Oregon Government Ethics Commission

Commission Meeting Materials

August 14, 2026

Public Session

OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Jonathan Thompson and Larry Givens were present in person. Commission Chair Shenoa Payne, Commissioners Richard Burke, Alicia McAuley, Iván Resendiz Gutierrez, and Cheri Helt were present via Teams. Commissioner Peter Janci and Ann Metler were excused.

Executive Director Susan Myers, Compliance & Enforcement Coordinator Casey Fenstermaker, Senior Operations Mgr. Becky Maison, Trainer Chris Brubaker, and Investigators Sheetal Digari and Josh Sullivan were present in person. Investigator Daniel Pacheco, Trainers Lex Tingey, Ruth Sylvester and Angela Nolan, and Admin Staff Molly Putnam were present via Teams.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Counsel Sean Brady was present in person. Jayann Franco was present via Teams.

Members of the Press, present in-person: Dianne Lugo, Statesman Journal; present via Teams: Shaanth Nanguneri, Oregon Capitol Chronicle; Dirk VanderHart, OPB; Carlos Fuentes, Oregonian; and Jonas Olson and Bjorn Dahlen, Oregon Aviation News.

(File 1)

Chair Payne called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Roll call was completed by Chair Payne to confirm attendance of the Commissioners.

Public Session Item 1, Comments from the Chair. Chair Payne introduced the newest commissioner Larry Givens.

Public Session Item 2, Comments from the Commissioners. Commissioner Larry Givens provided a brief background about his farming and political history. He advised that he lives in Umapine, an unincorporated town in Oregon, 10 miles away from Walla Walla, Washington. Commissioner Helt thanked Givens for sharing his story.

Public Session Item 3, Work Session Re: Weaponization of the Commission. Director Myers stated this issue came up at the June meeting. She stated there has been an increase in comments from respondents and Commissioners about the Commission being weaponized. Myers stated that there will be times when a complainant will file multiple complaints with all sorts of motives: need to correct, political, retaliation, or disgruntled employee. Myers stated that the motive behind why a complaint is being filed is not something that OGEC should consider as the complainant is not a party of the case. The Commission looks at the respondents and the actions the respondent takes and how the law applies to those actions.

Myers stated that political stuff is addressed by the Legislature, such as if a complaint is filed within a certain time period of an election, the case can be suspended until the end of the election. Myers stated that a respondent can pick up when Commissioners state that the Commission is being weaponized and will lean on that instead of actually providing a defense for their actions. Myers stated that the Commissioners do have the authority to deviate from OGEC staff recommendations, such as when the Commission states a respondent has learned about their mistake through the process and has been appropriately educated versus the Commission not looking at a case because they feel the complaint was filed to weaponize the Commission.

Payne confirmed that OGEC updated the complaint form to include a statement that complainant must select. Myers confirmed that there is now a required statement that complainants are required to select that states that the information they are providing is true and factual to the best of their knowledge. Payne stated that this is helpful even if their motives are less than ideal, and at least, the Commission will know that they are not just entering in lies.

Payne suggested that complainants might have to file a complaint under oath or under the penalty of perjury. Myers stated that she does have concern that this process would give the complainant standing. DOJ Counsel Sean Brady addressed the Commission and stated that a complainant with BOLI is a step towards a lawsuit and that with OGEC's process, the complainant may not have a personal stake in the process but would want to hold their public body responsible but also, a complainant may not know what is happening in executive session so asking them to swear under penalty of perjury about details under executive session is unfair.

Payne stated that a complaint with BOLI does not give them standing. Brady stated that typically with a complaint with BOLI that is a private interest and not all complaints with OGEC have a private interest and may not know the factual information as it may not be known to them as they only have 30 days to file a complaint (grievance), so they cannot certify all the information is true.

Resendiz Gutierrez stated that he disagrees as a complainant with OGEC may have a private stake in a complaint depending on the type of complaint such as awarding of a contract. Resendiz Gutierrez stated that a statement or acknowledgement of weaponization is important as in some instances it is very clear that the Commission is being weaponized and it is very clear that is very politically motivated.

Thompson thanked everyone for their comments. He stated that if someone states that the complaint is politically motivated or weaponized, they need to address why but still also address the basis of the complaint.

Helt stated that many of the complaints are about technical issues such as meeting minutes and agendas.

Givens stated that he sees more and more of these issues, but small communities really get sensitized and polarized. His question is "Is there something that OGEC can do to hold complainants more accountable? Is there a rule or mechanism that can do be done to enable complainants realize that they need to be more honest?" He realizes that complaints are politically motivated or out of harassment.

Myers stated that one of her concerns about perjury being built in, would need to go to the District Attorney, and would also give the complainant standing and have the right to appeal and go to court if they are unhappy with the Commission's decisions such as to dismiss a case. She stated that OGEC can look into strengthening the language that the complainants have to acknowledge when they file a complaint. Myers acknowledged that small communities can be very polarized and have repeat complaints and have repeat mistakes. She stated that OGEC tries to provide additional training to ensure the communities do not continue to make the same mistakes.

Burke stated that OGEC can make it part of the training that complaints can be weaponized and discourage it as the Commission can see when it is a weaponized complaint.

Helt and Payne discussed the complaint process and how to shorten the process for issues where it is a technical issue. Payne asked Myers about requiring training as a part of stipulated final order. Myers stated that the Commission has had success requiring training as a part of a stipulated final order in lieu of a financial penalty, where if they do not take the training within a set period of time, the respondent is responsible for a financial penalty.

Payne suggested adding language for complainants to acknowledge that they are filing complaints for the right purposes and in good faith.

Helt asked when the update was implemented on the website.
Brady expressed concerns about regulating free speech and reasons for complaints absent a legislative change.

Payne asked Brady look into updating language and wait to see if the current language will make a difference as it has only recently been updated.

Public Session Item 4, Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the minutes for the May 8, 2026 meeting as presented. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0.

Helt asked the June meetings to updated that she was late due to technical issues. Myers confirmed the meeting minutes will be amended.

Public Session Item 5, Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the minutes for the June 12, 2026 meeting as amended. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, abstain; Thompson, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 5-0, 1 abstention.

Chair Payne read the executive session script authorizing the executive session

To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection as authorized under ORS 192.660(2)(f), and

To consider Preliminary Reviews pursuant to the following authorities:

- ORS 192.660(2)(f) to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection;
- ORS 244.260(4)(c) and (d), requiring Preliminary Reviews to be kept confidential and requiring the Commission to consider Preliminary Reviews in executive session; and
- ORS 192.685(1), requiring public meetings law complaints to be considered as provided in ORS 244.260, which includes the confidentiality and executive session requirements of ORS 244.260(4)(c) and (d).

Commissioner Iván Resendiz Gutierrez declared a potential conflict of interest for Executive Session items 6 and 7 as his firm represents the respondents.

Commissioner Helt stated that she would like advice on how to declare a conflict of interest on items #13-22 as she has businesses that deal with workers' compensation. Director Myers stated that Helt would need to ask if the decision that she makes regarding these cases if there is any financial impact on her or her businesses. Myers stated that if she would like to abstain, she could state that she would like to abstain for other reasons. Helt stated that she would like to declare an actual conflict of interest as she pays financial dues to the entity in question.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission convened into Executive Session at 10:05 a.m.

(File 2)

Executive Session Consent Calendar

The following Public Meetings Law cases have been placed on the executive session consent calendar for dismissal, per ORS 192.685(3), as the complaints did not document that the mandatory grievance process had been satisfied.

Executive Session Item 1, 26-386PCF – John Holmes, Illinois Valley Rural Fire Protection District

Executive Session Item 2, 26-392PCF – Darrell Wade, Multnomah County Community Health Center Board

Commissioner Thompson moved that the Commission approve the Executive Session Consent Calendar. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0.

End of Executive Session Consent Calendar.

Reports of Preliminary Review

Facilitated by Investigators

Executive Session Item 3, 26-212EJS – Jason Ridgeway, City of Monmouth
Recommendation: Move to Investigate Possible Violations of ORS 244.120(2)
Investigator: Josh Sullivan
Respondent was present via telephone. Investigator Sullivan addressed the Commission and summarized the complaint. He advised Ridgeway commented on and voted on an amendment to bring houses into the Urban Growth Boundary for Monmouth. Sullivan recommended moving to investigation.

Ridgeway addressed the Commission and stated that he appreciated listening to the work session earlier. He agreed with Sullivan's statement, but that context is needed. He stated that he is a forever homeowner in Monmouth and that should be communicated. He is the same as any forever homeowner in Monmouth and would be affected the same way. The new buildings would affect everyone's property values. He feels the complaint is frivolous.

Thompson asked if Sullivan would look into a class exception. Sullivan stated that he would look into and analyze that if the case did move to investigation.

Helt asked Ridgeway how many homes are in the city currently. Ridgeway stated the population is approximately 11,000 and there are approximately 900 new homes that are slated to be introduced

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Jason Ridgeway may have ORS 244.120(2) and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0.

Executive Session Item 4, 26-228EDP – Jayme Morris, City of Waldport Budget Committee

Recommendation: Move to Investigate Possible Violations of ORS 244.120(2).

Investigator: Daniel Pacheco

The respondent was not present. Investigator Pacheco summarized the case and the recommendation to move to investigate as Morris was met with a conflict of interest when discussing and voting on the proposed budget in April, and she did not properly declare the nature of her conflict of interest. Chair Payne asked about a potential class exception. Pacheco confirmed he would be looking into that.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Jayne Morris may have ORS 244.120(2) and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Executive Session Item 5, 26-299EDP – **Jan Hansen**, City of Waldport Budget Committee

Recommendation: Move to Investigate Possible Violations of ORS 244.120(2)

Investigator: Daniel Pacheco

These minutes contain materials which paraphrase and/or summarize statements made during this meeting. Only text enclosed in quotation marks report a speaker's exact words. For complete contents of the proceedings, please refer to the recordings at https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/about-us/Pages/Meetings.aspx

Respondent was not present. Investigator Pacheco summarized the case and the recommendation to move to investigation as Hansen voted on the budget. He advised that he would look at a class exception should the case move to investigation.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Jan Hansen may have ORS 244.120(2) and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Executive Session Item 6, 26-190ESP – **Derrick DeGroot**, Klamath County
Recommendation: Move to Dismiss
Investigator: Silas Patterson/Casey Fenstermaker
Respondent DeGroot was present via Teams. Investigator Fenstermaker summarized the case and the recommendation to dismiss as it appears DeGroot did not violate ORS 244 as the Klamath County Economic Development Association is a non-profit and is not considered a business and therefore, DeGroot does not have a conflict of interest. DeGroot stated he did not have an official statement but wanted to be available for any questions.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission dismiss the complaint against Derrick DeGroot. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, abstain; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0, 1 abstention.

Executive Session Item 7, 26-213ESP and 26-230 – **Kelley Minty**, Klamath County Recommendation: Move to Dismiss

Investigator: Silas Patterson/Casey Fenstermaker

Respondent Minty was not present. Investigator Fenstermaker summarized the case and the recommendation to dismiss as it appears Minty did not violate ORS 244 as the Klamath County Economic Development Association is a non-profit and is not considered a business and therefore, Minty does not have a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission to dismiss the complaint against Kelley Minty. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, abstain; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0, 1 abstention.

Executive Session Item 8, 26-232EJS – **Laura Ayars**, Oregon Board of Tax Practitioners

Recommendation: Move to Dismiss

Investigator: Josh Sullivan

Respondent was present in person. Investigator Sullivan summarized the case and the recommendation to dismiss as it appears Ayars did not violate ORS 171 when she presented testimony in front of the Oregon Legislature regarding the Tax Board, as it appears she spent less than 24 hours and spent less than a $100 in a quarter. It also appears she did not violate ORS 244 when she lobbied on behalf of the Tax Board concerning the registration of out-of-state tax preparers.

Helt asked what made up the $100 in a quarter. Myers explained the differences between what a lobbyist reports and what a lobbyist client/employer reports.

Helt asked about submitting testimony to the legislature as a director or agency head. Myers explained that agency heads are required to list their testimony as neutral when submitting testimony on OLIS. Helt asked if the testimony was misrepresented. Sullivan stated that the testimony does not appear to be a misrepresentation of fact.

Ayars addressed the Commission and explained the process of providing testimony and requiring Governor approval. She explained her comments and fact were approved and reviewed by the Governor's Office and were told to submit them as neutral because agencies are required to submit how bills will affect an agency good or bad.

Payne asked for clarification on how an agency takes a stance on bills. Ayars explained the process on acquiring approval for taking a stance on bills and legislation.

Helt asked if she felt her testimony was factual. Ayars stated that yes, her testimony was factual. Helt asked if she felt it was lobbying. Ayars stated that yes, she did feel that it was lobbying as she was presenting information to the Legislature.

Helt stated that she wanted to make a motion to move to investigate but did not have the motion book in front of her. Thompson stated that he would make her motion but would not vote in support of it.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Laura Ayars may have 244.040(1), 244.120(1)(c), 171.740(1), 171.764, 171.763 and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz

Gutierrez, nay; Burke, nay; McAuley, nay; Thompson, nay; Givens, aye; Payne, nay. Motion failed. 2-5. The case was administratively dismissed.

The Commission recessed for a break from 11:05 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Tualatin Valley Irrigation District (TVID)
Recommendation: Move to investigate possible violations of ORS 192.670
Investigator: Casey Fenstermaker
Executive Session Item 9, 26-216PCF – Joe Finegan, TVID
Executive Session Item 10, 26-217PCF – Jay Hoffman, TVID
Executive Session Item 11, 26-218PCF – Alan Jesse, TVID
Executive Session Item 12, 26-219PCF – Jim Love, TVID
The respondents did not appear. Investigator Fenstermaker summarized the cases and recommended to move the cases to investigation. She explained the meeting was muted so the public could not hear and the meeting was limited to 45 minutes due to the free version of WebEx, when the meeting was 60 minutes long. TVID has since purchased a premium version of WebEx to resolve the issue. The Chair of TVID is available by telephone if the Commission has any questions.

Executive Session Item 9, 26-216PCF – Joe Finegan, TVID
Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Joe Finegan may have ORS 192.670 and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, no response; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0.

Executive Session Item 10, 26-217PCF – Jay Hoffman, TVID

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Jay Hoffman may have ORS 192.670 and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Executive Session Item 11, 26-218PCF – Alan Jesse, TVID

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Alan Jesse may have ORS 192.670 and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Executive Session Item 12, 26-219PCF – Jim Love, TVID

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission find there is a substantial, objective basis for believing that Jim Love may have ORS 192.670 and that the Commission should investigate accordingly. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Oregon Department of Consumer & Business Services (DCBS),
Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC)
Recommendation: Move to Dismiss
Investigator: Casey Fenstermaker

Executive Session Item 13, 26-148PCF – Scott Strickland, DCBS, MLAC
Executive Session Item 14, 26-150PCF – **Emily Cronan,** DCBS, MLAC
Executive Session Item 15, 26-151PCF – **Sara Duckwall,** DCBS, MLAC
Executive Session Item 16, 26-152PCF – **Ryan Hearn,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 17, 26-153PCF – **Stacy Lewallen,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 18, 26-154PCF – **Sarah Merrick,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 19, 26-155PCF – **Patrick Priest,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 20, 26-156PCF – **Kim Schlessinger,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 21, 26-157PCF – **Margaret Weddell,** DCBS, MLAC

Executive Session Item 22, 26-158PCF – **Sean O'Day,** DCBS, MLAC

Respondent Sean O'Day was present via Teams. All other respondents were not present. Investigator Fenstermaker summarized the complaint and the recommendation to dismiss the cases as the Management Labor Advisory Committee is not subject to Public Meetings Law.

O'Day addressed the Commission and explained the structure of MLAC and its processes. He explained that MLAC is not subject to Public Meetings Law but has always conducted its meetings publicly and welcomes public input. MLAC functions as intended; as an advisory committee producing thoughtful, consensus-based recommendations. He stated it was committed to transparency and the workers compensation system. He stated they agree with the recommendation of the staff and request the dismissal of the complaint. He also stated he would happily answer any questions.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission to dismiss the complaint against Scott Strickland, Emily Cronan, Sara Duckwall, Ryan Hearn, Stacy Lewallen, Sarah Merrick, Patrick Priest, Kim Schlessinger, Margaret Weddell, and Sean O'Day. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, abstain; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0, 1 abstention.

Own Motion Preliminary Reviews - None.

(FILE 3)

Director Myers exited the room.

Executive Session Item 23, Consider information or records exempt from public inspection (confidential attorney-client privileged legal advice), pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f).

DOJ Counsel Brady addressed the Commission and confidential attorney-client privileged legal advice.

(FILE 4)

Reconvene Regular Open Session

The Commission adjourned the Executive Session at 11:45 a.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Lobbyist Penalty Correspondence - None

Lobbyist Client Penalty Correspondence – None

Statement of Economic Interest Penalty Correspondence

Public Session Item 6, Mandie Alali, 2026 SEI, $860

Public Session Item 7, Kennedy Amundson, 2026 SEI, $1,060

Public Session Item 8, Retha Bartunek, 2026 SEI, $1,260

Public Session Item 9, Merri Berlin, 2026 SEI, $1,160

Public Session Item 10, Justin Deming, 2026 SEI, $860

Public Session Item 11, Shelby Dumire, 2026 SEI, $1,260

Public Session Item 12, Leaf Farley, 2026 SEI, $910

Public Session Item 13, Stephanie Gentry, 2026 SEI, $710

Public Session Item 14, Matt Gross, 2026 SEI, $910

Public Session Item 15, Nikki Harden, 2026 SEI, $1,260

Public Session Item 16, Harmonie Hicks, 2026 SEI, $860

Public Session Item 17, Frank Hook, 2026 SEI, $160

Public Session Item 18, Linda Jensen, 2026 SEI, $910

Public Session Item 19, Tegan Kaneaster, 2026 SEI, $810

Public Session Item 20, Tina King, 2026 SEI, $710

Public Session Item 21, Tony Lambert, 2026 SEI, $1,410

Public Session Item 22, Neale Ledgerwood, 2026 SEI, $860

Public Session Item 23, John Mabrey, 2026 SEI, $710

Public Session Item 24, PW May, 2026 SEI, $1,060

Public Session Item 25, Amee' McFee, 2026 SEI, $1,160

Public Session Item 26, Jonathan Metcalf, 2026 SEI, $1,060

Public Session Item 27, Ellyn Mole, 2026 SEI, $1,110

Public Session Item 28, Marc O'Brien, 2026 SEI, $860

Public Session Item 29, Lyle Smith, 2026 SEI, $910

Public Session Item 30, Priscilla Smith, 2026 SEI, $140

Public Session Item 31, Rhonda Sorenson, 2026 SEI, $760

Public Session Item 32, Randy Thomas, 2026 SEI, $1,110

Public Session Item 33, Max Twombly, 2026 SEI, $460

Public Session Item 34, Shaun Wagner, 2026 SEI, $60

Public Session Item 35, Kat Wiegand, 2026 SEI, $50

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the filing penalty waivers as presented on the Consent Calendar. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

PENALTY REDUCTIONS

Lobbyist Penalty Reductions - None.

