passed by the legislature, citing concerns from the election boards as well as concerns for funding a standalone election. The legislature overrode the county executive's veto of the ordinance and it was allowed to move forward. Finally, a judge ruled on the lawsuit filed by the election boards and pushed the date of the election back from August 26th to September 30th . If the county executive is recalled, the seat will become vacant and must be filled by an individual selected by the county legislature. The individual must be from the same party as the county executive and would serve out the remainder of the current term, which ends in January 2027. Additionally, the county executive has announced that he does not intend to run for reelection after his current term ends next year

6. Approval of Case Summaries

Cases were reviewed by commissioners independently. A quorum was not in place; thus, a vote could not be made to approve the director's report with the case summaries.

7. New Business

NONE

8. Unfinished Business

Complaints #25106 and #25107

Howard Lotven and Chris Crawford met with the complainants to obtain more information and descriptions of the events that took place. Chris Crawford has contacted the legislator to set up a meeting to discuss the complaint in detail but has yet to receive any communication back. Following the meeting, Howard Lotven will determine whether an ethics violation has taken place and make recommendations on further behavior.

Complaint #25092

Howard Lotven spoke with the State Judicial Review Commission to determine if this case had been litigated in the past or if there were opinions provided to the 16th circuit court regarding this complaint. It was determined an opinion had not been provided but the state does not differentiate between permanent or temporary positions meaning a dual appointment would violate state statute. The judge in this case is arguing they have the right to accept a dual appointment under the constitution, which takes precedence over the state statute. At this time, the municipal judge revoked the dual appointment of the circuit judge and replaced him with a local municipal judge. Howard Lotven is awaiting further communication and review of the case by the State Judicial Review Commission. The Ethics commission cannot currently make any recommendations about future appointments as there is not a quorum in place.

9. Public Comments

NONE

10. Adjournment

Due to the lack of a quorum, Howard Lotven declares the meeting adjourned.