

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

Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 15th, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. Eighth Regular Meeting

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present 4 – Howard Lotven, Mary Shannon, Jacquelyn Eidson, Keith Curnutt

Absent – NONE

Excused 1 – Roger Davis

A motion was made by Mary Shannon, seconded by Jacquelyn Eidson to excuse the absence of Roger Davis from the sixth, seventh, and eighth regular meetings of 2024. The motion passed with a voice vote.

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 Keith Curnutt, seconded by Jacquelyn Eidson to approve the seventh regular meeting minutes. The motion passed with a voice vote.

5. Director's Report

Assessment

There have been several updates to the legal and procedural battles surrounding the 2023 reassessment process since the commission's last meeting. The attorney general's (AG) lawsuit against the county has been dismissed after a series of events that many throughout the county find confusing. In recent weeks, the county counselor's office alleged that the AG committed ethical violations in the case by meeting privately with a county official, who is an opposing party in the case. The county requested the opportunity to depose the AG about these allegations, but the AG attempted to block the deposition. Ultimately, the court ruled that the AG must sit for a deposition about the potential ethical violations he committed. The day before the AG was scheduled to be deposed, the State Tax Commission (STC) issued an order requiring the county to roll back the 2023 reassessments and cap them at 15%, stating that they believed the reassessment process was completed in an illegal and unfair manner. On that same day, the AG filed a motion to dismiss his case against the county, stating that the case was no longer necessary due to the STC's order. The judge agreed to dismiss the case. The AG stated that this is a victory for taxpayers and that the STC order will finally bring them relief, while the county has stated that the STC does not have the legal authority to issue such an order and following the order would lead to serious negative financial consequences for the county's taxing jurisdictions, who have already received funding generated by 2023 property tax payments. The county stated that they will challenge the STC order. Regarding the alleged ethical violations committed by the AG in the case, since the case was dismissed prior to the deposition, the AG did not have to discuss the allegations. Although the AG's case has been dismissed, the state auditor's full audit of the 2023 reassessment process is still ongoing.

Legislative Updates & Commission Vacancies

OEHRCC met with the legislature's Rules Committee again in July to provide a report on the office's work. In addition to updates on cases and ongoing projects, a focus of the presentation to the committee was on the importance of filling the vacancies on the commission. Since several legislators have inquired about vacancies and how they are filled, OEHRCC provided an overview of the process and the current state of commission membership. The county executive's office was in attendance and committed to working to fill the current vacancies, stating that they were waiting to hear from members of the current nominating committee on whether they would be willing to move forward with new nominations at this time. If they are ready to move forward, new appointments could potentially happen before the end of 2 of 9 the year. If not, a new nominating committee will have to be formed and the vacancies will extend into 2025.

Complaint Dropbox

In previous meetings we have discussed our attempts to improve the options for citizens and associates to file complaints anonymously. Currently, complaint forms can be submitted without a name or contact information electronically, by mail, or by being

dropped off in the OEHRCC office in-person. We believe some complainants may wish to drop forms off without having to see and interact with OEHRCC staff, especially if they are recognizable or if the subject matter is sensitive. To address this, we are installing a complaint form drop box outside the office, where complaints can be dropped off without having to interact with anyone face-to-face. This may also be beneficial for anytime that a complainant wants to file a complaint or drop something off when the OEHRCC office is closed. We also plan to offer a “suggestion” form in addition to our complaint form, to allow a constructive alternative to the complaint process.

6. Approval of Case Summaries

Anita Mackerel presented case summaries #24124-24144. There were no questions or comments.

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Eidson, seconded by Keith Curnutt to approve the director’s report with the case summaries. The motion passed with a voice vote.

7. New Business

NONE

8. Unfinished Business

It is decided that an in-person meeting will take place in September or October.

Sheriff Forte has agreed to written discussions regarding the complaints from the detention center.

9. Public Comments

NONE

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Keith Curnutt, seconded by Mary Shannon. The motion passed with a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 pm.