Lobbyist Client Penalty Reductions - None.

Statement of Economic Interest Penalty Reductions

Public Session Item 36, Abbie Kimble, Rec: 2026 SEI, $20

Director Myers summarized the recommendation.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the recommendation as present. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Commissioner Resendiz Gutierrez declared a potential conflict of interest of agenda item# 37 as his firm represents the respondent and requested that it be removed from the Stipulated Final Order Consent Calendar.

STIPULATED FINAL ORDERS

Public Session Item 37, 25-789PSM and 26-048PCF – Marc Thalacker, Three Sisters Irrigation District

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the proposed stipulated final order for agenda item #37 and the chairperson be authorized to sign them as such. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, abstain; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 6-0, 1 abstention.

STIPULATED FINAL ORDERS – Consent Calendar

Public Session Item 38, 25-790PSM and 26-051PCF – Karl Nulton, Three Sisters Irrigation District

Public Session Item 39, 25-791PSM and 26-050PCF – Don Boyer, Three Sisters Irrigation District

Public Session Item 40, 25-801PDP – Terry Epperson, 82nd Ave. CAC

Public Session Item 41, 25-802PDP – Ana Gonzalez, 82nd Ave. CAC

Public Session Item 42, 25-804PDP – Jay Jones, 82nd Ave. CAC

Public Session Item 43, 26-204LSP – Maggie Gerlicher, Lobbyist

Public Session Item 44, 26-253LJS – Sabrina Riggs, Lobbyist

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the proposed stipulated final orders presented on the Consent Calendar as the final orders in those cases and the chairperson be authorized to sign them as such. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

STIPULATED FINAL ORDERS

Public Session Item 45, 25-204ECF – **Evan Giudice,** Deschutes County

Recommendation: $2,000

Investigator: Casey Fenstermaker

The respondent was not present. Investigator Fenstermaker summarized the case and the negotiated stipulated final order. Fenstermaker stated that Guidice acknowledged that while employed at Deschutes County, he improperly claimed hours worked while he was working at another organization and used Deschutes County resources for his private business and failed to declare a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Thompson moved the Commission approve the proposed stipulated final order as the final order in this case and the chairperson be authorized to sign it as such. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

DEFAULT FINAL ORDERS - None.

REPORTS OF INVESTIGATIONS- None.

OPINIONS, ADVICE, AND CORRESPONDENCE

Advisory Opinions - None

Staff Advice – Informational Letters

Public Session Item 46, 26-375I – Sen. WLnsvey Campos, Oregon Legislative Assembly

Re: application of the gift exception at ORS 244.020(7)(b)(F)

Public Session Item 47, 26-385I – Dr. Elizabeth Steiner, Oregon State Treasurer

Re: gift clause and ceremonial exceptions

Public Session Item 48, 26-394I – Linda Nishioka, Salem City Council

Re: application of the gift exception at ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H)

Public Meetings Law Training Approval Letters - None.

Other Correspondence

Public Session Item 48A, Local Government Entities Correspondence

Director Myers summarized the letter from the League of Oregon Cities, Association of Oregon Counties, Special Districts Association of Oregon, and the Oregon Community College Association.

Thompson stated he had comments he would like to share. He appreciates that the groups wanted a better relationship with OGEC but does not feel that insulting their integrity is a good start. He is going to chalk it up as a mistake. He shared his thoughts including that he doesn't feel that using the Commission as a scapegoat for a statute they do not like is helpful. He commented that public bodies get a chance to rectify issues concerning Public Meetings Law complaints before coming in front of OGEC. Many complaints are dismissed for not following the correct process. He stated that they are also ignoring the Letters of Education that are being issued in many cases. He is committed to working on updating ethics laws and public meetings law that protect public access to deliberations. Chair Payne echoed his comments.

Helt stated that the Commission should be made accessible to groups and time should be allotted in the August meeting for them.

Givens agreed with Thompson's comments and as a former chair of AOC, he had a good insight into their operations. He does think it is good to meet with them.

McAuley stated that she echoes his sentiments and echoes Helt's thoughts that OGEC should be transparent and welcome them to the next meeting.

Payne stated OGEC will add them to the August agenda. She stated a lot of the statements in the letter are unfair. She stated that she is a part of the Legislative Workgroup, along with Director Myers. She stated she is proud of to be a party of this body with various political viewpoints and is looking forward to a productive conversation with these organizations in August.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Public Session Item 49, Assign investigator to conduct Preliminary Review of Ethics Complaint against Executive Director

Payne asked Myers if she was staying for the discussion. Myers stated that she was not participating in the discussion but would leave if the Commission wanted her to. Payne advised that she could stay.

Payne summarized the options for the Commission to conduct the Preliminary Review: directing staff to conduct the Preliminary Review, directing staff or a Commissioner to contract an outside investigator from another state agency or directing staff or a Commissioner to contract an outside investigator from a private party.

Burke stated that he does not feel that he has a conflict, but the case originated due to a case with him, so he is going to abstain from the issue. Payne stated that she would support his decision to abstain from discussion and voting on the matter.

Thompson stated he does not feel the investigative staff does not have a conflict of interest but respects their concerns that they do, so he would support DOJ or the agency contracting with another agency with an interagency agreement to complete the investigation. Givens stated that he did not want the appearance of the issue to being swept under the rug, so would support having another agency complete the investigation. Helt stated that she would like to honor the staff's request of not being involved and is leaning towards the outside firm as it is the least biased. Based on her prior experience, she feels that it is the most prudent way to move forward and the least expensive.

Payne asked why Helt thought it might be cheaper. Helt stated that an outside firm would know their cost immediately, but a state agency would not know their cost or availability would be.

Payne stated with her experience outside firms were more expensive. Resendiz Gutierrez stated that with his experience, it really depends on the firm and agency due to staffing and experience, and one has to shop around.

Senior Op. Manager Maison advised the Commission that the 60-day Preliminary Review period has already started and that staff have already checked in with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) about availability. DAS is currently not available but has connected OGEC staff with another investigator/auditor from another state agency that is available and capable of doing an investigation within OGEC's statutory timelines. Maison advised that OGEC has worked previously with the firm Beery Elsner, but it would require DOJ to help coordinate contracting, which may cause delays.

Payne stated that since there is a state agency that is available, she is leaning towards that option. McAuley stated that she would support Payne's suggestion, and she does appreciate Helt's comment but given the information provided she would support Payne's suggestion.

Commissioner Thompson moved that the Commission dispose of the conflicts of interest raised by the Executive Director and staff related to the complaint filed against the Executive Director by directing staff to work with another State Agency to find an outside investigator to conduct the Preliminary Review, including negotiating an interagency agreement, as needed. Roll call was taken as follows: Helt, aye; Resendiz Gutierrez, aye; Burke, aye; McAuley, aye; Thompson, aye; Givens, aye; Payne, aye. Motion passed. 7-0.

Public Session Item 50, Trainers' Report

Trainer Ruth Sylvester summarized the training team activities since the last meeting in June. She mentioned the accessibility team and the updates the team have been. She also talked about the updated Ethics training that is now available and requested feedback if any of the Commissioners takes the new training.

Public Session Item 51, Executive Director's Report

Director Myers summarized the agency's activities since the last meeting, including updates on the number of SEI filers.
Myers advised that Maison is currently working on the Agency Request Budget that is due at the end of July. She explained there is one policy option package which includes an increase in limitation for the ongoing IT project.
She stated that the lobbyist filing period is currently open and is due on July 15th.
Myers introduced Sheetal Digari, the newest investigator.
Myers is working with Representative Sosa on the Legislative Workgroup for Public Meetings Law.

Helt stated she would like to know where the complaints come from so training could be targeted at those areas, such as city councils, school boards, or agencies, etc. She liked the map provided by the trainers which showed where the trainings were being presented at but would like more maps and data.

The Commission adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be August 14, 2026, at 3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220, Large Conference Room, Floor 2, Salem, Oregon 97302.

August 3, 2026

Oregon Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220
Salem, Oregon 97302-1680
mail@ogec.oregon.gov

RE: Additional Information from Local Government Organizations

Chair Payne and Members of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

First, thank you for inviting our organizations into direct dialogue with the Commission. Representing more than 1,300 individual government entities with independently elected governing bodies, our four organizations have noted concerns with staff leadership of the agency you oversee. We hope to create a continuing dialogue with Commissioners about reversing concerning trends and restoring trust. Our organizations share the same goal as the Commission in ensuring that public bodies operate transparently when carrying out the public's business. This has been our commitment since the passage of these laws 50-plus years ago.

The July letter from the Board Presidents of our respective organizations detailed challenges we have faced with staff leadership of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. To be clear, our concerns are not with the Commission as a whole or with individual Commissioners but rather with the actions of staff. As the body overseeing the Commission's executive director, we ask you to help us find a collective path forward.

During the August 14th meeting, after our respective board presidents share their concerns, we would like to engage in a discussion identifying our mutual path forward. In anticipation of that discussion, we have provided additional details and examples of the challenges we face. Below you will find examples of common challenges local governments navigate when working with agency leadership in legal interpretations that differ from long standing case law and in issues related to collaboration and customer service.

Interpretation Challenges

On more than one occasion, OGEC interpretations have hindered how local government leaders can effectively and transparently serve the public. During the OGEC's July 10 meeting, a commissioner rightfully emphasized that the OGEC and its staff must strictly follow the laws enacted by the Legislature. While we fully agree with that principle, statutory text is not entirely black and white. Our primary issue is that OGEC staff frequently extrapolate restrictions not found within the statutory text itself, or when faced with plausible alternative interpretations, repeatedly adopt positions that run counter to common-sense governance and administrative open access.

The real-world consequences of these interpretations vary. In certain cases – such as flawed guidance cautioning elected officials against communicating with the media– these positions are eventually corrected administratively. In other instances, however, local governments have had no choice but to seek legislative remedies to resolve the confusion caused by overly restrictive or strained readings of the law.

A clear example of this dynamic is House Bill 4161 (2026) which was required to resolve an overreaching staff interpretation. Nothing in the statutory text banned simple food or beverages at meetings; rather, OGEC staff stretched the broad prohibitions against using official positions for 'financial gain' to include a city providing a basic meal at a working meeting or training. When an alternative legal interpretation and reading of the statute was offered, there was initial interest from the Commission in understanding the issue, but staff pushed for a decision in one meeting. This approach ultimately forced local governments to seek legislative relief through HB 4161, leaving lawmakers perplexed as to why a bill was even necessary to restore basic administrative practicality and a reasonable understanding that public bodies can provide food and beverages at meetings, trainings, and official events without violating Oregon's ethics laws.

HB 4161 was not the first time legislative action was necessary to implement common sense legal principles. Senate Bill 983 (2025) allowed a public official to participate in discussion and vote on budgets that include compensation or benefits for themselves, needlessly codifying the rule of necessity that already existed in statute around the handling of conflicts of interest.

The need for legislative intervention continues. Local governments are working in partnership with stakeholders from the OGEC, the media, and others to address lingering issues from two OGEC interpretations that we now must resolve in the Legislature and are being discussed in a separate legislative workgroup.

First, related to information gathering. Both the Legislature and the judiciary have recognized that information gathering is permitted – and logically required – outside of formally noticed public meetings. The text of Oregon's public meetings law contains no prohibition against gathering facts, and the courts ruled nearly 40 years ago[1] that "information gathering" is not the same thing as "deliberation," and that the public meetings law only prohibits private meetings related to deliberation or decision making. This was reaffirmed when the courts prohibited serial meetings[2]. This long-standing judicial interpretation was upended not by an act of the legislature but instead by staff at the OGEC.

In addition, the OGEC's approach to ORS 192.630 and ORS 192.670 creates what is essentially a strict liability standard. The lack of ability to consider state of mind or intent in the investigation of potential public meetings law violations is problematic. While the statutes themselves are silent as to intent, a practical and reasonable interpretation should still occur; intent is a mitigating factor that the average person would naturally consider. In fact, the overwhelming majority of governing body members do abide by public meetings law and understand the importance of public transparency in decision making. Holding an official liable

[1] Oregon Court of Appeals, Haris v. Nordquist (1989)
[2] Oregon Court of Appeals, Handy v. Lane County (2015)

for an unlawful serial meeting – entirely without their knowledge or intent - demonstrates a lack of understanding for the operational realities of the work.

Coordination Issues

In many areas, our work is naturally aligned. As membership organizations serving elected officials, we help educate our members across many statutory requirements – including public meetings law – and have been doing so for years before the OGEC's authority over public meetings law was expanded. We create materials to help public officials understand their requirements. We work to create consensus within local governments around issues that impact us all. Yet, despite our shared compliance goals, we are consistently bypassed in favor of unilateral decision-making rather than meaningful partnership.

Three of the four organizations writing to you have become certified trainers for the OGEC. In each case, we have faced barriers manifested by OGEC staff. First, the timeliness of training review and approval has been long and drawn out – and inconsistent, ranging from 58 to 347 days. Often taking multiple rounds, feedback provided is not always consistent and includes requirements above and beyond the statutory training mandate (such as requiring statutory references, prohibiting the use of quizzes and other best practices in adult learning). We have provided a detailed timeline and notes at the end of this letter.

All of our organizations provide information to public officials and have been engaged in this education of our members for many years. Commission staff have known about our concerns regarding partnership and collaboration for over a year. When staff reached out to our organizations for feedback on their draft serial meetings FAQ, we appreciated the collaborative dialogue. Though the final FAQ did not reflect all of our positions, seeing many of our suggested changes incorporated gave us hope that our working relationship had turned a corner. That is why the sudden release of the updated version of the Oregon Government Ethics Law Guide for Public Officials was such a surprise. While the expansion from 53 pages to 165 pages likely addresses new federal accessibility requirements, it appears other changes were included in the manual. Nowhere in the manual does it indicate what changes were made. This information was only shared after the fact in the OGEC's "Ethics Matters' June newsletter. This created a lot of confusion for our members. Dropping this manual without advance notice or an opportunity to collaborate is a step backward and another sign of disengagement. In reviewing the new manual post publication, we have noticed errors that we could have worked with staff before its public release.

Lastly, in May your Commission heard of forthcoming rulemaking. Despite outreach from local governments, we have yet to hear a timeline for a Rules Advisory Committee. In the months that have followed, so has silence. We urge you to direct staff to heed Governor Kotek's call to work "urgently, diligently, and openly" with stakeholders to provide clarity on the laws governing local leaders.

A Path Forward
Working towards the same goals of educated public officials that follow the letter and the spirit of the laws you enforce, we write to you with the explicit goal of improving our partnership. A trusted government is a boon for us all. Your support in addressing the issues above will help us all meet our collective goals and improve our efforts.

We look forward to a productive conversation on August 14th, and we hope it won't be the last time we have the opportunity to work collaboratively and openly with each other.

Patrcia Mulvihill
Executive Director, League of Oregon Cities

Gina Nikkel
Executive Director, Association of Oregon Counties

Frank Stratton
Executive Director, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Abby Lee
Executive Director, Oregon Community College Association

Public Meeting Law Training Approval Timelines

Date	LOC	SDAO	OCCA
Early 2023	PML training requirement enacted via HB 2805. LOC staff proactively reached out to OGEC staff indicating its interest in having LOC's PML training approved ASAP to educate LOC members.		
September 25, 2023	LOC staff met with OGEC staff to discuss the new training requirement and to begin the coordination process.		
January 18, 2024	LOC emails OGEC staff re: update on training approval process and timeline. OGEC staff responded that upon DOJ legal counsel, training review process would be placed on hold until the administrative rulemaking process was completed.		
August 2024		SDAO was informed by OGEC that the rules would be adopted on October 1st, and our training was one of the first in line for review. We believed it would be reviewed in October.	
October 1, 2024 – OGEC rulemaking completed.			
October 4, 2024	LOC emails OGEC to see if there were updates on the training approval process. OGEC staff responded that they would begin the training approval process later in the month of October 2024.		

November 19, 2024	LOC staff reached out to OGEC about OGEC presenting PML training during LOC's City Day event (January 28, 2025).		
November 20, 2024	OGEC staff responds that it is available to present. OGEC staff provided that OGEC is finalizing the assessment process. Stated that OGEC staff will be sending out information on how to submit trainings for approval "next week." "We'll work with you all to get your training approved before the event…"		
November 27, 2024 - OGEC sends out newsletter notifying entities that OGEC is now accepting trainings for approval.			
November 27, 2024	LOC staff learned from the OGEC website that the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) received certification for its PML training. LOC learned that OSBA submitted their initial training on November 7, 2024. OSBA also confirmed that it had to do three rounds of submission prior to receiving approval.		
December 2, 2024	LOC staff attempted to submit its training for approval, but an OGEC website error prevented this. LOC staff reached out to OGEC regarding inability to submit.	SDAO was sent an email saying OGEC was beginning to approve trainings. However, SDAO had to submit an online form to get our training reviewed. The submission form had several specific questions regarding content, so SDAO worked brought on Vector Solutions to support the training.	

