

Jackson County, Missouri

Commissioners
Howard Lotven, Chairman
Mary Shannon
Jacquelyn Eidson
Keith Curutt



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, July 3rd, 2025, at 1:00p.m.. Fourth Regular Meeting</p>
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1. Call to Order

Howard Lotven, Chairman, called the fourth regular meeting of the Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission to order at 1:00p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present 2 – Howard Lotven, Jacquelyn Eidson

Absent – Mary Shannon, Keith Curnutt

Excused – NONE

3. Introduction of OEHRCC Staff and Guests

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

4. Review and Consideration of Complaints #25092, #25106, and #25107

Cases #25106 and #25107

Complaints allege misconduct and ethics code violations against a county legislator. The complainants state that the legislator sent out a newsletter with a link to a YouTube video that explained common personal property tax assessment issues. At the end of the video, the legislator called for the recall of County Executive Frank White Jr and directed everyone watching the video to a link to sign the recall petition. The newsletter was sent using county-provided and funded software, and contained the county seal and the language “sent on behalf of Jackson County.” The social media channels linked to the video in the newsletter are also associated with the political campaign of the legislator.

Under chapter 9 of the county code article 913(b) states that public officials should not act or create the appearance of acting as their own opinions are those of the county. Article 913(c) states that elected officials should not represent their own opinions as those of the county. Article 913(e) states that county resources are not to be used as unofficial or non-county business. The allegations made by the complainants in these cases may be enough to substantiate these sections of chapter 9. Per chapter 9, the legislator was notified of the complaint when the commission received notification. At the time of the commission meeting, the video had been edited to remove the portion calling for the recall of the county executive, per the complainants.

Howard Lotven recommends approving this as an ethics complaint and beginning an investigation. After discussion it is determined that an interview with the legislator regarding the complaint will take place, after which evidence will be brought to the commission and a decision will be made on how to proceed.

Case #25092

An anonymous letter received by the OEHRCC alleges a violation of state statute against the county municipal judge. The letter states that the municipal judge is serving in multiple jurisdictions which is a violation of state statute. The judge is currently serving in both Jackson County and Greenwood, Missouri. It is unclear according to state statutes if it is a violation to serve in multiple capacities in a relief capacity or only in a full-time role. During the previous year the OEHRCC received a similar complaint accusing the county municipal judge of serving in multiple capacities. At the time, the presiding judge of the 16th circuit court appointed the municipal judge to serve in a temporary relief capacity in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The presiding judge and the 16th circuit court asserted at the time that this was allowed under state statute, however, the judge relieved himself of the temporary position to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Howard Lotven recommends contacting the state's office of legal ethics and advisory commission to determine if they have previously issued an opinion on this subject, or if they are willing to issue one at this time. This may help the commission to determine whether serving temporary relief capacity is allowable, and if an ethics violation has occurred. Mr. Lotven recommends accepting this complaint as an ethics complaint and beginning an investigation. After discussion, the commission agrees. The investigation will begin and the results will be presented to the commission, at which time they will make a decision on how to proceed.

5. New Business

NONE

6. Unfinished Business

A copy of the conclusion letter in case #25076 will be sent to commissioners upon completion.

7. Public Comment

NONE

8. Adjournment

Howard Lotven adjourns the fourth regular meeting at 1:18 p.m.