

# 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, February 16, 2023</b> <b>Second Regular Meeting</b></p>
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### **1. Call to Order**

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

### **2. Roll Call**

Present 7 – Howard Lotven, Mary Shannon, Davin Gordon, Jacquelyn Eidson, Roger Davis, Lewis Jones, Keith Curnutt

Absent NONE

A motion was made by Keith Curnutt and seconded by Roger Davis to excuse Davin Gordon's absence from the January meeting of the commission. The motion passed by 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 Roger Davis, seconded by Keith Curnutt to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2023 meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

## 5. Director's Report

The ethics training makeup session will take place directly after the meeting for any board members who were not present for the first training session or who wish to attend again.

Conversations about filling the empty commissioner role have been delayed, potentially due to the county executive's focus on working with new legislators as they get settled in and getting the county budget passed. Director Crawford will have updated information at the March 2023 meeting.

The assessment department has removed the option to mail in any personal property tax declarations. All declarations must be made online with a given PIN number. This has caused an increase in complaints to the office. Additionally, calls to the assessment department and in-person lines for personal property declaration are reaching wait times of up to three hours. OEHRCC is working with the assessment department to keep track of trends in complaints regarding the new system.

The 2023 budget has been approved by legislators. Legislators overrode several line-item vetoes made by the county executive's office. These overrides allow for more funds to be allocated to legislative staff and associated costs.

Conversations regarding the new Jackson County Detention Center were stalled while new legislators took office. New legislators have taken office and funding conversations have been renewed. Conversations center on budget allocation, programs provided, number of beds, etc.

The new legislators have walked through the new administrative building at 13<sup>th</sup> and Washington. The timeline for moving into the building has been pushed to April or May of this year. No office functions should be impacted by the move.

Director Crawford is working with the payroll department to establish a payment schedule for commissioners. A date will be established for payments to be distributed every month.

County administration would like the commission to determine whether meetings will continue to be held over Zoom or if there is a desire to return to in person meetings. A hybrid approach could be taken where the meeting is held in person and any commissioners who would like to join via Zoom would have the option. The decision will be made in the future.

### **Approval of Case Summaries**

Anita Mackerel presented case summaries ##1-17 received in January 2023.

CASE #1

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #2

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #3

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #4

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #5

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #6

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #7

Reviewed

Question: Was there any additional information on why the sheriff chose to implement this policy?

Answer: The determination to implement this policy was at the sole discretion of the sheriff, and no further explanation was provided.

CASE #8

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #9

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #10

Reviewed

Question: Why was the county not responsible for payment when the citizen could prove intent to pay?

Answer: The reason that the payment did not go through was not at the fault of the county. There was an issue on the citizen's end that resulted in non-payment.

CASE #11

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #12

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #13

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #14

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #15

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #16

Reviewed, no questions

CASE #17

Reviewed, no questions

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

**6. New Business**

NONE

**7. Unfinished Business**

NONE

**8. Public Comments**

James Frank Abbott present. Chairman Lotven states that he has received seventeen emails from Mr. Abbott since the January 2023 meeting. Mr. Lotven asks for agreement that any additional emails will not be considered in the review of the complaints he is working on. Any new emails will not be included in the summary report of Mr. Abbott's email complaints. Mr. Abbott reiterated that his complaints stand alone and any emails he sends are not meant to be addendums to the complaints.

Mr. Abbott questions why his complaints are treated differently in the processing of them. Chairman Lotven states that other citizens submit one complaint regarding one person while Mr. Abbott has a higher volume of complaints. The commission would like all of Mr. Abbott's complaints to be addressed at the same time. Chairman Lotven states that in the January 2023 meeting, he noted that any emails sent after February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 will not be addressed until all other complaints have been addressed and finalized.

Mr. Abbott states that he also compiled a list of witnesses associated with his complaints and notes that many of these witnesses may have never been questioned, and some may have not left the county and be inaccessible. Mr. Abbot continues that he was under the impression that the complaint process would be such that all parties involved would be questioned and would have the opportunity to respond to what the others have said, but that he will await for the report from Mr. Lotven.

Mr. Abbott states that he does not feel that he has been treated fairly regarding the complaint process. He also states that he has joined a citizen's association to help fight

government corruption. He goes on to give examples of how the county government has wronged its citizens.

Mr. Abbott states that the commission is meant to be independent from the county government and the budget needs to be increased to fight government corruption. He states that the commission is responsible for fighting corruption. He also states that citizens will begin to complain in numbers.

## **9. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Keith Curnutt, seconded by Davin Gordon. The motion passed by a voice vote.