December 3, 2024	LOC contacts OSBA staff for a copy of its training in order to use it as a template with the goal to expedite the approval process.		
December 4, 2024	LOC reattempts to submit its training and is successful in the submission process.		
December 6, 2024	OGEC staff confirms it received LOC training.		
December 10, 2024	OGEC staff confirms again it received LOC training.		
January – February 2025		SDAO worked with Vector Solutions to change the training to address everything on the OGEC form.	
January 17, 2025	LOC staff requested an update on the review process.		
January 28, 2025	LOC's City Day event occurs, without the approved training, and an opportunity to train hundreds of public officials is lost. Between November 2024-February 2025, LOC trained over 400 city officials during its Elected Essentials program. LOC worked to receive PML certification prior to this event but missed the opportunity to streamline trainings for volunteer public officials.		
February 12, 2025	LOC staff again requested an update on the review process.		
February 14, 2025	OGEC returned the LOC training with a number of required amendments. Nearly	We submitted the updated training to OGEC.	

	every area of the assessment indicated a necessary amendment. Primary cause of requirement amendment was not providing a specific citation in the slides. (72 days after LOC submission)		
February 20, 2025	OGEC certifies PML training submitted by Beery, Elsner & Hammond LLP.		
February 24, 2025	LOC resubmits training with all required amendments.		
February 25, 2025		SDAO received a review back from OGEC on the training with pages of comments and changes needed. We sent the review to Vector Solutions, and they worked to edit the training.	
March 3, 2025	OGEC certifies LOC's training.		
March 4, 2024	LOC staff asks whether a recording of a LOC certified training would allow viewers to satisfy the training requirements. OGEC staff responds that a full script or recording is required before OGEC can certify a recording.		
March 5, 2025	LOC reached out to BEH staff about whether BEH's planned training on March 20, 2025, had been certified by OGEC for recorded viewing. Through these conversations, LOC learns that BEH submitted its PML training 3 times prior to approval. OGEC records indicate that BEH initially submitted its training on		

	January 6, 2025. BEH confirmed with LOC staff that its training has also been preapproved for recorded viewing. No indication that a script was required.		
April 28, 2025		The edited training was submitted to OGEC.	
May 7, 2025		Heard back from OGEC about the training and it was suggested to set up meetings to go over the comments.	
May 28, 2025			LOC staff shares certified training as template for OCCA's training.
May 29, 2025			OCAA begins work on draft PPT (intermittently with goal of early July submission and well before 30 days prior noted on OGEC website.)
June 5, 2025		Held a two-hour meeting with OGEC, Vector Solutions, and SDAO to go over the comments/requested changes.	
June 30, 2025		Held a two-hour meeting with OGEC, Vector Solutions, and SDAO to go over the comments/requested changes.	
July 9, 2025			OCCA submits PPT presentation to OGEC for approval, requested 8/20/25 deadline for 9/6/25 training at OCCA Annual Governance Summit.

			OGEC responds. Will be reviewed in order received and currently have 3 in process and will do best to respond by 8/20. Status by 7/31.
August 7, 2025			OCCA asks for status, OGEC responds that staff had family emergency and was out most of July, but staff have done initial review. OGEC asks for a Zoom meeting to review feedback.
August 13, 2025			OCCA meets with OGEC to review initial feedback.
August 14, 2025			OGEC sends partial list of needed revisions/ clarifications in assessment document. (OCCA staff on vacation from 8/16-9/3 but spends at least 20 hours revising PPT.)
August 20, 2025			OGEC sends full assessment (14 pg matrix assessment doc) of required revisions/clarifications and comments about what must be included in speaker notes.
August 28, 2025			OCCA sends revised PPT with required revisions to OGEC
September 4, 2025			OCCA emails OGEC asking for status. 2 days remaining until training event.
September 5, 2025			Zoom call with OGEC to review “small things” that need to be revised for approval. OCCA submits final draft at

			2:40 pm. OCCA receives approval with certification letter at 3:42 pm. Note - OGEC said this was the quickest approval time for certification of an outside trainer. We were the sixth entity to receive approval, and new training assessments were put on hold by OGEC on 9/1/25 to update the assessment process and training requirements.
September 6, 2025			OCCA holds first PML certified training for community college board members and presidents.
September 23, 2025		Sent redlined training script to OGEC to review.	
October 6, 2025		Held meeting with OGEC, Vector Solutions, and SDAO to review OGEC's thoughts on the revised training script.	
October 21, 2025		Vector Solutions submitted amended script and presentation to OGEC.	
November 4, 2025		OGEC returned an assessment of the amended training with specific changes to make.	
November 10, 2025		Vector Solutions submitted amended training presentation to OGEC.	

November 13, 2025		OGEC followed up with a few changes, clarification questions, and recommendations prior to sharing the assessment rubric. Vector Solutions provided input and OGEC responded with assessment number 5 with changes they made directly on the PowerPoint.	
December 23, 2025		Vector Solutions made the requested changes and shared the login information with OGEC so they could review the revised training.	
January 9, 2026		OGEC responded with additional changes needing to be made.	
January 12, 2026		Vector Solutions shared the revised training with OGEC.	
January 26, 2026		OGEC responded with requested revisions to the landing page of the training.	
January 27, 2026		Vector Solutions revised the landing page verbiage and emailed that to OGEC. OGEC responded right away with another revision request for the landing page. Vector Solutions made the change. The training was approved.	

General comments:

- Timelines for approval between OSBA (20 days), Beery, Elsner & Hammond, LLP (45 days), LOC (89 days), SDOA (347 days), and OCCA (58 days) is inconsistent. Entities with lower resubmissions required took longer than entities with multiple rounds of revisions.

- Revisions requested were inconsistent; new requirements manifested between reviews. Beery, Elsner & Hammond, LLP training slides did not include the same statutory citations that OGEC required of others.
- Certified trainers heard inconsistency about a video recording being certified.
- OGEC consistently missed deadlines, creating additional training time needs for volunteer public officials.

July 6, 2026

Chair Shenoa Payne
Oregon Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220
Salem, Oregon 97302-1680
mail@ogec.oregon.gov

Re: Local Government's Critical Concerns Regarding the Oregon Government Ethics Commission Organizational Integrity

Dear Chair Payne:

On behalf of our collective membership organizations and the local government entities we represent, we are writing to formally express a shared and deepening concern regarding the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's (OGEC) current trajectory. Local governments are committed to our shared goals of strong government ethics and transparency in public deliberations and decision making by governing bodies. We rely on a functional partnership with OGEC to meet these goals. Unfortunately, our organizations' confidence in OGEC's integrity and its ability to competently interpret and enforce state statutes is declining rapidly.

Openness and good faith are the cornerstones of any functional partnership, and those elements are lacking in our current partnership. Our collective trust has been eroded by a pattern of behavior where the OGEC's Executive Director's public statements are in direct conflict with her private actions. This is evidenced by the public disavowal of her own staff's training—which inaccurately advised elected officials to avoid the press under the guise of those interactions violating the public meetings law—and her private advocacy for a veto of HB 4177 despite a public commitment of neutrality on the bill. These instances represent a significant departure from the transparency required of her position and suggest an institutional lack of candor that we can no longer overlook.

The OGEC holds substantial power to penalize local elected leaders – the majority of whom are unpaid volunteers only wishing to serve their community. This power must be wielded with care, respect, and strict adherence to legislative intent. We find that the requisite care, respect, and strict adherence to the legislative intent is missing.

- Local governments have observed a consistent pattern where the OGEC interpretations diverged so sharply from statutory intent that legislative intervention (HB 4161 and 4177) became necessary during the 2026 legislative session to restore clarity.

- Equally troubling is the OGEC's insistence on interpreting statutes without regard for the operational realities of local government. This is clearly demonstrated in recent "FAQ" guidance that characterizes a city administrator's independent outreach as a prohibited serial meeting, effectively penalizing elected officials for the unilateral actions of staff. This interpretation erroneously presumes the "use" of an intermediary without evidence that the council directed or intended for the administrator to facilitate a serial deliberation. In a practical environment, intent is the defining factor; it is irrational to impute personal liability to a locally elected volunteer for the unilateral actions of a third party they cannot control or for failing to cross-examine every administrative interaction.

- Finally, there is a clear disconnect between the volume of investigations and the Commission's ultimate findings. Despite a massive surge in public meeting law cases—up 128% in 2024 and 46% the following year—total fines remained completely flat. This stability in penalties demonstrates that the commission is largely dismissing or declining to penalize these additional cases, proving that the spike in activity does not reflect an increase in genuine wrongdoing.

In vetoing HB 4177, the Governor directed the Commission to work "urgently, diligently, and openly" with stakeholders—including the signatories of this letter—to provide clarity on the laws governing local leaders. She further committed her office to collaborating with these groups and the media to develop a workable policy solution for the 2027 legislative session.

Our organizations are prepared to answer that call in a transparent and proactive manner. We intend to engage thoughtfully with the Governor's office, the Legislature, and the news media; we hope to do the same with the OGEC. However, the cumulative deficiencies and systemic issues outlined in this letter have made it increasingly difficult to rely on OGEC leadership's credibility or fairness. Because we can no longer rely on staff-level engagements to resolve these fundamental concerns, we are requesting a special meeting with the full Commission to establish a direct, collaborative path forward that aligns with the Governor's mandate for institutional transparency. The leaders of our respective organizations have been directed to support scheduling this conversation and representing our organizations in that meeting.

Thank you for your attention and for your efforts to restore our partnership.

Carol MacInnes
Board President, League of Oregon Cities

Erin Skaar
Board President, Association of Oregon Counties

Kathy Kleczek
Board President, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Pat Fahey
Board President, Oregon Community College Association

CC OGEC Appointing Authorities:
Governor Tina Kotek
Senate Majority Leader Kayse Jama
Senate Minority Leader Bruce Starr
House Majority Leader Ben Bowman
House Minority Leader Lucetta Elmer
Senate President Rob Wagner
Speaker Julie Fahey

Outlook

late filing penalty

From Sandy Chung [redacted]
Date Mon 7/20/2026 9:45 AM
To Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from schung@aclu-or.org. Learn why this is important

Hello OGEC,

I wanted to ask if my lobbying report late-filing penalty of $50 could be waived.

I was on a month-long trip outside the country starting in June, and I was not able to take my work devices outside the country or access work-related files/websites. I tried to see if I could file my lobbying report before leaving on my trip but it was before July 1 and the system wouldn't let me know file a report before that date.

Today is my first day back and I've filed my lobbying report.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sandy Chung

Sandy Chung
Pronouns: she, her

Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon
P.O. Box 40585 Portland, OR 97240
(971) 358-2017 | schung@aclu-or.org
aclu-or.org

ACLU Oregon

Past Violations: None
Current Penalties: 2026 Q2, $50.00
Recommendation: 1st violation - Letter of Education

SVM

During the 2026 Oregon State Legislative session, the ACLU of Oregon community kept government actors accountable and unmasked law enforcement, strengthened critical privacy protections, protected the right to abortion, reproductive, and gender-affirming health care, and defended immigrant and refugee rights. **Read more about the legislative victories that the ACLU of Oregon community achieved together in our legislative report.**

Outlook

Filling fee appeal for Zachary Lauritzen

From Zachary Lauritzen [redacted]
Date Mon 7/20/2026 1:53 PM
To Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from zachary@oregonwalks.org. Learn why this is important

July 20th, 2026

To the Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I am writing as a lobbyist to appeal the $30 fine assessed against me for the late filing of my lobbying quarterly report.

I submitted my report three days after the deadline. This was my first late submission since I began lobbying reporting. As a new filer, I made the mistake of not creating a system for filing, and the deadline came and went. I take this error seriously and have implemented a system of reminders to ensure future reports are filed on time.

Given that this was a first-time error and I have implemented corrective measures, I respectfully request that the Commission waive the $30 fine.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Zachary Lauritzen

Oregon Walks

541.805.5425 (cell, text okay)
Organizer
Oregon Walks
www.oregonwalks.org

Past Violations: None

Current Penalties: 2026 Q2 $30.00

Recommendation: 1st violation - Letter of Education SVM

Outlook

OGEC appeal_Oregon Walks

From Zachary Lauritzen <z[redacted]
Date Mon 7/20/2026 1:51 PM
To Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from zachary@oregonwalks.org. Learn why this is important

July 20th, 2026

To the Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I am writing on behalf of Oregon Walks to appeal the $30 fine assessed against Oregon Walks for the late filing of our lobbying quarterly report.

We submitted our report three days after the deadline. This was our first late submission since we began lobbying reporting. As a new filer, we made the mistake of not creating a system for filing, and the deadline came and went. We take this error seriously and have implemented internal calendar reminders and a review process to ensure all future reports are filed on time.

Given that this was a first-time error and we have implemented corrective measures, we respectfully request that the Commission waive the $30 fine.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Zachary Lauritzen

Oregon Walks

541.805.5425 (cell, text okay)
Organizer
Oregon Walks
www.oregonwalks.org

Past Violations: None
Current Penalties: 2026 Q2 $30.00
Recommendation: 1st violation - Letter of Education SVM

Outlook

Re: OR Gov. Ethics Commission Re Your Late Filing Penalty

From Charlie Ross [redacted]
Date Tue 6/30/2026 9:19 PM
To Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from charblu35@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Hello,

I would like to request a waiver and the money order should be returned to my home address at 1389 NE Alex Way, Apt. 229, Hillsboro OR 97124.

Thank you and I look forward to completing the next step, if you'd be able to tell me what they are with regards to applying for and obtaining a waiver.

Regards,
Charles Ross

On Mon, Jun 29, 2026 at 2:35 PM Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov> wrote:

> Hello Charles,
>
> We received your Money Order 19-840536571 in the amount of $111.00. Unfortunately, this amount is not correct as the actual amount owed on your account, as shown in the attached screenshot, is $110.00.
>
> We are unable to process this payment and are seeking to return this payment to you for correction.
>
> We also would like to remind you, that you are able to request a penalty waiver from the Commission by replying to this email, and asking for the Commission to reduce or waiver your balance.
>
> Please let us know if you would like to remit a new payment or if you would like to request a waiver, and where we can return your incorrect money order.
>
> **Oregon Government Ethics Commission**
> 3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220
> Salem, OR 97302-1544
> 503-378-5105

Past Violations: None

Current Penalties: 2026 SEI, $110

Recommendation: 1st violation SVM
Letter of Education

Outlook

Fwd: Ethics Filing - Pending Fee and need for Waiver request

From Linda Kerr [redacted]
Date Tue 7/7/2026 8:50 AM
To Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>
Cc Leslie Taylor <boardmember.taylor@ukiahsd.org>; Laura Orr <lorr@ukiahsd.org>; Amie Gulden <amie.gulden@yahoo.com>; Amie Gulden <boardmember.gulden@ukiahsd.org>

You don't often get email from lkerr@ukiahsd.org. [Learn why this is important]

Thank you for your awesome service and assistance this morning regarding late filing or our Board Member Amie Gulden. Please accept the above copy of Ms. Gulden's request for waiving the filing fee. This is the first time Ms. Gulden has not complied in a timely manner completing and submitting her OGEC Ethics filing prior to April 15th.
Please advise if additional information is required.
Sincerely,
Linda Kerr
OGEC Jurisdictional Representative
Ukiah School District 80R
541-427-3732

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Leslie Taylor** [redacted]
Date: Mon, Jul 6, 2026 at 9:12 PM
Subject: Re: Ethics Filing - Pending Fee and need for Waiver request
To: Laura Orr [redacted]
Cc: Amie Gulden <[redacted], Linda Kerr [redacted]>

Amie is still locked out of her board email. She had sent this to David in late May. If you can coordinate with her via her personal cell or email she will be able to recieve any additional instructions.

At our next board meeting maybe we can discuss before or after the meeting?

Thanks
Leslie

8:08

Me May 28

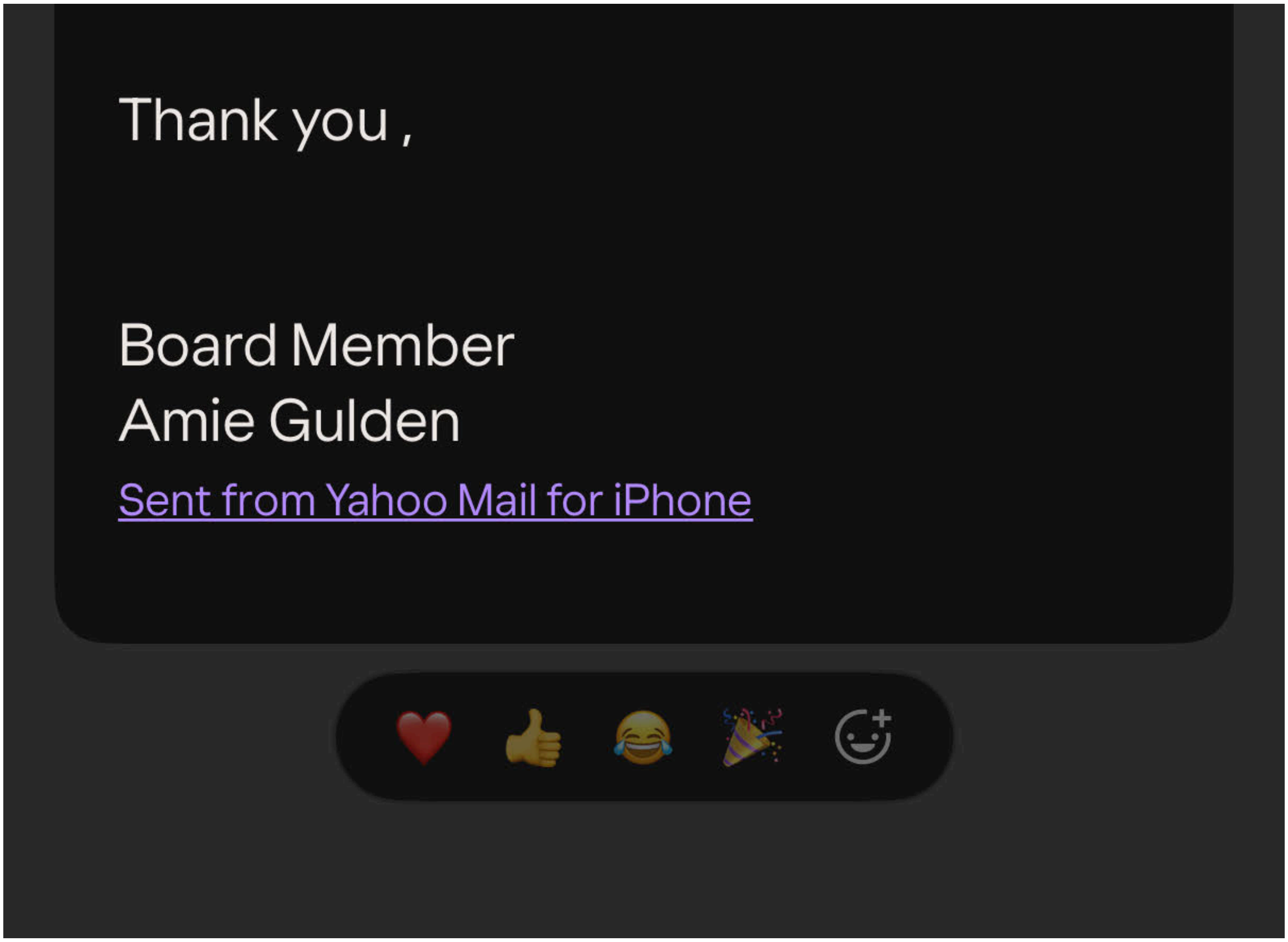
To: david.hunt...c.oregob.gov

A

Commissioners,

I'm emailing to ask for a wave of penalty fees for not having the ethics information in at adequate time. As this is the first time it's been late. The reasoning is I have received new phone which temporarily locked me out of my email. I am at this time working with our super to have the bugs worked out.

