Jackson County, Missouri

Commissioners
Howard Lotven, Chairman
Mary Shannon
Jacquelyn Eidson
Brent Herrick
Karen Baker

Jackson County Courthouse
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Kansas City, Missouri 64106
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Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizen Complaints Commission

Minutes
Eighth Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 5:15p.m.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

   Present: 4 - Howard Lotven, Jacquelyn Eidson, Karen Baker, Mary Shannon
   Absent: 1 – Brent Herrick

3. Introduction of OEHRCC Staff and Members of the Public

   Present 3 – OEHRCC Staff Director Chris Crawford, Complaint Officer Lisa Kinney, Administrative Assistant Ashley Blaco

4. Approval of Minutes

   A motion was made by Karen Baker and seconded by Jacquelyn Eidson to approve the seventh regular meeting minutes for July. The motion passed with a voice vote.

5. Director's Report

   County Executive

   The county executive has been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges relating to alleged actions associated with the 2026 county executive election. The county executive held a press conference last week, shortly after pleading not guilty to the

charges in federal court. During the press conference, the county executive announced his intention to remain in the role until the conclusion of his term. Currently, there is no indication that these charges have impacted on the day-to-day operations of county departments or associates, and the county is conducting business as usual. We will monitor the situation and report any additional updates or concerns to the commission.

Mary Shannon asked whether the county executive was still meeting with employees like he has been. Chris Crawford asked whether she was referring to the "Fridays with Phil" program. Mary Shannon confirmed. Chris Crawford responded that it was unknown at the time. Chris Crawford stated that the county executive attended the most recent monthly department leadership meeting and emphasized professionalism and stability.

Election Results

Elected Officials
The August primary results revealed that the county will have a minimum of seven new legislators next year (out of nine in total). This, in addition to a new county executive, marks a big transition for the county, and may lead to new direction, policy initiatives, and solutions. We look forward to working with the new administration and new elected officials when they arrive ready to improve county government, but we remain committed to assisting the current administration and officials through the rest of the year.

Amendment 2
Statewide voters passed amendment 2 overwhelmingly, with more than 76% of voters supporting the measure. This state constitutional amendment will require all charter counties, including Jackson County, to elect a county assessor. Prior to this amendment, all other charter counties already had an elected assessor. This state constitutional amendment was proposed in addition to the amendment to the county charter, which county residents passed with 88% of the vote in 2025, to require the county assessor to be an elected position beginning in 2028.

Karen Baker commented that the leadership change is going to be interesting. Chris Crawford responded that the upcoming change would be a good opportunity for fresh ideas in the county. Karen Baker agreed.

Jackson County Detention Center (JCDC) Updates

JCDC complaints have increased sharply over the last approximately 45 days. With this increase, we've noticed trends in complaints relating to confinement, administration, medical needs, officer behavior and supervision, and more. The increase in complaints has also caused us to be in more frequent contact with the JCDC, and the number of complaints they receive from us has made tracking and monitoring the progress of each complaint difficult for both our office and the JCDC. To address this, we spoke with JCDC leadership and agreed to some improved communications strategies between our two agencies, including pre-agreed response timelines and expectations for follow-ups if those timelines are not met, more frequent reporting from our office, and improved communication about policy changes, in addition to some other changes. We are hopeful that these changes will improve efficiency and level of service for both OEHRCC and the JCDC.

Chris Crawford stated that he estimated 80% of complaints are currently coming from the JCDC. There are a few trending subjects among the complaints: confinement, administration/leadership, medication issues, and facilities issues. Chris Crawford reports the number of complaints is concerning because the hope had been that moving into the new facility would result in a decrease in complaints.

Chris Crawford stated that communication and the ability to get information on cases has improved since the recent conversation with the JCDC. It can be difficult sometimes to be extremely engaged at the JCDC due to a lack of direct oversight. Oversight is the responsibility of the sheriff, and there have been some issues with addressing concerns over the years. Chris Crawford stated he is working on ways to improve this and will share more moving forward. Chris Crawford emphasized that he wants the commission to be aware of the increasing complaints, to have the knowledge that the office is pursuing each compliant and has been trying to create strategies to improve the ability to address complaints.

Property Tax Class Action Settlement

We have previously discussed the class action lawsuit against the county relating to 2023 property tax assessments. It appears the county and attorneys for the class have agreed to terms for settlement with a potential cost of around $250 million for the county. Under the agreement, taxpayers would receive credits on their property tax account for any amount over 15% that their assessed value increased in 2023. Any taxpayers who have since moved out of Jackson County (who therefore no longer have an account to credit) will be provided with a direct refund paid over three years. The agreement also establishes a fund to reimburse eligible taxpayers who hired attorneys or appraisers to help appeal their 2023 values. The credits in

this agreement are substantively similar to those in the tax credit system the county executive and legislature established earlier this year for those overcharged during the 2023 and 2025 reassessment processes.

