

# Jackson County, Missouri

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



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

## **Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission**

<p><b>Meeting Minutes</b> <b>Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.</b> <b>Ninth Regular Meeting</b></p>
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### **1. Call to Order**

Howard Lotven, Chairman, called the ninth regular meeting of the Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission to order.

### **2. Roll Call**

Present 5 – Howard Lotven, Mary Shannon, Jacquelyn Eidson, Roger Davis, Keith Curnutt

Absent NONE

Excused NONE

### **3. Introduction of OEHRCC Staff and Guests**

Present – Director Chris Crawford, Complaint Officer Anita Mackerel, Administrative Assistant Alexandra Gold-Barnes

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt, to approve the July 2023, regular meeting minutes. The motion passed with a voice vote.

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Mary Shannon, to approve the August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, special meeting minutes. The motion passed with a voice vote.

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt, to approve the August 2023, regular meeting minutes. The motion passed with a voice vote.

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt, to approve the director's report with the case summaries for August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The motion passed with a voice vote.

## **5. Director's Report**

The budget request for 2024 was sent to commissioners. Director Crawford also presented the budget to the legislature as well as the administration, who will include it in their full budget recommendation to the county executive. The legislature will begin having final department budget hearings and the full county budget will be approved by the end of the year.

The assessment department has reviewed just over half of all property valuation appeals. The BOE is reporting a high number of no-shows to hearings despite citizens being notified of their appointments. The BOE will work to arrange make-up hearings for those who missed their initial hearing.

The cities of Lee's Summit and Independence have filed lawsuits against the county over the reassessment process. The lawsuits point to an unfair and inconsistent process, failure to properly notify taxpayers, failure to complete physical inspections as required by law among other things. Following the state auditor's preliminary review of Tyler Technology's role in the reassessment process, the auditor has been invited by the legislature to conduct a full investigation of the processes.

Dr. Lindsay Haldiman, previously Deputy Director Medical Examiner, is the new county medical examiner following Dr. Marius Tarau's resignation. Vacancies have been filled in both the human resources and finance departments. The executive assistant to the county executive position has been filled following Miriam Hennosy's retirement.

Meeting minutes, agendas, and other documents are currently available to citizens upon request. The office will begin transitioning to posting available documents online without needing a request to make access easier for citizens. Any documents older than a few months will still need to be requested.

The OEHRCC has so far received and reviewed 141 formal complaints this year. At this time last year, the number of formal complaints was 41. The assessment department and their processes constitute roughly half of all complaints for 2023.

## **6. Approval of Case Summaries**

Anita Mackerel presented case summaries #112-141 received in August 2023.

CASE #112

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #113

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #114

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #115

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #116

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #117

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #118

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #119

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #120

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #121

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #122

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #123

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #124

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #125

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #126

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #127

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #128

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #129

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #130

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #131

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #132

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #133

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #134

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #135

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #136

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #137

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #138

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #139

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #140

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #141

Reviewed, no questions

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt to approve the director's report and case summaries. The motion passed with a voice vote.

## **7. New Business**

A complaint was filed against the board of equalization and Jackson County that was labeled by the complainant as an ethics complaint. A complaint is determined to be an ethics complaint if the alleged action involves article 10 of the charter or chapter 9 of the county code. Any complaint that does not regard those sections, by default, is categorized as a citizen complaint. Roger Davis questioned whether the complaint in question is one of ethical concerns. If so, it must be in writing, signed, and cite the chapter of the code that was violated. Director Crawford and Chairman Lotven had previously discussed whether the complaint should be categorized as an ethics or citizen complaint, and how to best handle the investigation. After discussion, the commission elected to dismiss the complaint as an ethics complaint and proceed with it as a citizen complaint, and that no formal hearings will be held on the complaint at this time.

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt, to deny the categorization as an ethics complaint and any formal hearing that would result from such. The motion passes with a voice vote.

## **8. Unfinished Business**

Regarding the budget and seeing there are no provisions for worker's compensation, Roger Davis questioned whether that information needs to be added. Director Crawford stated that the total will be calculated and added into the administration's final proposal, but the budget office calculates those totals rather than individual departments/offices.

Four thousand dollars was budgeted for computer software for employee feedback surveys and ongoing tracking. Chris Crawford clarifies the money is for access to create and modify surveys for employee feedback. This would allow an employee from the OEHRCC, human resources, legislature, and the county administration to have administrative-level access to the survey data.

There were decreases in the office's postage and printing budgets. There was an increase in the copier rental and maintenance budget attributable to the increase in complaints.

A motion was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt to approve the budget as proposed. The motion passed with a voice vote.

## **9. Public Comments**

Ellen Cardel questions how it is ethical for a county government to dispossess people from their homes based on egregious increases in their taxes. Howard Lotven states this question is part of the state auditor's investigation into the assessment and re-assessment process for 2023. The question also makes an appearance in the class action lawsuits against the county. Ellen states that despite the investigations, citizens will begin receiving tax bills they cannot afford to pay. Howard Lotven encourages her to contact her county legislator. Director Crawford states that what most people consider

to be ethical is not part of the county's ethics codes, limiting the commission's ability to make recommendations about such items. The OEHRCC is working to rewrite the county's ethics code to help solve this problem.

Maris Hueing states she felt intimidated throughout the reassessment process by employees. She states that she was encouraged to utilize comparable properties that did not fit Missouri law, and that employees were looking at the most expensive properties regardless of her location or neighborhood. She brought in comparisons that were done professionally within her neighborhood and states that when employees realized she understood the process, they relented and were more accommodating. Maris states her worry over hiring a large company to handle our data and their blatant breaking of Missouri law. She has spoken with her legislator.

Teresa Vollenweider complains of the use of out-of-date comps for the assessment process. Teresa states that Tyler Technologies has an unlimited amount of time to find new comps while citizens have strict guidelines. Additionally, Teresa has concerns about the county's online parcel viewer system, stating that a quarter of an acre of her property has disappeared despite not having sold or subcontracted the land. She questions whether the assessment department has a responsibility to explain changes to shown on the parcel viewer. Teresa states additional complaints about the multiple different boards, panels, and reviews citizens must go through.

## **10. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Roger Davis, seconded by Kieth Curnutt. The motion passed by a voice vote and the commission adjourned at 7:22 pm.