This is my personal email. If there is any information further needed please feel free to reach me here.


Thank you ,

Board Member
Amie Gulden
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Leslie Taylor
Ukiah School Board Chair

On Mon, Jun 29, 2026, 4:09 PM Laura Orr <lorr@ukiahsd.org> wrote:

> Hello -
>
> Linda was contacted about the annual ethics filings for our board and they brought to her attention that there is an outstanding fee for late filing for your account. It is currently up to $510. There is a waiver available - but contact needs to be made adn a letter written explaining the late filing and circumstances. We can help with that if you want.
>
> This is fixable, but we need to get to it quickly before the fine increases again and we miss a commission meeting.
>
> Let me know how to help -
>
> Laura

Past Violations: None

Current Penalties: 2026, $510.00

Recommendation: 1st violation - Letter of Education

Outlook

Re: Receipt of Late Quarterly Report

From Cameron Herrington <[redacted]>
Date Sun 7/19/2026 9:36 AM
To PUTNAM Molly M * OGEC <Molly.M.Putnam@ogec.oregon.gov>; Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from cameron.herrington@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

Please waive my $10.00 penalty. I have not been employed as a lobbyist since leaving my prior job in March 2026. My lobbyist registration was tied to that employment, and all communication related to my registration -- including the three emails notifying me of the Q2 reporting requirement -- were sent to an email address owned by my former employer, to which I have no access.

I spoke with a staff member at the Oregon Government Ethics Commission in April 2026, at which point I was assured that my account was closed and that I had no further obligations. I was also told that my email address would be updated in the Commission's records, as I do not have access to the account that was previously used. Unfortunately, my email address was not updated. As a result, I have been charged a $10.00 penalty that I had zero chance to avoid, because I was under the impression that my account had been closed, and I did not receive any communication alerting me to the requirement that I file a report for Q2.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Cameron Herrington
206-226-1938

On Thu, Jul 16, 2026 at 4:23 PM PUTNAM Molly M * OGEC <Molly.M.PUTNAM@ogec.oregon.gov> wrote:

> Dear Cameron Herrington:
>
> Thank you for filing your quarterly report as required. You were registered with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission in the role of Lobbyist. You were notified on 07/01/2026 that the reporting window for the 2026 Q2 reporting period was open and you were reminded again on 07/10/2026 and 07/15/2026.
>
> Your late filing was received on 07/16/2026. Accordingly, you have accrued a penalty of $10.00. Please remit the full amount by check or money order to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission at the above address by 08/15/2026.

If you choose, you may submit a letter of explanation to the Commission regarding the late filing. Your correspondence will be presented to the Commission for their review at the next Commission meeting. The Commission may elect at that time to waive some, all, or none of the penalty based upon your explanation and your prior filing history. You will be notified of what action the Commission has taken following the meeting. If you do submit a letter, please send it by mail to the address below, by fax to 503-373-1456, or by email to mail@ogec.oregon.gov.

Please remember to visit the Electronic Filing System at https://apps.oregon.gov/OGEC/EFS/Home/SignIn to update our profile if you have changes to your email address or other personal information. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the Oregon Government Ethics Commission office at 503-378-5105 or by email at mail@ogec.oregon.gov.

Thank you,

Molly Putnam

Accountability Coordinator

Oregon Government Ethics Commission

503-378-5105
molly.m.putnam@ogec.oregon.gov
https://www.oregon.gov/ogec

Please take our customer service survey!

Past Violations: 2026, Q1 $60.00 penalty reduced to $20.00 at 5/8 Commission Mtg

Current Penalties: 2026, Q2 $10.00 due

SVM

Recommendation: 3rd violation - already below minimum - no reduction = $10

Outlook

Request a waiver - lobbyist

From Dana Turell [redacted]
Date Fri 7/17/2026 4:35 PM
To Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from dana@turellgroup.com. Learn why this is important

Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I humbly request a waiver of my penalty fees. I didn't realize I had an active account requiring a report. Once I heard from Molly, I filed immediately. I will monitor this in the future and file on time.

Thank you for considering my request.

On Fri, Jul 17, 2026 at 4:23 PM Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov> wrote:

> Hello Dana,
>
> Thank you for filing your report. Upon reviewing your accounts, there are $40 total in penalties between the Lobbyist account and the Client Lobbyist account.
>
> At this time, the Commission is not able to accept electronic payments. To pay your penalties please sent a check or money order, with your name or organization name clearly printed on the payment method, to the address below.
>
> You have the option to petition the Commission to waive the penalties. Simply reply to this email, one email for each account, addressed to the Commission, explaining the reason the reports were late, and requesting a waiver or reduction of penalties.
>
> **Oregon Government Ethics Commission**
> 3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220
> Salem, OR 97302-1544
> 503-378-5105
> https://www.oregon.gov/ogec
>
> ***Please take our customer service survey!***
> ***Sign up for FREE ethics training!***
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Dana Turell <dana@turellgroup.com>
> **Sent:** Friday, July 17, 2026 11:57 AM
> **To:** Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>
> **Subject:** Explanation for late filing

[You don't often get email from dana@turellgroup.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I apologize for not filing my lobbying report on time. I thought I didn't need to because my status is inactive. I am new to this and don't understand the process.

If you deem that I should pay my $20 penalty, I am willing. Just let me know how to pay it.

Thank you.

Dana Turell
Turell Group
541.525.2207

Past Violations: 2026 Q1, Letter of Ed issued 5/8/26 Mtg.

Current Penalties: 2026 Q1, $20.00

SVM

Recommendation: 2nd violation - below minimum - no reduction = $20

Outlook

Re: OGEC Client/Employer Account Update

From Shawn Daley [redacted]
Date Mon 7/20/2026 9:41 AM
To HUNTER David * OGEC <David.HUNTER@ogec.oregon.gov>; Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from sdaley@georgefox.edu. Learn why this is important

Greetings,

I was traveling overseas when we engaged a lobbyist again at George Fox University. There was a leftover fee from our previous engagement with a lobbyist, and David, who has apparently retired, advised us to send a note explaining what had happened in the pursuit of having what was a minor fine potentially waived.

I was not responsible for the lobbyist at that time, as I was not at the institution.

This was the response that Mr. Hunter suggested:

Dear Mr. Hunter,

I am writing to respectfully request a waiver of the penalty associated with our 2020 Q4 filing, which was submitted one day past the deadline.

At that time, our administrative team was navigating significant disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, our organization was undergoing a transition as our lobbyist was in the process of concluding her contract with George Fox. These combined challenges led to an inadvertent oversight in the filing timeline.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Best regards,
Shawn Daley
George Fox University

Thank you in advance for you consideration. I will keep ahead of the process now that I have taken over this responsibility for George Fox.

On Mon, Jun 15, 2026 at 1:01 PM HUNTER David * OGEC <David.HUNTER@ogec.oregon.gov> wrote:

> Hi Shawn,

I received information from Lobbyist Montana Lewellen at Capitol Strategies who informed me that you are now the new Client account manager.

I will update the account with your name and email address and also need a phone number. I will notify Montana that she can submit a registration request.

After I update the account I will send you an informational email and password reset link for access to the account, as you will need to accept the registration request within a 10 day window.

You can contact me anytime you have questions or need assistance.

Best Regards,

David R Hunter

Oregon Government Ethics Commission

3218 Pringle Rd SE #220

Salem OR 97302

Direct 503-378-2170

I am retiring from State Service effective July 1, 2026

Please redirect your email to mail@ogec.oregon.gov or call the main number at 503-378-5105

Please complete our Survey: https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/about-us/Pages/Customer-Satisfaction.aspx

Past Violations: 2024 Q3, Letter of Education; 2024 Q4, $100 pd

Current Penalties: 2025 Q1, $1400

SVM

Recommendation: 3rd violation - reduction to 25% = $350

Outlook

Request a waiver - client

From Dana Turell [redacted]
Date Fri 7/17/2026 4:35 PM
To Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

You don't often get email from dana@turellgroup.com. Learn why this is important

Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I humbly request a waiver of my penalty fees. I didn't realize I had an active account requiring a report. Once I heard from Molly, I filed immediately. I will monitor this in the future and file on time.

Thank you for considering my request.

On Fri, Jul 17, 2026 at 4:23 PM Mail * OGEC <Mail@ogec.oregon.gov> wrote:

> Hello Dana,
>
> Thank you for filing your report. Upon reviewing your accounts, there are $40 total in penalties between the Lobbyist account and the Client Lobbyist account.
>
> At this time, the Commission is not able to accept electronic payments. To pay your penalties please sent a check or money order, with your name or organization name clearly printed on the payment method, to the address below.
>
> You have the option to petition the Commission to waive the penalties. Simply reply to this email, one email for each account, addressed to the Commission, explaining the reason the reports were late, and requesting a waiver or reduction of penalties.
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> ***Please take our customer service survey!***
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>
> ---
>
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> **Subject:** Explanation for late filing

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Oregon Government Ethics Commission,

I apologize for not filing my lobbying report on time. I thought I didn't need to because my status is inactive. I am new to this and don't understand the process.

If you deem that I should pay my $20 penalty, I am willing. Just let me know how to pay it.

Thank you.

Dana Turell
Turell Group
541.525.2207

Past Violations: None

Current Penalties: 2026 Q2 $30.00

Recommendation: 1st violation - Letter of Education SVM

BEFORE THE OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of	)	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
Casey Miller	)	**CASE NO. 25-412PCF**

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Casey Miller.

2. JURISDICTION:

   A. Lincoln County is a public body, and the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners is one of its governing body. [ORS 192.610(5) and (7)].

   B. At all material times, Casey Miller was a member of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. As a member of a governing body, Casey Miller is required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.610 through ORS 192.705.

   C. On October 10, 2025, the Commission considered information in the preliminary review phase of case #25-412PCF and acted to find cause to open an investigation of this matter.

3. APPLICABLE LAW:

   A. ORS 192.630(1) requires that all meetings of a governing body “shall be open to the public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting" except as otherwise provided in the Public Meetings Law.

B. ORS 192.610(7)(a) states that a "meeting" means the convening of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to deliberate toward a decision on any matter.

C. A "convening" means: "(a) Gathering in a physical location; (b) Using electronic, video or telephonic technology to be able to communicate contemporaneously among participants; (c) Using serial electronic written communication among participants; or (d) Using an intermediary to communicate among participants." [ORS 192.610(1)].

D. An "intermediary" is "a person who is used to facilitate communications among members of a governing body about a matter subject to deliberation or decision by the governing body, by sharing information received from a member or members of the governing body with other members of the governing body. The term "intermediary" can include a member of the governing body." [OAR 199-050-0005(7)].

E. ORS 192.610(3) defines "deliberation" as discussion or communication that is part of a decision-making process. "Decision-making process" means the process a governing body engages in to make a decision, such as: (a) identifying or selecting the nature of the decision to be made; (b) gathering information related to the decision to be made; (c) identifying and assessing alternatives; (d) weighing information; and (e) making a decision. [OAR 199-050-0005(4)].

F. OAR 199-050-0015(4) states that "[a] private meeting where a quorum of a governing body engages in discussions or communications that are part of the governing body's decision-making process on matters within the authority of the governing body violates the Public Meetings Law."

G. OAR 199-050-0020(1) prohibits serial communications and provides: "A quorum of the members of a governing body shall not, outside of a meeting conducted in compliance with the Public Meetings Law, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, for the purpose of deliberating or deciding on any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the governing body."

H. OAR 199-050-0020(2) states that "[t]he prohibitions in section (1) apply to using any one or a combination of the following methods of communication:
(a) In-person;
(b) Telephone calls;
(c) Videos, videoconferencing, or electronic video applications;
(d) Written communications, including electronic written communications, such as email, texts, and other electronic applications;
(e) Use of one or more intermediaries to convey information among members; and
(f) Any other means of conveying information."

I. ORS 192.630(2) states that "[a]quorum of a governing body may not meet in private for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision on any matter except as otherwise provided by ORS 192.610 to 192.705."

J. ORS 192.640(1) requires that "[t]he governing body of a public body shall provide for and give public notice, reasonably calculated to give actual notice to interested persons including news media which have requested notice, of the time and place for holding regular meetings. The notice shall also include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects."

K. ORS 192.650(1) requires that "[t]he governing body of a public body shall provide for the sound, video or digital recording or the taking of written minutes of all its meetings. Neither a full transcript nor a full recording of the meeting is required, except as otherwise provided by law, but the written minutes or recording must give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants."

L. ORS 192.650(1) requires that the meeting minutes include all members of the governing body present; all motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, ordinances and measures proposed and their disposition; the results of all votes and the vote of each member by name; substance of any discussion on the matter; and a reference to any document discussed at the meeting.

4. <u>STIPULATED FACTS</u>

A. Between May 9, 2025 and June 10, 2025, each Lincoln County Commissioner, including Casey Miller, received a series of emails ("the emails") from the Lincoln County Human Resources Director asking them to respond to hiring freeze exemption requests.

B. The process for reviewing and approving hiring freeze exemptions was developed and approved by Lincoln County legal counsel.

C. The emails from the Lincoln County Human Resources Director were directed to individual Lincoln County Commissioners and regarding positions requested for exemption from the hiring freeze.

D. The emails to the Lincoln County Commissioners were asked to indicate whether they approved, denied, abstained from, or otherwise responded to the exemption requests.

E. The Human Resources Director functioned as an intermediary by soliciting and collecting commissioner responses from the exemption requests.

F. Casey Miller received the communications but did not respond to the exemption requests.

G. Casey Miller raised concerns regarding whether the workflow complied with Public Meetings Law and requested that hiring freeze exemption requests be discussed during properly noticed public meetings.

H. When the exemption approval request workflow continued outside of properly noticed public meetings, Casey Miller submitted a grievance and later filed a complaint with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission requesting review of the process.

I. By establishing a process for and processing exemption requests outside of a public meeting, it was a violation of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), and ORS 192.650(1). Despite not establishing the process and despite not responding to the emails regarding the exemption requests, as a Lincoln County Commissioner, Casey Miller is responsible for ensuring the requirements of Public Meetings Law were followed as a member of the governing body.

J. Casey Miller has been raising concerns about the applicability of Public Meetings Law to Lincoln County government meetings, processes and procedures since at least on or about September 18, 2024.

K. Casey Miller asserts that his ability to impact how meetings are conducted and what is discussed at those meetings have been hindered by certain Lincoln County personnel as set forth in his First Amended Complaint in Civil Case No. 6:26-cv-00499-AA, filed in the US. District Court for the District of Oregon, Eugene Division.

L. Casey Miller asserts that he is not responsible for posting Lincoln County Commission meeting notices or taking meeting minutes, and that those actions are taken by Lincoln County staff. Casey Miller asserts that he was not responsible for determining what workflows were used to process hiring freeze exemptions, that he did not affirmatively approve exemption requests through the workflow, that he did not engage in deliberations by email, and that he sought corrective review through internal grievance procedures and complaint submission to the Commission. Nonetheless, Casey Miller understands the importance of transparency and compliance with Public Meetings Law and agrees to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order to bring this case to a close.

5. <u>CONCLUSION/VIOLATION</u>

A. The actions described in paragraph (4)(I) constitute one violation each of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), and ORS 192.650(1).

B. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation each of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), and ORS 192.650(1).

6. <u>TERMS OF SETTLEMENT</u>:

The parties agree as follows:

A. Casey Miller has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order without completing the investigative phase, further litigation or contested case proceedings.

B. As authorized by ORS 244.350(5), and in consideration of the fact that the process was developed with the advice of legal counsel and Casey Miller filed the complaint in this matter, Casey Miller will receive a letter of education in lieu of a civil penalty in order to settle and compromise this matter.

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges which have been asserted by the Commission in the above-referenced case against Casey Miller.

D. Casey Miller will initiate no claims, litigation or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

E. Nothing in this stipulated final order shall be construed as limiting Casey Miller's ability to advocate for future governance reforms, transparency measures or Public Meetings Law compliance initiatives.

6. REVIEW BY COUNSEL:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. EFFECT:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of the matter and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Casey Miller agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 244.370. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Casey Miller agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
Casey Miller
B7737ACE1843470...

August 4, 2026

Respondent: Casey Miller | Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson | Date
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

BEFORE THE OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of	)	
	)	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
Walter Chuck	)	**CASE NO. 25-424PCF**
______________________	)	

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Walter Chuck.

2. JURISDICTION:

   A. Lincoln County is a public body, and the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners is one of its governing body. [ORS 192.610(5) and (7)].

   B. At all material times, Walter Chuck was a member of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. As a member of a governing body, Walter Chuck is required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.610 through ORS 192.705.

   C. On October 10, 2025, the Commission considered information in the preliminary review phase of case #25-412PCF and acted to find cause to open an investigation of this matter.

3. APPLICABLE LAW:

   A. ORS 192.630(1) requires that all meetings of a governing body "shall be open to the public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting" except as otherwise provided in the Public Meetings Law.

B. ORS 192.610(7)(a) states that a "meeting" means the convening of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to deliberate toward a decision on any matter.

C. A "convening" means: "(a) Gathering in a physical location; (b) Using electronic, video or telephonic technology to be able to communicate contemporaneously among participants; (c) Using serial electronic written communication among participants; or (d) Using an intermediary to communicate among participants." [ORS 192.610(1)].

D. An "intermediary" is "a person who is used to facilitate communications among members of a governing body about a matter subject to deliberation or decision by the governing body, by sharing information received from a member or members of the governing body with other members of the governing body. The term "intermediary" can include a member of the governing body." [OAR 199-050-0005(7)].

E. ORS 192.610(3) defines "deliberation" as discussion or communication that is part of a decision-making process. "Decision-making process" means the process a governing body engages in to make a decision, such as: (a) identifying or selecting the nature of the decision to be made; (b) gathering information related to the decision to be made; (c) identifying and assessing alternatives; (d) weighing information; and (e) making a decision. [OAR 199-050-0005(4)].