Chris Crawford described the process that led to this settlement and how it will be implemented. Chris Crawford commented that the commissioners may see or hear about issues with taxing jurisdictions experiencing significant lost revenue over the next two to three years, stating that in theory this will make up for excess revenue they previously received, but that doesn't solve today's spending needs for the taxing jurisdictions. Chris Crawford notes that some of these school districts have already sued the county but those cases are ongoing.

6. Approval of Case Summaries
   Cases were reviewed by commissioners independently and asked if there were any questions on any of the cases for July.

   Regarding case 26166, Howard Lotven added for everyone's information that once someone receives a judgement in small claims court, that person is responsible for filing garnishment proceedings and it is not the court's responsibility, so it would not be a contempt of court to not pay. Howard Lotven stated that in this case, the best thing for them to do is probably to contact an attorney or Legal Aid of Western Missouri for further assistance. Chris Crawford responded that the office did provide contact information for free legal services in addition to notifying the court in question.

   Howard Lotven asked Chris Crawford if the commission currently had a quorum. Chris Crawford stated that a quorum is in place as long as Karen Baker qualifies as present via phone attendance.

   A motion was made by Karen Baker and seconded by Jaquline Eidson to approve the director's report with case summaries. The motion passed with a voice vote.

7. New Business
   2027 OEHRCC Budget Proposal – Chris Crawford provided an overview of budget the process and timeline, stating that it was unclear how the timeline will unfold this year. Generally, when new legislators are coming in, the outgoing body with not vote on the budget. This gives the new legislators the opportunity to vote on the budget they will be working with. With a new county executive and new legislators coming in, it is unclear how the process will unfold. For now, the office is following the

standard timeline of submitting the budget request to the administration. Pursuant to the code, the office is sharing the budget with he commission prior to submitting it to the administration. Chris Crawford states that he will meet with the administration in two to three weeks to present this budget and would like the commission's feedback/approval. Chris Crawford states that the administration has requested a flat budget from 2026 to 2027. Chris Crawford stated that he will be asking for an additional training expense allotment for the office. Including the additional training expenses, the OEHRCC budget for 2027 will come in about $6000 less than 2026, which is a small amount overall, but a larger percentage of OEHRCC's relatively small budget.

Mary Shannon asked whether the budget would be approved in 2026 or if it would wait until 2027. Chris Crawford responded that, generally the budget would be received by the legislature in October or November and would approve it in late November or early December. Chris Crawford clarified that, in election years, the process has generally unfolded like normal except for the fact that the legislators hold off on approving the final budget until the newly elected members take office. Chris Crawford clarified that this year it is uncertain, stating that the administration will propose a budget package but it will be up to the legislators whether to pass it before the new members take office. If they do, it will take effect at the beginning of the year. If they don't, the new county executive and legislature will have an opportunity to rework the budget as they see fit, and the budget will go into effect once they approve it. In that case, state law allows for the previous year's budget to be applied until a new one is adopted. Mary Shannon stated that she believes this happened in 2024 or 2025, when the budget was approved so late. Chris Crawford agreed that this has happened recently and the county operated off of the previous year's budget for six or seven months until a new one was adopted. Chris Crawford stated that this was a big issue for county operations at the time.

Howard Lotven stated that the commission needed to approve the budget before it is submitted.

Mary Shannon made a motion to approve the budget, seconded by Jacqueline Eidson. The motion passed by voice vote.

8. Unfinished Business
   Chris Crawford stated that he wanted the commission to have the opportunity to enter closed session to discuss personnel-related complaints and the outstanding

ethics complaint before the commission. Howard Lotven responded that the investigation is still ongoing and he believes there are still some documents the office is trying to obtain to a full report can be provided. Chris Crawford responded that there are potentially some documents the office could seek if the commission wished or provided that direction. Howard Lotven stated it would be up to the commissioners whether they wanted to enter a closed session. No motion was made to enter closed session. Howard Lotven stated that the issue would be rolled over to next month's meeting. Chris Crawford offered to send an update via email as well if commissioners wished, stating he just wanted to make sure the commissioners had all the information they needed to have. Howard Lotven stated that he thought this would be a good idea.

9. Public Comments
   None

10. Adjournment
    A motion was made by Jacqueline Eidson, seconded by Mary Shannon to adjourn the eighth regular meeting of 2026. The motion passed with a voice vote.