F. OAR 199-050-0015(4) states that "[a] private meeting where a quorum of a governing body engages in discussions or communications that are part of the governing body's decision-making process on matters within the authority of the governing body violates the Public Meetings Law."

G. OAR 199-050-0020(1) prohibits serial communications and provides: "A quorum of the members of a governing body shall not, outside of a meeting conducted in compliance with the Public Meetings Law, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, for the purpose of deliberating or deciding on any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the governing body."

H. OAR 199-050-0020(2) states that "[t]he prohibitions in section (1) apply to using any one or a combination of the following methods of communication:
(a) In-person;
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(e) Use of one or more intermediaries to convey information among members; and
(f) Any other means of conveying information."

I. ORS 192.630(2) states that "[a]quorum of a governing body may not meet in private for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision on any matter except as otherwise provided by ORS 192.610 to 192.705."

J. ORS 192.640(1) requires that "[t]he governing body of a public body shall provide for and give public notice, reasonably calculated to give actual notice to interested persons including news media which have requested notice, of the time and place for holding regular meetings. The notice shall also include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects."

K. ORS 192.650(1) requires that "[t]he governing body of a public body shall provide for the sound, video or digital recording or the taking of written minutes of all its meetings. Neither a full transcript nor a full recording of the meeting is required, except as otherwise provided by law, but the written minutes or recording must give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants."

L. ORS 192.650(1) requires that the meeting minutes include all members of the governing body present; all motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, ordinances and measures proposed and their disposition; the results of all votes and the vote of each member by name; substance of any discussion on the matter; and a reference to any document discussed at the meeting.

M. OAR 199-050-0055(1) requires all official actions of a governing body be taken by public vote.

4. STIPULATED FACTS

A. Between May 9, 2025 and June 10, 2025, each Lincoln County Commissioner, including Walter Chuck, received a series of emails ("the emails") from the Lincoln County HR Director asking them to respond to hiring freeze exemption requests by email.

B. The emails from the Lincoln County HR Director were directed to individual Lincoln County Commissioners so that no two Lincoln County Commissioners were on the same email.

C. The emails included information from Lincoln County department heads on why a position should be exempt from the hiring freeze. To effectuate an exemption from the hiring freeze, the Lincoln County Commissioners were asked to respond to the emails either approving the exemption, denying the exemption or abstaining from the decision.

D. The HR Director served as an intermediary, as he solicited and received the responses from a quorum of the Lincoln County Commissioners.

E. Walter Chuck was aware that the exemption requests were being processed by email and in violation of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), 192.650(1) and ORS 192.670(1).

F. Walter Chuck approved hiring freeze exemptions by email in violation of ORS 199-050-0055(1).

G. Walter Chuck asserts that he is not responsible for posting Lincoln County Commission meeting notices or taking meeting minutes, and that those actions are taken by Lincoln County staff. The freeze on general fund positions was put in place by late Commissioner Hall while she was appointed as interim administrator. The process was developed by HR without consultation of legal counsel. Between May 9 and June 10 no actions were taken, or positions unfrozen on the approvals sent to HR during that time. Nonetheless, Walter Chuck understands the importance of transparency and compliance with Public Meetings Law and agrees to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order to bring this case to a close.

5. <u>CONCLUSION/VIOLATION</u>

A. The actions described in paragraph 4(E) and (4)(F) constitute one violation each of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), ORS 192.650(1), ORS 192.670(1) and OAR 100-050-0055(1).

B. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation each of ORS 192.630(1), ORS 192.640(1), ORS 192.650(1), ORS 192.670(1) and OAR 199-050-0055(1).

6. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT:

The parties agree as follows:

A. Walter Chuck has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order without completing the investigative phase.

B. As authorized by ORS 244.350(5), Walter Chuck will receive a letter of education in lieu of a civil penalty in order to settle and compromise this matter.

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges which have been asserted by the Commission in the above-referenced case against Walter Chuck.

D. Walter Chuck will initiate no claims, litigation or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. REVIEW BY COUNSEL:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. EFFECT:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of the matter and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Walter Chuck agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 244.370. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Walter Chuck agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
Walter Chuck
D4368C5EA99A4C6...

August 2, 2026

Respondent: Walter Chuck

Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

Date

BEFORE THE OREGON
GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

Suzanne Kunse

Case No.: **26-194LCF**

Date: **July 31, 2026**

STIPULATED FINAL ORDER

---

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations, and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Suzanne Kunse.

2. **Jurisdiction:**

At all material times, Suzanne Kunse was serving as the Associate Vice President, Government and Community Affairs for the Oregon Institute of Technology, and in that role was a lobbyist for Oregon Institute of Technology. As such, Suzanne Kunse is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to ORS Chapter 171.

3. **Applicable Law:**

A. ORS 171.740(1) requires lobbyists to be registered with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

B. Per ORS 171.740(5), lobbyist registrations expire on December 31 of each odd-numbered year. If a lobbyist intends to continue lobbying for a client, the lobbyist must renew the registration before January 31st of the next even-numbered year.

4. **Stipulated Facts:**

A. Suzanne Kunse is the Associate Vice President, Government and Community Affairs for the Oregon Institute of Technology.

B. Suzanne Kunse has been registered as a lobbyist with the Commission since January 16, 2025.

C. Suzanne Kunse's registration was not accepted by Oregon Institute of Technology until April 2, 2026. As a result, Suzanne Kunse was not registered as a lobbyist for Oregon Institute of Technology during Q1 2026.

D. On April 7, 2026, Suzanne Kunse filed a self-reported complaint. The complaint states that Suzanne Kunse was not registered during Q1 2026 due to an oversight.

E. Suzanne Kunse submitted a timely-filed quarterly expenditure report for Q1 2026 on April 13, 2026. However, Oregon Institute of Technology could not and did not file their Q1 2026 client quarterly expenditure reports, as Suzanne Kunse's registration to lobby on their behalf was not active.

F. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation of ORS 171.740(1).

5. **Terms of Settlement:**

The parties agree as follows:

A. On April 2, 2026, Suzanne Kunse filed a self-reported complaint, initiating a case in preliminary review. Suzanne Kunse has indicated that she wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the preliminary review phase.

B. ORS 171.992(1) authorizes the Commission to assess civil penalties of up to $5,000.00 for each violation of ORS 171.740. In lieu of civil penalty, Suzanne Kunse will receive a letter of education, as authorized by ORS 171.992(4).

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been or could be asserted against Suzanne Kunse within the scope of the above-referenced case.

D. Suzanne Kunse will initiate no claims, litigation, or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. Review by Counsel:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. Effect:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of these matters and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Suzanne Kunse agrees to waive her right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Suzanne Kunse agrees to waive her right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Suzanne Kunse | August 3, 2026

Respondent: Suzanne Kunse
Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson
Date
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

BEFORE THE OREGON

GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of: **Jason Williams** Case No.: **26-207LCF** Date: **August , 2026**	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**

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1. Purpose:

The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations, and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Jason Williams.

2. Jurisdiction:

At all material times, Jason Williams was a lobbyist who engaged in lobbying members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon. As a lobbyist, Jason Williams is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to ORS Chapter 171.

3. Applicable Law:

A. ORS 171.740(5) provides that lobbyist registrations in the Commission's Electronic Filing System (EFS) expire on December 31 of each odd-numbered year. If a lobbyist intends to continue lobbying on behalf of a client, the lobbyist must renew that registration in EFS before January 31st of the following even-numbered year. If they do not renew, their registration will be terminated as of December 31 of the odd-numbered year.

B. If the lobbyist did not renew and their registration has terminated but they want to lobby or continue lobbying on behalf of a client, they must submit a new registration in EFS, per ORS 171.740(1), and that registration must be accepted by the client/employer, per ORS 171.740(2).

C. ORS 171.740(1) requires lobbyists to register in EFS within three business days after exceeding the time or expenditure thresholds specified in ORS 171.735(4). Those thresholds are spending an aggregate of more than 24 hours lobbying in a calendar quarter or spending in excess of $100 aggregate on lobbying in a calendar quarter.

4. **Stipulated Facts:**

A. Jason Williams was registered in EFS to lobby on behalf of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon beginning in 2016 through 2023.

B. Jason Williams' 2022-2023 lobbyist registration expired on December 31, 2023.

C. Jason Williams engaged in lobbying on behalf of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon during the first quarter of 2026.

D. Jason Williams explained that he did not realize that his registration had expired. He submitted his registration on April 14, 2026 and it was accepted by the Taxpayer Association of Oregon later that day.

E. Neither Jason Williams nor the Taxpayer Association of Oregon Williams was able to file their Q1 2026 expenditure report because Jason Williams was not registered until April 14, 2026.

F. By lobbying on behalf of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon in Q1 2026 without being actively registered in EFS, Jason Williams violated ORS 171.740(1).

G. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation of ORS 171.740(1).

5. **Terms of Settlement:**

The parties agree as follows:

A. On April 15, 2026, Jason Williams filed a self-reported complaint, initiating a case in preliminary review. Jason Williams has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the preliminary review phase.

B. ORS 171.992(1) authorizes the Commission to assess civil penalties of up to $5,000.00 for each violation of ORS 171.740.

C. In lieu of a civil penalty, Jason Williams will receive a letter of education, as authorized by ORS 171.992(4).

D. Commission staff will coordinate with Jason Williams to get the effective date of his 2026-27 registration updated and his missing Q1 2026 expenditure report filed, as well as the missing expenditure report for Q1 2026 of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon.

E. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, which have been or could be asserted against Jason Williams within the scope of the above-referenced proceedings.

F. Jason Williams will initiate no claims, litigation, or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. **Review by Counsel:**

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. **Effect:**

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of these matters and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Jason Williams agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Jason Williams agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Jason Williams

7/31/2026

Respondent: Jason Williams | Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

Date

BEFORE THE OREGON

GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of:		**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
	Nicole Mann	
Case No.:	**26-252LCF**	
Date:	**August 14, 2026**	

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations, and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Nicole Mann.

2. Jurisdiction:

At all material times, Nicole Mann was a Senior Legislative Advocate at Dalton Advocacy, and in that role was a lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings and Oregon Small Woodlands Association. As such, Nicole Mann is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to ORS Chapter 171.

3. Applicable Law:

A. ORS 171.740(1) requires lobbyists to be registered with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

B. Per ORS 171.740(5), lobbyist registrations expire on December 31 of each odd-numbered year. If a lobbyist intends to continue lobbying for a client, the lobbyist must renew the registration before January 31st of the next even-numbered year.

4. Stipulated Facts:

A. Nicole Mann is employed by Dalton Advocacy, which contracts with Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Chubb INA Holdings, Inc.

B. Nicole Mann has served as a paid lobbyist for Oregon Small Woodlands Association since November 2024.

C. Nicole Mann has served as a paid lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. since January of 2026.

D. Nicole Mann initiated her lobbyist/client registrations for both clients on January 5, 2026. Oregon Small Woodlands Association did not accept Nicole Mann's lobbyist registration until April 28, 2026. Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. did not accept Nicole Mann's lobbyist registration until April 28, 2026. Thus, Nicole Mann was not registered as a lobbyist for either Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. or Oregon Small Woodlands Association during Q1 2026.

E. On May 5, 2026, Nicole Mann filed a self-reported complaint. The complaint states that Nicole Mann was not registered as a lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. or Oregon Small Woodlands Association during Q1 2026.

F. Nicole Mann submitted a timely-filed quarterly expenditure report for Q1 2026 on April 6, 2026. However, Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. and Oregon Small Woodlands Association could not and did not file their Q1 2026 client quarterly expenditure reports, as Nicole Mann's registration to lobby on their behalf was not active.

G. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation of ORS 171.740(1).

5. Terms of Settlement:

The parties agree as follows:

A. On May 5, 2026, Nicole Mann filed a self-reported complaint, initiating a case in preliminary review. Nicole Mann has indicated that she wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the preliminary review phase.

B. ORS 171.992(1) authorizes the Commission to assess civil penalties of up to $5,000.00 for each violation of ORS 171.740. In lieu of civil penalty, Nicole Mann will receive a letter of education, as authorized by ORS 171.992(4).

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been or could be asserted against Nicole Mann within the scope of the above-referenced case.

D. Nicole Mann will initiate no claims, litigation, or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. Review by Counsel:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. Effect:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of these matters and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Nicole Mann agrees to waive her right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Nicole Mann agrees to waive her right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
Nicole Mann
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July 30, 2026

Respondent: Nicole Mann | Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson | Date
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

BEFORE THE OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of	)	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
Amanda Dalton	)	**CASE NO.** 26-291LDP

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this stipulated final order is to settle any and all claims, allegations and charges by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above referenced case against Amanda Dalton.

2. JURISDICTION: At all material times, Amanda Dalton was a lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. and Oregon Small Woodlands Association. As such, Amanda Dalton is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to ORS Chapter 171.

3. STIPULATED FACTS:

   A. ORS 171.740(1) provides that "* * * within three business days after agreeing to provide personal services for money or any other consideration for the purpose of lobbying, a lobbyist shall register with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission * * *." Such registration is completed through the Commission's Electronic Filing System (EFS).

   B. ORS 171.740(5) provides that a lobbyist registration expires December 31, of each odd-numbered year. If a lobbyist renews the registration before January 31 of the following even-numbered year, the Commission shall consider the registration to have been effective as of December 31 of the odd-numbered year on which the registration expired.

   C. ORS 171.740(2)(a) provides that "[n]ot later than 10 calendar days after a lobbyist files a registration statement under this section, the designation of official authorization to lobby shall be signed by an official of each person that employs the lobbyist or in whose interest the lobbyist appears or works." The client/employer's official authorization is done through EFS.

D. Amanda Dalton has been registered as a lobbyist in EFS since 2015 and has lobbied on behalf of a number of clients.

E. Amanda Dalton's firm, Dalton Advocacy, contracts with Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. Since January 2026, Amanda Dalton has served as a paid lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. and Oregon Small Woodlands Association through Dalton Advocacy.

F. Amanda Dalton registration expired on December 31, 2025. Amanda Dalton initiated her lobbyist/client registrations for both clients on January 5, 2026; however, Oregon Small Woodlands Association did not accept Amanda Dalton's lobbyist registration until April 28, 2026 and Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. did not accept Amanda Dalton's lobbyist registration until April 30, 2026. Thus, Amanda Dalton was not registered as a lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. or Oregon Small Woodlands Association during Q1 2026.

G. On May 5, 2026, Amanda Dalton filed a self-reported complaint. The complaint states that Amanda Dalton was not registered as a lobbyist for Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. or Oregon Small Woodlands Association during Q1 2026.

H. Amanda Dalton submitted a timely-filed quarterly expenditure report for Q1 2026 on April 2, 2026. However, Chubb INA Holdings, Inc. and Oregon Small Woodlands Association could not and did not file their Q1 2026 client quarterly expenditure reports, as Amanda Dalton's registration to lobby on their behalf was not active.

I. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation of ORS 171.740(1).

4. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT:

The parties agree as follows:

A. On May 5, 2026, Amanda Dalton filed a self-reported complaint, initiating a case in preliminary review. Amanda Dalton has indicated that she wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the preliminary review phase.

B. ORS 171.992(1) authorizes the Commission to assess civil penalties of up to $5,000.00 for each violation of ORS 171.740. In lieu of civil penalty, Amanda Dalton will receive a letter of education, as authorized by ORS 171.992(4).

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, which have been or could be asserted against Amanda Dalton within the scope of the above-referenced proceedings.

D. Amanda Dalton will initiate no claims, litigation or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

5. REVIEW BY COUNSEL:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in comparing and reviewing this agreement.

6. <u>EFFECT</u>:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of the matter and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Amanda Dalton agrees to waive her right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Amanda Dalton agrees to waive her right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
Amanda Dalton
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Respondent: Amanda Dalton

July 2, 2026
Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

Date

BEFORE THE OREGON

GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of: **Branden Pursinger** Case No.: **26-370LCF** Date: **August 14, 2026**	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**

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1. Purpose:

The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations, and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Branden Pursinger.

2. Jurisdiction:

At all material times, Branden Pursinger was a lobbyist who, as the Legislative Affairs Manager for the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), engaged in lobbying members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly. As a lobbyist, Branden Pursinger is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to ORS Chapter 171.

3. Applicable Law:

A. ORS 171.740(5) provides that lobbyist registrations in the Commission's Electronic Filing System (EFS) expire on December 31 of each odd-numbered year. If a lobbyist intends to continue lobbying on behalf of a client, the lobbyist must renew that registration in EFS before January 31st of the following even-numbered year. If they do not renew, their registration will be terminated as of December 31 of the odd-numbered year.

B. If the lobbyist did not renew and their registration has terminated but they want to lobby or continue lobbying on behalf of a client, they must submit a new registration in EFS, per ORS 171.740(1), and that registration must be accepted by the client/employer, per ORS 171.740(2).

C. ORS 171.740(1) requires lobbyists to register in EFS within three business days after exceeding the time or expenditure thresholds specified in ORS 171.735(4). Those thresholds are spending an aggregate of more than 24 hours lobbying in a calendar quarter or spending in excess of $100 aggregate on lobbying in a calendar quarter.

4. Stipulated Facts:

A. Branden Pursinger has been registered in EFS to lobby on behalf of AOC since 2022-23.

B. In 2024-25, Branden Pursinger was registered to lobby on behalf of AOC. On December 15, 2025, EFS notified Branden Pursinger that his lobbyist registration would expire on December 31st and that registration did, in fact, expire on December 31, 2025.

C. Branden Pursinger did not renew his lobbyist registration before January 31, 2026. Therefore, his lobbyist registration was terminated, effective December 31, 2025.

D. Branden Pursinger engaged in lobbying on behalf of AOC during the first and second quarters of 2026.

E. Branden Pursinger explained that he did not realize that his registration had expired until the beginning of June 2026. On June 1, 2026, he submitted a new registration in EFS and his client/employer, AOC, immediately accepted that registration.

F. Branden Pursinger was able to file his Q2 2026 expenditure report on July 1, 2026. However, because he was not registered until June 1, 2026, he was not able to file his Q1 2026 expenditure report.

G. Because AOC has other registered lobbyists, it was able to file both its Q1 2026 and Q2 2026 client/employer expenditure reports. Both of those reports identify Branden Pursinger as one of its lobbyists.

H. By lobbying on behalf of AOC in Q1 2026 without being actively registered in EFS, Branden Pursinger violated ORS 171.740(1).

I. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find one violation of ORS 171.740(1).

5. **Terms of Settlement:**

The parties agree as follows:

A. On June 4, 2026, Branden Pursinger filed a self-reported complaint, initiating a case in preliminary review. Mr. Pursinger has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the preliminary review phase.

B. ORS 171.992(1) authorizes the Commission to assess civil penalties of up to $5,000.00 for each violation of ORS 171.740.

C. In lieu of a civil penalty, Branden Pursinger will receive a letter of education, as authorized by ORS 171.992(4).

D. Commission staff will coordinate with Branden Pursinger to get the effective date of his 2026-27 registration updated and his missing Q1 2026 expenditure report filed.

E. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, which have been or could be asserted against Branden Pursinger within the scope of the above-referenced proceedings.

F. Branden Pursinger will initiate no claims, litigation, or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. **Review by Counsel:**

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. **Effect:**

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of these matters and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Branden Pursinger agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Branden Pursinger agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
Branden Pursinger
DBC117CEFCB849C...

July 30, 2026

Respondent: Branden Pursinger — Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson
Oregon Government Ethics Commission — Date

BEFORE THE OREGON

GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of:		**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
	Matt Scarfo	
Case No.:	**25-708ECF**	
Date:	**August 14, 2026**	

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations, and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced case against Matt Scarfo.

2. Jurisdiction:

A. At all material times, Matt Scarfo was a Union County Commissioner. As such, he is a public official as defined in ORS 244.020(15), and therefore subject to Oregon Government Ethics Law.

B. On February 6, 2026, the Commission considered information in the preliminary review report for case no. 25-708ECF and found there to be sufficient evidence to move the case to investigation to review alleged violations of ORS 244.040(1) and ORS 244.120(1)(c).

3. **Applicable Law:**

   A. At the time relevant to this review, ORS 244.020(1) and (13) defined conflict of interest as any action or decision or any recommendation by a public official, the effect of which would be (actual conflict of interest) or could be (potential conflict of interest) to the private pecuniary benefit or detriment of the public official, their relative or any business with which either the public official or their relative is associated.

   B. Pursuant to ORS 244.120(2)(a), when an elected official is faced with a potential conflict of interest, the elected official is required to publicly announce the nature of the potential conflict of interest prior to taking any action on the matter in the capacity of a public official.

   C. Pursuant to ORS 244.120(2)(b)(A), when met with an actual conflict of interest, the public official must publicly announce the nature of their actual conflict and refrain from participating as a public official in any discussion or debate on the issue out of which the actual conflict arises or from voting on the issue.

4. **Stipulated Facts:**

   A. Matt Scarfo was first elected to the Union County Board of Commissioners in 2018 and was reelected in 2022. In his capacity as a Union County Commissioner he earns a salary.

   B. At a meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners held on January 8, 2025, Commissioner Paul Anderes indicated that he wanted a legal ruling of the term limits for Commissioners.

   C. Matt Scarfo failed to declare the nature of his conflict of interest at the January 8, 2025 meeting, during which the question of the validity of the term limits arose and information and guidance from legal counsel was requested. At that point, the conflict of interest was a potential conflict of interest because the Commissioners were seeking information from their legal counsel with respect to their options and those options could have resulted in a financial benefit or detriment to Matt Scarfo.

D. At a meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners held on January 22, 2025, legal counsel for the Union County Board of Commissioners discussed the term limits of two consecutive terms (8 years) established by petition in 2017. Legal counsel indicated that in a similar case in a different Oregon county, the circuit court overturned the term limitation. Legal counsel provided the Union County Commissioners with the option of petitioning the court for a determination on the validity of the term limits or waiting until a Commissioner submitted the documentation necessary to run for a third term, at which point the clerk would be responsible for addressing the matter.

E. Each of the Commissioners, including Matt Scarfo, discussed the options for moving forward presented by legal counsel and voted to request a determination on the legality of the term limits through a special writ at the January 25, 2025 meeting. None of the Commissioners declared a conflict of interest. Legal counsel was present during the discussion and vote.

F. Matt Scarfo failed to declare the nature of his conflict of interest and failed to abstain from discussion and the vote on the matter at the January 25, 2025 meeting, during which the Commissioners received legal advice from their legal counsel regarding the validity of the term limits and their options for obtaining a court ruling regarding those term limits. At that point, the conflict of interest was an actual conflict of interest because the action, decision or recommendation would result in a financial benefit to himself because he would not be required to pursue legal action on the term limits using his own funds.

G. The Commission asserts that as a result of his failure to declare a conflict of interest at two separate public meetings, Matt Scarfo violated ORS 244.120(2)(a)(A) and ORS 244.120(2)(b)(A).

H. The result of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find two violations of ORS 244.120(2).

I. Matt Scarfo contends that he did not intentionally violate the law. The decision made by the Commissioners was only to seek a determination of the legality of the term limits, not to eliminate the term limits. He notes that other public officials in similar positions did not declare a conflict of interest and did not have a complaint filed against them. Nonetheless, Matt Scarfo understands the importance of complying with Oregon Government Ethics Law and agrees to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order to bring this case to a close.

5. Terms of Settlement:

The parties agree as follows:

A. Matt Scarfo has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this order without completing the investigative phase.

B. As authorized by ORS 244.350(5), Matt Scarfo will receive a letter of education in order to settle and compromise this matter.

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been or could be asserted against Matt Scarfo within the scope of the above-referenced case.

D. Matt Scarfo will initiate no claims, litigation, or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. Review by Counsel:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. Effect:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of these matters and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Matt Scarfo agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 171.778. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Matt Scarfo agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

Signed by:
AA7CA51521FB496...

August 6, 2026

Respondent: Matt Scarfo — Date

Shenoa Payne, Chairperson — Date
Oregon Government Ethics Commission

BEFORE THE OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

In the Matter of	)	**STIPULATED FINAL ORDER**
Greg Smith	)	**CASE NO. 25-160ECF** **25-429ECF**

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this stipulated final order is to release, settle and compromise any and all claims, allegations and charges that have been asserted by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) in the above-referenced cases against Greg Smith.

2. JURISDICTION:

   A. Greg Smith was the Executive Director of the Columbia Development Authority at all times relevant to the aforementioned cases. As such, he is a public official, as defined in ORS 244.020(15), and therefore subject to Oregon Government Ethics Law provisions found in ORS Chapter 244.

   B. On December 12, 2025, the Commission considered information in the investigation report for case no. 25-160ECF and made preliminary findings of violations of ORS 244.120(1)(c) and ORS 244.040(1).

   C. On October 10, 2025, the Commission considered information in the preliminary review report for case no. 25-429ECF and found there to be sufficient evidence to move the case to investigation to review alleged violations of ORS 244.040(1) and 244.120(1)(c).

3. APPLICABLE LAW:

A. At the time relevant to this review, conflict of interest was defined as any action or decision or recommendation by a person acting in their capacity as a public official, the effect of which would be or could be to the private financial benefit or detriment of the person or the person's relative or any business with which the person or a relative of the person is associated. [ORS 244.020(1),(13)].

B. When met with a conflict of interest, an appointed public official is required to notify their appointing authority, in writing, of the nature of the conflict, and request that the appointing authority dispose of the matter giving rise to the conflict. The appointing authority shall either designate within a reasonable time, an alternate to dispose of the matter, or shall direct the official to dispose of the matter in a manner specified by the appointing authority. [ORS 244.120(1)(c)].

C. ORS 244.040(1) prohibits a public official from using or attempting to use his official position or office to obtain financial gain or to avoid financial detriment for the public official, a relative or member of the household of the public official, or any business with which any of those individuals are associated, if the financial gain or avoidance of financial detriment would not otherwise be available but for the public official's holding of the official position or office. There are exceptions to this prohibition listed in ORS 244.040(2).

D. ORS 244.040(2) states that subsection (1) does not include any part of an official compensation package as determined by the public body that the public official serves.

E. OAR 199-008-0005(3) defines "official compensation package" as the wages and other benefits provided to the public official. To be part of the public official's official compensation package, the wages and benefits must have been specifically approved by the public body in a formal manner such as through a contract or adopted personnel policies that apply to the public official. The "official compensation package" also includes the direct payment of a public official's expenses by the public body in accordance with the public body's policies.

4. STIPULATED FACTS

a. *2024 OLDCC Grant Application, Pay Increases and Retroactive Pay*

A. The Columbia Development Authority (CDA) is an intergovernmental organization comprised of five public entities: the Port of Umatilla, Umatilla County, Port of Morrow, Morrow County, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Pursuant to the CDA's intergovernmental agreement, one member entity would serve as the CDA's fiscal agent. At all times relevant to these cases, the CDA's fiscal agent was the Port of Morrow (hereinafter, "Fiscal Agent" when Port of Morrow acting as fiscal agent of CDA).

B. In November/December 2023, Greg Smith discussed a pay increase for CDA employees, including himself, with members of the CDA Board. In January 2024, Greg Smith provided research regarding pay increases for CDA employees, including himself, to members of the CDA Board.

C. The CDA, through the Port of Morrow, applied for a grant from the Office of Local Defense and Community Cooperation (OLDCC) in 2024. The grant application provided for a salary for Greg Smith of

$195,000, and included language indicating that CDA employees' compensation packages, as reflected in the grant application, had already been approved by the CDA Board of Directors even though no official Board vote was taken. Greg Smith contends that he did not write that language.

D. The 2024 OLDCC grant was awarded to Port of Morrow, on behalf of CDA, on or about May 20, 2024. The grant included the language that the CDA employees' compensation packages had already been approved by the CDA Board. The grant was retroactive.

E. Before the June 20, 2025 board meeting, the CDA circulated board packets to all board members which included the CDA budget, the budget narrative, and the grant application as approved by the OLDCC and the Fiscal Agent.

F. During a CDA Board Meeting on June 24, 2024, Greg Smith presented an overview of the OLDCC grant. There was a general reference to personnel wages and benefits. There was no discussion of Greg Smith's salary specifically, or the retroactivity of Greg Smith's salary increase. The CDA Board approved the OLDCC grant unanimously. Greg Smith contends the Chair of the CDA Board directed Greg Smith to notify the Fiscal Agent regarding the pay increases referenced in the grant.

G. On June 26, 2025, Greg Smith emailed the Fiscal Agent's Chief Financial Officer and stated that the OLDCC grant had been approved and that the pay increase was supposed to be retroactive to April 1, 2024. The retroactive pay to April 1, 2024 totaled $14,577.20.

H. For the pay period beginning on June 15, 2024, Greg Smith's hourly rate increased from $60.62 to $93.75, although he was an exempt salary employee and not paid hourly. Greg Smith was paid at the higher rate through the pay period ending September 20, 2024. The rate reverted back to the rate of $60.62 beginning on September 21, 2024. The increase in rate between June 15, 2024 and September 20, 2024, totaled $18,552.80.

I. On September 20, 2024, the CDA Board held a meeting at which the "board-approved" language in the OLDCC grant was discussed. A motion was made to have CDA staff return their salaries back to the previous amounts and return their retroactive pay. The motion carried. Greg Smith contends under Oregon law at the time, it could not require employees to pay back the pay increases.

J. As of the date of this stipulated final order, Greg Smith has not returned his retroactive pay at the higher rate or the additional amount received as a result of being paid at a higher rate from June 15 to September 20, 2024. Greg Smith has and continues to stand ready to repay the wages upon further direction by the Fiscal Agent.

K. Greg Smith was met with a conflict of interest on multiple occasions, including when he participated in the review of the OLDCC grant application, when he presented the OLDCC grant application to the CDA Board, and when he emailed the Port of Morrow's Chief Financial Officer regarding the applicability of salary increases and retroactive pay. Moreover, Greg Smith never provided a written conflict of interest disclosure to his appointing authority, the CDA Board, prior to engaging in any of those actions, decisions or recommendations.

L. Greg Smith admitted that he was unaware of the need to declare a conflict of interest while participating in the review of the OLDCC grant application, during the CDA's approval of the OLDCC grant application, and when emailing the Fiscal Agent to effectuate the salaries described as "board-approved" in the OLDCC application.

M. But for his position as the Executive Director of the CDA, Greg Smith would not have been able to pursue and obtain a pay increase through the OLDCC grant application, would not have had the ability to direct the Fiscal Agent to implement the salaries from the OLDCC grant application, would not have been able to direct that the pay increases be applied retroactively, would not have been able to keep the retroactive pay despite the CDA requiring it be returned, and would not have been able to keep the proceeds of the increased salary.

N. The Commission asserts that as a result of the actions, decisions and recommendations taken by Greg Smith as described herein, it resulted in one violation of ORS 244.120(1)(c), with 4 equivalent actions.

O. The Commission asserts that as a result of the actions, decisions and recommendations taken by Greg Smith as described herein, it resulted in one violation of ORS 244.040(1), with 4 equivalent actions.

b. *CDA Benefits and Timecards*

A. During the time Greg Smith served as Executive Director for the CDA, there were no written CDA Board policies and no written contracts or employment agreements regarding the hours he was expected to work, the amount of vacation he would earn and how it would be earned, the amount of sick leave that he would earn and how it would be earned, the amount of personal leave he would earn and how it would be earned, or what holidays he was entitled to be paid for.

B. For 2023, Greg Smith submitted 26 timecards, all of which were signed by him as the employee and signed by him as the approver. The timecards included 192 hours (24 days) of vacation time. Greg Smith was paid approximately $11,639.04.00 for the vacation time. Greg Smith contends the Fiscal Agent never directed Greg Smith to do anything differently.

C. For 2024, Greg Smith submitted 25 timecards, all of which were signed by him as the employee and signed by him as the approver. The timecards included 112 hours (14 days) of vacation time. The amount paid out for this vacation time totals approximately $13,539.44. Greg Smith contends the Fiscal Agent never directed Greg Smith to do anything differently.

D. For the period relevant to this review in 2025, Greg Smith submitted 18 timecards, all of which were signed by him as the employee and signed by him as the approver. The timecards include 433 hours (more than 54 days) of vacation between December 28, 2024 and August 8, 2025. The amount paid out for this vacation time totals $26,248.46. Greg Smith contends the Fiscal Agent never directed Greg Smith to do anything differently.

E. Greg Smith approved his own regular time, his vacation leave, his sick leave and his holiday leave. Greg Smith contends that his approval of his own time and leave were consistent with CDA workplace practices and instructions from the Fiscal Agent.

F. For each time Greg Smith approved his own timecard, he was required to declare a conflict of interest as the action that he was taking, approving the timecard, would result in a financial benefit to himself.

G. Because there were no written CDA contracts, policies or procedures dictating the accumulation of vacation time, each time Greg Smith used vacation time, it resulted in a prohibited use of office because, but for Greg Smith holding the position of CDA Executive Director, Greg Smith would not have otherwise been able to take the paid vacation time represented on his timecards.

H. Because there were no written contracts, policies or procedures issued by the CDA regarding vacation leave, sick leave, or holiday leave, the exception relating to official compensation packages in ORS 244.040(2)(a) does not apply.

I. Greg Smith contends that he was an employee of the Port of Morrow, or alternatively, that he was an employee of both the Port of Morrow and the CDA through an arrangement referred to as a joint employment relationship. During all relevant times, Greg Smith received a w-2 from the Port of Morrow but did not receive a w-2 from the CDA. Thus, he asserts that at all times relevant to this review, he was subject to the Port of Morrow's leave policies.

J. For 2025, the amount of vacation days as referenced on Greg Smith's timecards, which were signed and approved by him, would appear to exceed anything authorized under either the CDA's policies or the Port of Morrow's policies. Therefore, the exception relating to official compensation packages in ORS 244.040(2)(a) does not apply. Greg Smith contends that he was subject to the Port of Morrow's policies and, based on his calculations, would only have exceeded authorized vacation time by one day.

K. The Commission asserts that as a result of the actions, decisions and recommendations taken by Greg Smith as described herein, it resulted in one violation of ORS 244.120(1)(c) and 68 equivalent actions.

L. The Commission asserts that as a result of the actions, decisions and recommendations taken by Greg Smith as described herein, it resulted in one violation of ORS 244.040(1).

5. CONCLUSION/VIOLATION

A. The actions, decisions and recommendations described in section 4 above constitute a total of two violations of ORS 244.120(1)(c), with 72 equivalent actions. The attempted or actual uses of office or position described in section 4 above constitute a total of two violations of ORS 244.040(1), with four equivalent actions.

B. The results of the Commission investigation, if submitted through exhibits and testimony at a contested case hearing, would establish a preponderance of evidence in support of a post-hearing order to find two violations of ORS 244.120(2), with 72 equivalent actions, and two violations of ORS 244.040(1), with four equivalent actions.

6. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT:

The parties agree as follows:

A. The Oregon Government Ethics Commission encourages the settlement of a case by stipulated final order. [OAR 199-008-0020(1)]. Greg Smith has indicated that he wishes to conclude this matter by agreeing to the terms and conditions in this stipulated final order without completing the investigative phase and without Greg Smith admitting any intentional violations.

B. In lieu of a civil penalty, Greg Smith will pay a civil penalty in the amount of $12,000, as authorized by ORS 244.350(5), in order to settle and compromise this matter.

C. The Commission releases, settles and compromises any and all claims, allegations and charges which have been asserted by the Commission in the above-referenced case against Greg Smith.

D. Greg Smith will initiate no claims, litigation or other action against the Commission as a result of these proceedings.

6. REVIEW BY COUNSEL:

All of the parties hereto acknowledge that this agreement has been entered into by their own free will and with full understanding of the contents herein. Each of the parties further acknowledges that each has had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel in reviewing and entering this agreement.

7. EFFECT:

This agreement is subject to the final approval of the Commission. Once approved, this agreement shall be the final disposition of the matter and shall be binding upon all parties.

By signing this agreement, Greg Smith agrees to waive his right to a contested case hearing as provided in ORS Chapter 183 and ORS 244.370. This order shall be the final order and all information in the Commission files on this matter shall become part of the record.

By signing this agreement, Greg Smith agrees to waive his right to obtain judicial review of this order as provided in ORS 183.482.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into and signed this stipulated final order on the dates set forth below.

DocuSigned by:
8F715AB571604EB...

Respondent: Greg Smith	7/16/2026 Date
Shenoa Payne, Chairperson Oregon Government Ethics Commission	Date

Date: August 4, 2026

To: Commission

SVM

From: Susan Myers, Executive Director

Subject: Request for Commission Advisory Opinion - No. 26-533A

On June 18, 2026 we received the attached request for a formal commission advisory opinion from James Ofsink of Portland Forward Progress. The information presented indicates that Portland Forward Progress is considering engaging a lobbyist to engage with the Portland City Council.

The request for a commission advisory opinion asks the following:

> May an entity - such as an advocacy organization - acting through a paid lobbyist who is contractually bound to act as their independent agent (and who is not acting at the direction of any Councilor or public official), engage in the following activities without violating ORS 192.630(2) or the prohibition on prohibited serial communications under the Public Meetings Law:
>
> A. Meet individually with each member of a governing body [on a] regularly [*sic*] basis to gather information about their positions on targeted policies and legislation;
> B. Share information gathered from Councilors with the entity/ies, to help direct further lobbying; and
> C. Share information gathered with Councilors, including specific vote counts, positions, and potential amendments?

ORS 244.280(2) directs as follows:

> Not later than 60 days after the date the commission receives the written request for a commission advisory opinion, the commission shall issue either the opinion or a written denial of the request. The written denial shall explain the reasons for the

> denial. The commission may ask the person requesting the advisory opinion to supply additional information the commission considers necessary to render the opinion. The commission, by vote of a majority of the members of the commission, may extend the 60-day deadline by one period not to exceed 60 days.

The Public Meetings Law, including the provisions relating to prohibited serial communications, apply to members of governing bodies of public bodies. These provisions do not apply to Portland Forward Progress or its paid lobbyists.

For that reason, we recommend that the Commission vote to deny the request for a commission advisory opinion and issue James Ofsink a written denial of his request. In the alternative, we request that the Commission vote to extend the deadline for completion of Commission Advisory Opinion No. 26-533A by a period not to exceed 60 days.

Outlook

Request for Commission Advisory Opinion Pursuant to ORS 244.280 and OAR 199-001-0030

From James Ofsink <james@portlandforward.org>
Date Thu 6/18/2026 4:41 PM
To Mail * OGEC <mail@ogec.oregon.gov>

I respectfully request a formal Commission Advisory Opinion regarding the application of Oregon's Public Meetings Law (ORS 192.610 to 192.705) to a potential lobbying arrangement described below.

I. Statement of Facts

Many entities, such as advocacy organizations, wish to promote the adoption of certain policies before Portland City Council.

The City Council currently has 12 members. A quorum for the Council is seven members. Under the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's current guidance, members of the governing body are prohibited from engaging in serial communications or using intermediaries to deliberate toward a decision outside of public meetings. However, the Commission has also clarified that members of the public are generally not considered intermediaries when acting on their own behalf.

We are considering engaging a paid lobbyist, either alone or in partnership with another nonprofit. The lobbyist would operate under a written contract establishing that the lobbyist is acting as the agent of our advocacy organization and not at the direction of any City Councilor or City official. The lobbyist's activities would include:

1. Meeting with individual Portland City Councilors.
2. Asking each Councilor about their support for several policies, including actual or contemplated amendments.
3. Reporting the information gathered to our advocacy organization to direct further lobbying efforts.
4. Informing Councilors when the targeted proposed policies or ordinances have enough votes to pass, or which provisions or amendments are needed in order to get enough votes to pass those proposed policies or ordinances.

The lobbyist could inform Councilors that they are acting independently as a lobbyist — not as a tool of the Council — and asking them to act as a go-between or to poll other members on their behalf would potentially make them a prohibited intermediary, therefore they cannot accept such requests.

The lobbyist would not accept any requests or directions to act as an intermediary.

II. Relevant Statutes and Administrative Rules

The request concerns the application of the following provisions of Oregon law:

- ORS 192.630(2) – Prohibiting quorums of governing bodies from meeting in private for the purpose of deciding or deliberating toward a decision on any matter;
- ORS 192.610 – Definitions applicable to the Public Meetings Law, including definitions of "deliberation" and "meeting;"
- OAR 199-050-0005 – Definitions for serial communication rules, including the definition of "intermediary" as "a person who is used to facilitate communications among members of a governing body... by sharing information received from a member or members of the governing body with other members of the governing body;" and
- OGEC Prohibited Serial Communications FAQ (January 2025) – Specifically the guidance stating that "the fact that a constituent communicates on their own with a quorum of the governing body does not mean the governing body engaged in prohibited serial communications'".

III. Question Presented

May an entity - such as an advocacy organization - acting through a paid lobbyist who is contractually bound to act as their independent agent (and who is not acting at the direction of any Councilor or public official), engage in the following activities without violating ORS 192.630(2) or the prohibition on prohibited serial communications under the Public Meetings Law:

A. Meet individually with each member of a governing body regularly basis to gather information about their positions on targeted policies and legislation;
B. Share information gathered from Councilors with the entity/ies, to help direct further lobbying; and
C. Share information gathered with Councilors, including specific vote counts, positions, and potential amendments?

IV. Legal Context and Requestor's Preliminary Understanding

We understand that, under OGEC's current FAQ guidance:

1. A member of the public communicating on their own with a quorum does not automatically constitute a prohibited serial communication by the governing body;
2. An intermediary is defined as someone "used to facilitate communications among members";
3. A Councilor "should not direct another party to act as their intermediary."

We also understand that the prohibition on serial communications focuses on whether the communications were orchestrated at the direction of members of the governing body. The proposed arrangement is structured to ensure that all communications are initiated and controlled by the paid lobbyist as an agent of the entity/ies, not by any Councilor or public official.

However, because the statute and administrative rules are ambiguous regarding whether a paid lobbyist acting on behalf of an advocacy organization retains the same status as an "independent constituent" under the FAQ, and because the penalty for violating the Public Meetings Law can be severe, we seek formal guidance from the Commission.

V. Basis for Issuance

This request is made pursuant to ORS 244.280(1), which authorizes the Commission to issue advisory opinions on the application of ORS 192.610 to 192.705 to any actual or hypothetical circumstance . HB 4117 (2024) amended this provision to explicitly authorize any person to request such opinions .

The request concerns proposed future conduct that has not yet occurred, consistent with OAR 199-001-0030(2), which states the Commission will issue opinions "based on real or hypothetical facts or circumstances but not upon actual events that have already occurred."

VI. Request for Relief

We respectfully request that the Commission issue an advisory opinion answering the questions presented above. We intend to act in good faith reliance on any opinion issued and seek the penalty protection provided under ORS 244.280(3) .

If the Commission determines that any aspect of the proposed arrangement would violate the Public Meetings Law, we request that the Commission identify the specific elements of concern we may modify the proposal accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

James Ofsink
Portland Forward Progress

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220
Salem, OR 97302-1680
Telephone: 503-378-5105
Fax: 503-373-1456
E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

July 2, 2026

Sent via email

Honorable April Dobson
Oregon Legislative Assembly
900 Court St. NE, H-488
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Advice Number 26-464I

Dear Representative Dobson:

Thank you for reaching out to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission requesting advice on the application of the gift exception in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H).

You have been invited to travel to San Francisco next week with a group of Oregon policymakers and local Jewish leaders to meet with Bay Area Jewish Action and other established organizations to study grassroots strategies for combating antisemitism, with the goal of bringing proven best practices back to Oregon. Antisemitism is on the rise in Oregon and globally, and our communities, schools, and institutions are feeling its impact. The Bay Area has developed programs to confront hate at the local level, and the delegates hope a direct exchange with the people doing this work will provide models that Oregon can adapt for its own policy and community response. We understand that you are paying for own transportation expenses for the San Francisco event; however, Danelle Romain, the President of the Mittleman Jewish Community Center and Portland Jewish Academy, and a registered lobbyist, has offered to pay for your hotel expenses. You have asked whether you can accept this offer under the gift exception in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H).

In most circumstances, when a public official is offered something of economic value at no cost or at a discount, and it is not offered to others, who are not public officials, on the same terms and conditions, it is considered a gift, as defined in ORS 244.020(7)(a), and subject to the gift clause in ORS 244.025(1). There are exceptions, however, for items that do not qualify as gifts under one of the exceptions in ORS 244.020(7)(b).

ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H) allows acceptance of the payment of reasonable travel expenses (food, transportation, or lodging expenses) provided to a public official, as well as to a relative, household member, or staff member accompanying that public official. It applies to events where the public official is representing state government on an officially sanctioned trade-promotion or fact-finding mission or in officially designated negotiations or economic development activities. The (H) exception requires:

1. The public official must be representing state government, a local government or a special government body.

2. The purpose of the trip must be for trade promotion or a fact-finding mission, or for negotiations or economic development activities, where receipt of expenses is approved in advance.
3. The activities must be “officially sanctioned or officially designated,” which requires written approval in advance by a person authorized by the public body to provide that approval.

For the first criteria, you will be attending and participating in the San Francisco event in your official capacity, as a representative of state government.

For the second criteria, a “fact-finding mission or trip” is defined as “any activity related to a cultural or educational purpose, or any activity aimed at providing intergovernmental assistance, such as for the purpose of international aid or sharing best practices, or developing intergovernmental relationships directly related to the public official’s duties.” [OAR 100-004-0001(2)]. The San Fancisco event appears to have an educational purpose and is for the purpose of sharing best practices. Thus, it would appear to qualify as a fact-finding mission or trip.

For the third criteria, to get the event “officially sanctioned or officially designated,” for members of the Legislative Assembly, the written approval must be provided by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, the designated majority or minority leaders of either chamber or appointed committees of the Legislative Assembly, unless the public body determines otherwise [OAR 199-005-0020(3)(b)(C)]. Thus, for you to accept the paid travel expenses, you would need to follow the procedures required by the leadership in the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the event was officially sanctioned or designated.

There is one additional requirement to note. Legislators are required to file a Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) annually. ORS 244.060(6) require SEI filers to identify all expenses with an aggregate value exceeding $50 received during the preceding calendar year when participating in a convention, mission, trip or other meeting described in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H). Thus, you will need to identify the event and source of paid travel expenses on your 2027 SEI. The source paying the expenses for the fact-finding mission or trip will need to provide you with written notification of the expenditure.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Susan V. Myers

Susan V. Myers
Executive Director

*****DISCLAIMER*****
This staff advice is provided under the authority given in ORS 244.284(1). This advice offers guidance on how Oregon Government Ethics law may apply to the specific facts described in your request. This advice is based on my understanding and analysis of the specific circumstances you described and should not be applied to circumstances that differ from those discussed in this request.

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220
Salem, OR 97302-1680
Telephone: 503-378-5105
Fax: 503-373-1456
E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

July 13, 2026

Sent via email

Julia McFadden
juliaannmcfadden@gmail.com

Re: Advice No. 26-474I

Dear Julia,

This letter of advice is provided in response to your request regarding the application of Public Meetings Law to the specifics of the City of Phoenix Planning Commission (Commission) meetings. This analysis and advice is being offered under the authority provided in ORS 244.284 as guidance on how the current provisions of Public Meetings Law may apply to the specific circumstances you have presented.

You provided that the Commission often holds meetings it calls "study sessions," linking the video recording of a recent June 22 study session as an example. The Commission posts the videos of these meetings online publicly to serve as their minutes. For future study sessions, you would like advice on three specific questions:

- Are the study sessions considered public meetings?
- Is it acceptable for Commissioners to ask other Commissioners for consensus on voting, whether verbally on the record or later in writing after the meeting?
- Is the Commission allowed to remove a Commissioner's statement and/or change their statement using AI and editing in the video minutes?

For the first question, we'll look at the definition of a meeting under Public Meetings Law. ORS 192.610(6)(a) defines a meeting as the convening of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to deliberate towards a decision on any matter. If a quorum of the Commission is meeting to deliberate or decide on matters within their jurisdiction, then the study sessions would qualify as meetings and need to comply with Public Meetings Law. That would include noticing the meeting, holding it as open to the public, and taking minutes or a recording, to name a few of the requirements. A complete list of requirements can be found in the statutes or in our Public Meetings Law Checklist.

Now, let's consider if Commissioners can ask other Commissioners for consensus on voting. If the Commissioners are in a public meeting, whether a study session or regular Planning Commission meeting, then asking for consensus before a vote is not an issue. This conversation is occurring during a public meeting and on the record. Whether Commissioners can ask for consensus later in writing after the meeting becomes another matter. Prohibited serial communications require that a quorum of governing body members not deliberate or decide on governing body matters outside of a public meeting [OAR 199-050-0020(1)]. It does not matter whether those communications are in-person, over telephone, via written communication, via intermediaries or any other ways of conveying information. It is best practice for Commissioners not to deliberate or decide on governing body matters outside of a public meeting and when a quorum of governing body members participates in such communications, they risk violating ORS 192.630.

Lastly, we'll look at the requirements for minutes and recordings. Public Meetings Law requires that governing bodies take minutes or a recording of all meetings. Full or verbatim transcripts are not required, but the minutes or recordings "must give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants." In addition, they must include:

a) all governing body members present
b) all motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, ordinances, measures, and their results
c) the results of all votes and the votes of each member by name
d) the substance of discussion
e) reference to any documents discussed [ORS 192.650(1)]

The Public Meetings Law does not address the use of AI for transcribing or editing the minutes or recordings. Whether a governing body uses AI or one of its members or one of its staff to edit the minutes or recordings, the test for satisfying the Public Meetings Law requirements is whether the minutes or recordings include all the required information noted above and whether they provide a true reflection of the matters discussed and the views of the participants. If the edited minutes or recordings do so, then they will have satisfied the requirements.

You ask whether it is permissible for AI edits to remove a Commissioner's statement and/or replace or rephrase the words of a Commissioner's statement. Whether that would be permitted under the statute and the administrative rule would depend on the specific facts – namely, whether those edits result in minutes or recordings that do not provide a true reflection of the matters discussed and the views of the participants. Given the complexities involved in the use of AI, this might be an issue to discuss further with your body's legal counsel.

If you have any additional questions regarding the application of Public Meetings Law, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Susan V. Myers

Susan V. Myers

Executive Director

SVM/lt

*****DISCLAIMER*****

This staff advice is provided under the authority given in ORS 244.284(1). This opinion offers guidance on how Public Meetings Law may apply to the specific facts described in your request. This opinion is based on my understanding and analysis of the specific circumstances you described and should not be applied to circumstances that differ from those discussed in this request.

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220
Salem, OR 97302-1680
Telephone: 503-378-5105
Fax: 503-373-1456
E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

July 10, 2026

Sent via email

Honorable Senator Janeen Sollman
Oregon Legislative Assembly
900 Court St. NE, S-207
Salem, Oregon, 97301

Re: Advice No. 26-479I

Dear Senator Sollman:

Thank you for reaching out to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission requesting advice on the application of the gift exception in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H).

You have been invited to participate in a Canada – U.S. Carbon Capture Study Tour. The tour will take place from September 14th through September 18th, 2026, and will be structured around the Carbon Capture Canada conference, focusing on carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) technology. The tour invitation includes admission to the conference and to a Canada – U.S. Welcome Dinner, as well as tailored site visits and meetings with Edmonton leaders who are using CCUS technology. The Government of Canada has offered to cover your expenses for this tour. You have asked whether you can accept this offer under the gift exception in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H).

In most circumstances, when a public official is offered something of economic value at no cost or at a discount, and it is not offered to others, who are not public officials, on the same terms and conditions, it is considered a gift, as defined in ORS 244.020(7)(a), and subject to the gift clause in ORS 244.025(1). There are exceptions, however, for items that do not qualify as gifts under one of the exceptions in ORS 244.020(7)(b).

ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H) allows acceptance of the payment of reasonable travel expenses (food, transportation, or lodging expenses) provided to a public official, as well as to a relative, household member, or staff member accompanying that public official. It applies to events where the public official is representing state government on an officially sanctioned trade-promotion or fact-finding mission or in officially designated negotiations or economic development activities. The (H) exception requires:

1. The public official must be representing state government, a local government or a special government body.
2. The purpose of the trip must be for trade promotion or a fact-finding mission, or for negotiations or economic development activities, where receipt of expenses is approved in advance.

3. The activities must be “officially sanctioned or officially designated,” which requires written approval in advance by a person authorized by the public body to provide that approval.

For the first criteria, you will be attending and participating in the study tour in your official capacity, as a representative of state government.

For the second criteria, a “fact-finding mission or trip” is defined as “any activity related to a cultural or educational purpose, or any activity aimed at providing intergovernmental assistance, such as for the purpose of international aid or sharing best practices, or developing intergovernmental relationships directly related to the public official’s duties.” [OAR 100-004-0001(2)]. The study tour appears to have an educational purpose and is directly related to your official duties in your position as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment.

For the third criteria, in terms of getting the event “officially sanctioned or officially designated,” for members of the Legislative Assembly, the written approval must be provided by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, the designated majority or minority leaders of either chamber or appointed committees of the Legislative Assembly, unless the public body determines otherwise [OAR 199-005-0020(3)(b)(C)]. Thus, for you to accept the paid travel expenses, you would need to follow the procedures required by the leadership in the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the event was officially sanctioned or designated.

There is an additional requirement to note. Legislators are required to file an annual Statement of Economic Interest (SEI). ORS 244.060(6) requires SEI filers to identify all expenses with an aggregate value exceeding $50 received during the preceding calendar year when participating in a convention, mission, trip or other meeting described in ORS 244.020(7)(b)(H). Thus, you will need to identify the event and source of paid travel expenses on your 2027 SEI. The source paying the expenses will need to provide you with written notification of the expenditure.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Susan V. Myers

Susan V. Myers
Executive Director

*****DISCLAIMER*****

This staff advice is provided under the authority given in ORS 244.284(1). This advice offers guidance on how Oregon Government Ethics Law may apply to the specific facts described in your request. This advice is based on my understanding and analysis of the specific circumstances you described and should not be applied to circumstances that differ from those discussed in this request.

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220
Salem, OR 97302-1680
Telephone: 503-378-5105
Fax: 503-373-1456
E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

July 20, 2026

Sent via email

Ericka Thessen, Board
Chair Eugene School
District 4j 200 N. Monroe
St. Eugene, OR 97402

Re: Advice No. 26-498I

Dear Board Chair Thessen:

Thank you for reaching out to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission with this inquiry. The advice that follows is provided under ORS 244.284(1) and offers guidance on how the public meetings law may apply to the specific facts described in your request.

You explain that your school board consists of seven members. Prior to each regular board meeting, three of the board members (the chair, the vice-chair, and a rotating third board member) along with the District superintendent hold an agenda planning meeting. You indicate the purpose of the agenda planning meetings is not deliberative but rather is to organize the agenda for the upcoming board meeting, considering what topics should be added based on staff schedules and how much time particular topics may take in order to determine which and how many agenda items can be scheduled in a meeting. You have asked whether these agenda planning meetings comply with the Public Meetings Law.

The purpose and intent of the Public Meetings Law is that the decisions of governing bodies be arrived at openly and that the public be informed and aware of the deliberations and decisions of governing bodies and the information upon which such decisions are made. [ORS 192.620]. Governing bodies are, therefore, required to deliberate and decide matters in open public meetings.

The main question in your scenario is whether the agenda planning meetings qualify as meetings subject to the public meetings law. A “meeting” is defined as the convening of the members of a governing body for which a quorum is required in order to deliberate or make a decision. [ORS 192.610]. Communications among less than a quorum of the governing body do not constitute a meeting. You have indicated that the agenda planning meetings do not include a quorum of the school board. So long as these agenda planning meetings, and any related communications, do not expand beyond the three school board members, they would not involve a quorum and would not be subject to the public meetings law.

There is an additional exception in ORS 192.690(1)(n)(C) which could apply to the agenda planning meetings. This exception provides that communications between or among governing body members that are "[n]onsubstantive in nature, such as communication relating to scheduling, leaves of absence and other similar matters," are not subject to the public meetings law. Determining whether an agenda planning meeting would fall within this exception would require examining the specific matters discussed in that meeting. If the discussion was limited to considering staff schedules and how much time each topic would need, that would likely remain nonsubstantive and fall within the exception. If, however, the discussion included polling or whipping the votes to make sure, prior to the board meeting, that there would be enough votes for a matter to pass, that would be deliberative and would not fall within the exception.

Based on the information provided, the school board can continue its long-standing practice of holding agenda planning meetings with just three of the board members and for the purposes disclosed. Doing so would not appear to violate the public meetings law.

Sincerely,

Susan V. Myers

Susan V. Myers
Executive Director

Disclaimer - This advice is based on my understanding and analysis of the specific circumstances you described and should not be applied to circumstances that differ from those discussed in this request.

From:	MYERS Susan * OGEC
To:	MYERS Susan * OGEC
Cc:	MAISON Becky * OGEC; FENSTERMAKER Casey * OGEC
Subject:	OGEC - Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Date:	Monday, July 27, 2026 3:15:30 PM

Commissioners –

I am hereby submitting this written notice to you, my appointing authority, that I have a conflict of interest with respect to the July 20, 2026 letter to the Commission from Waldport City Manager Dann Cutter, detailing his complaint regarding my and the Commission's handling of a case against a member of the City of Waldport budget committee (Case No. 26-229EDP).

In accordance with ORS 244.120(1)(c), I am submitting this written conflict of interest disclosure notice to you and requesting that you dispose of the matter giving rise to the conflict. You can do so by designating an alternate employee to dispose of the matter or by directing me to dispose of the matter in a manner specified by the Commission.

The letter from Dann Cutter will be on the agenda for the Commission's August 14, 2026 meeting, at which time the Commission can make its determination of how to respond to the letter, as well as with how to dispose of my conflict of interest.

In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact Becky Maison (becky.maison@ogec.oregon.gov or 503-378-6803).

Susan V. Myers
Executive Director
Oregon Government Ethics Commission
susan.myers@ogec.oregon.gov
(503) 378-6808

From:	Dann Cutter
To:	MAIL Commission * OGEC
Cc:	SOS Investigations * SOS
Subject:	OGEC complaint
Date:	Monday, July 20, 2026 12:08:59 PM
Attachments:	City Manager Letterhead copy 5.pdf

Dear Members of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission:

The City of Waldport submits the attached complaint concerning the conduct of the Director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. This complaint is filed pursuant to the City's authority under Oregon law to raise concerns regarding potential violations of Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 244, applicable commission rules, and public meetings laws under ORS 192.610 to 192.705. ORS § 244.260

The City respectfully requests that the Commission conduct a thorough preliminary review and, if warranted, undertake a full investigation in accordance with the procedures set forth in ORS 244.260. ORS § 244.260

Reservation of Rights

The City of Waldport expressly reserves all legal rights, claims, remedies, and causes of action available to it under federal and state law, including but not limited to:

1. **Rights to Judicial Review.** The City reserves its right to seek judicial review of any final order issued by the Commission in connection with this matter, as provided under ORS 183.480 and ORS 183.484, including the right to petition for declaratory, mandatory, or prohibitory relief and any ancillary relief necessary to redress wrongful agency action. ORS § 183.480, ORS § 183.484, ORS § 183.486

2. **Constitutional and Statutory Remedies.** The City reserves all rights and remedies under the United States Constitution, the Oregon Constitution, and applicable federal and state statutes, including claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for deprivation of constitutional rights, privileges, or immunities. 42 USCS § 1983 The City further reserves its right to pursue claims for injury to its corporate rights or property as authorized under ORS 30.310 and ORS 30.320, as well as any causes of action for governmental tort liability subject to the limitations and procedures set forth in ORS 30.265. ORS § 30.310, ORS § 30.320, ORS § 30.265

3. **Home Rule Authority.** As a municipal corporation vested with home rule powers under Article XI, Section 2 of the Oregon Constitution, the City reserves its authority to exercise all powers granted to municipalities under Oregon law and to

protect its corporate interests, governmental functions, and the rights of its residents and officials. Ore. Const. Art. XI, § 2, City of Corvallis v. State, 304 Or. App. 171, 464 P.3d 1127 (2020), State v. Uroza-Zuniga, 364 Or. 682, 439 P.3d 973 (2019)

4. **Rights Related to Public Records and Due Process.** The City reserves all rights to enforce compliance with Oregon public records laws, public meetings laws, and procedural due process protections afforded to municipalities and their representatives under state and federal law.

5. **All Other Legal Remedies.** The City reserves any and all other legal rights, remedies, causes of action, defenses, and claims available under applicable law, whether arising in contract, tort, equity, or statute, that may become relevant as facts develop or as the Commission proceeds with its review and investigation.

This reservation of rights is made without waiver of any kind and applies to all proceedings, hearings, orders, and related matters arising from or connected to the attached complaint. Nothing in this submission or the attached complaint shall be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity, a limitation on the City's remedies, or a consent to jurisdiction beyond that expressly provided by law.

The City respectfully requests acknowledgment of receipt of this complaint and timely updates regarding the status of the Commission's preliminary review and any subsequent investigatory proceedings.

Sincerely,

Dann Cutter

Dann Cutter
Waldport City Manager
Office: 541-563-3561 option 7
Cell: 541-270-6996
dann.cutter@waldport.org

City of Waldport
OFFICE of the CITY MANAGER
355 NW Alder Street
P.O. Box 1120
Waldport, OR 97394
Phone: 541-563-9179
dann.cutter@waldport.org

July 20, 2026

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Office of the Secretary of State, State of Oregon
900 Court Street NE, Room 136
Salem, Oregon 97310

Chair and Members of the Board Oregon Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 220
Salem, Oregon 97302-1680

Re: Formal Complaint Against Executive Director Susan V. Myers — Failure to Notify Jan Hansen of Preliminary Review Proceedings and Improper Direction of Notice to the City of Waldport (Case No. 26-229EDP)

Dear Secretary Read and Members of the Commission:

I write to file a formal complaint against Susan V. Myers, Executive Director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (the Commission), concerning the Commission's handling of the matter captioned above involving Jan Hansen. The complaint arises from two distinct procedural failures: (1) the failure to notify Ms. Hansen of the preliminary review proceedings, including the July 10, 2026 executive session at which the Commission voted to take action against her; and (2) the continued direction of correspondence concerning Ms. Hansen to the City of Waldport notwithstanding that Ms. Hansen is a volunteer, and not an employee, of the City. Each failure violates Oregon law, as set forth below.

Background

By letter dated July 13, 2026, and signed by Ms. Myers as Executive Director, the Commission advised Ms. Hansen that, on July 10, 2026, it had voted to conduct an investigation into a possible violation of ORS 244.120(2), based on a complaint filed by Karun Olson. The July 13 letter — sent only after the Commission had already found cause and voted to investigate — was the first notice Ms. Hansen received that she was the subject of any Commission proceeding. She received no notice that a complaint had been filed against her, no notice of the preliminary review, and no notice of the July 10, 2026 session at which the Commission acted.

I. The Failure to Notify Ms. Hansen During the Preliminary Review Phase Violated ORS 244.260.

Oregon law imposes clear, mandatory notice obligations on the Commission at the outset of any matter. Upon receiving a complaint, the Commission shall notify the person who is the subject of the complaint not later than two business days after receiving it, and that notice must describe the nature of the alleged violation and include copies of all materials submitted with a complaint. ORS 244.260(2)(a), (c) [1] These duties attach at the very beginning of the Preliminary Review Phase, which begins on the date the complaint is filed and during which the Executive Director undertakes action to determine whether there is cause to investigate. ORS 244.260(3), (4)(a) [2]

Ms. Hansen received no such notice. She was not advised, within two business days of the Olson complaint or at any point during the Preliminary Review Phase, that a complaint had been filed, what violation was alleged, or what materials had been submitted against her. This deprived her of the opportunity the law contemplates during preliminary review, including the opportunity to make an oral statement to the Commissioners at the discretion of the Chair. See OAR 199-001-0010(3)(t) [3] Because the Executive Director is charged with undertaking the action of the Preliminary Review Phase,

[1] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.260

[2] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.260

[3] Or. Admin. R. 199-001-0010

the failure to provide Ms. Hansen the statutorily required notice is directly attributable to Ms. Myers' office. ORS 244.260(3) [4]

II. The Commission Acted at the July 10, 2026 Session Without Notice to Ms. Hansen, in Violation of ORS 244.260 and OAR 199-001-0010.

At the conclusion of the Preliminary Review Phase, the Executive Director presents a statement of facts to the Commission in executive session and recommends whether there is cause to undertake an investigation; the Commission then makes its final determination at that session. ORS 244.260(4)(d) [5] When the Commission makes a finding of cause to undertake an investigation, it shall notify the person who is the subject of the investigation, identify the issues to be examined, and confine the investigation to those issues. ORS 244.260(5)(b) [6]

The Commission voted on July 10, 2026 to proceed against Ms. Hansen, yet she received no contemporaneous notice of that session and no opportunity to be heard before the Commission took action adverse to her. The Executive Director is responsible for causing notices of the time and place of Commission meetings to be given. OAR 199-001-0010(3)(k) [7] The first notice Ms. Hansen received of any of this arrived three days after the fact, in Ms. Myers's July 13 letter. Taking action against a subject before affording her the notice the statute requires is a serious procedural violation that calls the July 10 finding of cause into question.

III. Directing Ms. Hansen's Case Correspondence to the City of Waldport Improperly Conflated Ms. Hansen with the City and Failed to Effect Proper Notice.

Ms. Hansen is a volunteer of the City of Waldport. She is not a City employee. Oregon law recognizes that a volunteer may be a public official subject to Chapter 244 where the volunteer performs governmental functions, but this status does not make the volunteer an employee of, or reachable through, the public body. See OAR 199-008-0005(7) [8] The distinction matters: notice owed to Ms. Hansen as the subject of a Commission proceeding is owed to her personally, not to the City.

Despite this, the Commission continued to direct correspondence concerning Ms. Hansen to the City of Waldport's mail stop. Oregon law provides only one circumstance in which the Commission communicates with the public body about an official's ethics matter: after the Commission finds that a public official has violated Chapter 244, it must notify the public body the official serves, describing the violation, within ten business days of final action. ORS 244.270(2) [9] That provision does not authorize routing a subject's own case notices through her employer or the public body, and it certainly does not apply before any finding of violation. By treating the City as the point of contact for Ms. Hansen, the Commission both failed to effect proper notice to Ms. Hansen and improperly disclosed and conflated her individual matter with the City of Waldport.

Requested Relief

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully request that the Secretary of State and the Commission:

1. Investigate the conduct of Executive Director Susan V. Myers in connection with the notice failures described above;

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[4] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.260
[5] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.260
[6] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.260
[7] Or. Admin. R. 199-001-0010
[8] Or. Admin. R. 199-008-0005
[9] Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.270

2. Rescind or stay the July 10, 2026 finding of cause and any action taken in Case No. 26-229EDP until Ms. Hansen has been afforded the notice and opportunity to respond required by ORS 244.260;
3. Provide Ms. Hansen proper, individual notice of all proceedings, materials, and meetings in this matter, directed to her personal address of record and not to the City of Waldport or City Manager Dann Cutter;
4. Correct the record to reflect that Ms. Hansen is a volunteer, and not an employee, of the City of Waldport, and cease directing her case correspondence to the City; and
5. Afford Ms. Hansen any further relief appropriate to remedy the procedural violations described above.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am available to provide any additional information the Secretary of State or the Commission may require.

Respectfully,

Dan Cutter, City Manager

City of Waldport

---

cc: Jan Hansen, Rep David Gomberg, City Attorney Corey Blake

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission
3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220
Salem, OR 97302-1680
Telephone: 503-378-5105
Fax: 503-373-1456
E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

August 7, 2026

City of Waldport
c/o Dann Cutter
City of Waldport
Office of the City Manager
355 NW Alder Street
Waldport, OR 97394

Delivered via Email

Re: Correspondence 26-520

Dear City of Waldport:

This is a response to the letter the City of Waldport submitted to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (Commission) on July 20, 2025 regarding Susan Myers.

The City of Waldport submitted a letter to the Commission and the Secretary of State's Office, which alleged that Executive Director Susan Myers failed to notify Jan Hansen of a complaint that had been filed against her, failed to notify Jan Hansen of the Commission's executive session on July 10, 2026 where the preliminary review report in the matter was considered, and directed case correspondence to the City of Waldport.. We interpret your allegations that Ms. Myers violated certain procedural provisions of ORS 244.260 as a complaint regarding conduct, as opposed to a complaint involving the substantive ethics provisions of ORS Chapter 244.

As you noted, the Commission moved the complaint against Jan Hansen to investigation at the July 10, 2026 Commission meeting. As this matter is currently in the investigation phase, staff's recommendation to the Commission is not to take any action with respect to the allegations contained in your letter at this time.

A copy of your complaint and a copy of this letter has been provided to the Commission and will be considered at the August 14, 2026 Commission meeting.

If you have questions or would like more information about Commission's jurisdiction, please feel free to contact us at 503-378-5105 or mail@ogec.oregon.gov.

Sincerely,

Casey Fenstermaker
Compliance &Enforcement Coordinator

OGEC Training Report

August Commission Meeting Facilitators

- Room/Online Facilitator: Angela
- Participation Facilitator: Chris
- Facilitation Lead/Media Contact: Stephanie

August Training Highlights

Accessibility Workgroup

- The Accessibility Workgroup focused on a few projects, including:
    - Auditing lobby reporting pages on EFS for accessibility
    - Planning how to make the meeting materials more accessible
    - Creating a style guide for consistency and document standardization that relies on accessibility at its core

Public Meetings Law Trainings

- Lex provided Public Meetings Law (PML) training to System of Care Advisory Council, and Ruth traveled to Tillamook to provide PML training to the Tillamook Urban Renewal Agency.

Government Ethics Law Trainings

- Ethics webinars resumed in July with the completion of our Ethics training course updates.
- Stephanie presented the new on-demand Ethics Training course during the Statewide Learning and Development Community Meeting, which brings together learning and development state employees from various agencies.

Training Requests

- Molly contacted and worked with those who filled out training requests during this period, helping to further fill out our fall schedule.

Communications

- Ruth created a bulletin for the on-demand Ethics Training, scheduled to go out later this month.
- Next quarter's newsletter is in progress, with contributions scheduled from the training and investigation teams.
- Our unique open rate for email bulletins sent using Granicus Communications continues to exceed industry standards and was at 42.2% for the month of July.

Training Outreach & Collaboration

- Chris continued to work on a new outline for an outreach program that aligns with the goals in our Strategic Plan.

Trainings Completed (July 1, 2026 – August 3, 2026)

These trainings are hosted by public bodies across the state both online and in-person. Some hosted training sessions are open to public officials from other governing bodies to attend. The public body who hosts the training is listed first, followed by the public bodies represented by other attendees.

Area of Law	Public Body	Location
ORS 192	System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC)	Online
ORS 192	Tillamook Urban Renewal Agency	Tillamook

OGEC Webinars (July 1, 2026 – August 3, 2026)

These online trainings are open to anyone to sign up for through our website. Most of the topics are offered once a month. Public Meetings Law webinars are currently offered twice a month for the summer and will resume to at least once a week in September.

Area of Law	Webinar Topic	July
ORS 244	New Employee	1 Session
ORS 244	New Councilor or Commissioner	1 Session

ORS 244	Use of Office/Conflicts of Interest	1 Session
ORS 244	Gifts	1 Session
ORS 244	Jurisdictional Contact	1 Session
ORS 192	Public Meetings Law	3 Sessions
ORS 192	Executive Sessions	1 Session
ORS 171	Lobby Law	1 Session

Training Staff

Trainers

Angela Nolan	503-378-8066	angela.nolan@ogec.oregon.gov
Chris Brubaker	503-378-2059	chris.brubaker@ogec.oregon.gov
Lex Tingey	503-378-2245	lex.tingey@ogec.oregon.gov
Ruth Sylvester	503-378-2060	ruth.sylvester@ogec.oregon.gov

Administrative Support

Molly Putnam	503-378-5108	training@ogec.oregon.gov

Curriculum and Training Coordinator

Stephanie Heffner	503-378-6802	stephanie.heffner@ogec.oregon.gov

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

08/04/2026

2027-29 Budget

OGEC is an early submittal agency, so our 2027-29 Agency Request Budget (ARB) was due, and was submitted, by July 31, 2026. The ARB is available on our website here: https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/about-us/Pages/Funding%20and%20Fees.aspx

I would like to express my thanks to Becky Maison for all of her hard work on preparing this budget. I would also like to thank Lex Tingey for her help with making the ARB accessible.

Recruitment

We have completed the recruitment process to fill the vacant administrative specialist position. We will be making an offer shortly and hope to have the candidate begin before the end of August.

Public Meetings Law

Representative Sosa has convened another legislative workgroup focusing on making improvements to the Public Meetings Law. OGEC staff and Chair Payne are participating as members of the workgroup.

The initial meeting of the workgroup took place on July 16, 2026 and future meetings have already been scheduled. Recordings of the workgroup meetings and related documents are available on the Workgroup's website, available here: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/committees/2025I1-HRULES/Pages/default.aspx