

Merom Brachman, *Chairman*  
Mark A. Vander Laan, *Vice Chairman*  
Bruce E. Bailey  
Megan C. Kelley  
Mary M. Ross-Dolen  
Elizabeth E. Tracy



OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION  
William Green Building  
30 West Spring Street, L3  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2256  
Telephone: (614) 466-7090  
Fax: (614) 466-8368

Paul M. Nick  
*Executive Director*

[www.ethics.ohio.gov](http://www.ethics.ohio.gov)

---

OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JUNE 12, 2025

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Merom Brachman	Megan C. Kelley	Bruce E. Bailey
Elizabeth E. Tracy	Mary M. Ross-Dolen	Mark A. Vander Laan

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Ohio Ethics Commission was called to order at 12:04 p.m. in Room 2 on Level 2 of the William Green Building, at 30 West Spring Street, in Columbus, Ohio.

ROLL CALL

The following Commission Members were present: Mr. Brachman, Mr. Bailey, Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Tracy, and Mr. Vander Laan. Staff present: Executive Director Paul M. Nick; Deputy Director/General Counsel Jed Hood; Education and Communications Administrator Susan Willeke; IT and Financial Disclosure Administrator Brian Ring; HR & Fiscal Manager Alan Carlson; Investigative Attorneys Molly Bruns and Nicole Candelora-Norman; Special Investigator Connie McDonald; Investigative Assistant Shana Kaplan, and Assistant Attorney General Dale Vitale. Joining the meeting after Executive Session were Chief Advisory Attorney Christopher Woeste, and Advisory Attorneys Katie Saks and Melissa Riggins.

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Commission scheduled its next meeting: Monday, August 4, 2025, at noon.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Brachman, seconded by Ms. Ross-Dolen, to go into Executive Session to discuss matters that are statutorily confidential, including executive compensation, pending litigation, updates on investigations and complaints, the confidential financial disclosure report. Mr. Bailey, Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Tracy, Mr. Vander Laan, and Mr. Brachman voted "yes." The motion was approved, and the Commission, pursuant to Section 102.06 and 121.22 of the Revised Code, went into Executive Session at 12:07 p.m. All staff exited the room from 12:08 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. while the commissioners discussed executive compensation and then the Commission discussed the other items on the executive session agenda.

The Commission returned to open session at 12:52 p.m.

### PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the May 9, 2025, Commission meeting.

MOTION by Ms. Kelley, seconded by Ms. Tracy, that the Commission approve the minutes of the May 9, 2025, Commission meeting. Mr. Bailey, Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Tracy, Mr. Vander Laan, and Mr. Brachman voted yes. The motion was approved.

### ADVISORY OPINIONS AND STATISTICS

Mr. Nick introduced the Advisory and Investigative Statistics and Report.

Ms. Ross-Dolen asked why the employee could accept the award described in the Staff Opinion issued to Inga A. Fisher. Mr. Woeste distinguished this opinion from a prior staff opinion that prohibited a public employee from accepting a vehicle from agency vendors. Ms. Riggins added that the teacher was nominated by a colleague for an award that was not compensating him for his public duties.

Mr. Brachman asked whether the appropriate legal advisor was notified of the Staff Opinion issued to David DeChristofaro, and Ms. Saks confirmed that the County Prosecutor's Office was copied on the email sending the opinion.

Mr. Nick introduced the Memorandum on the financial disclosure filing requirement for township elected officials and explained the background of the Memorandum. Mr. Bailey asked why the Commission was interested in the matter. Mr. Nick and Mr. Brachman provided background on some prior legislation discussed at an earlier meeting. Mr. Woeste stated that the question is whether the Commission can utilize R.C. 102.02(B) to require township elected officials to file financial disclosure statements. Mr. Woeste provided an overview of the financial disclosure statute as it applies to township elected officials. Based upon legislative history and Commission precedents, Mr. Nick recommended that the Commission consider seeking legislative action instead.

Mr. Bailey asked about the reasoning for the exclusion of township trustees in the statute, and Mr. Woeste replied that he could not locate any specific reasoning in the legislative history. Mr. Nick speculated that since these officials are part-time and minimally compensated, the disclosure requirement may have been considered too much of a burden at the time the statute was enacted in the 1970s.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nick reviewed the information in the packet and provided an update on Steve Toole, a candidate for executive director of the State Teachers Retirement System. Mr. Toole filed his financial disclosure statement, then an amendment based on staff's input, and was eventually appointed as the STRS Executive Director.

Mr. Nick also provided an update on the budget bill. He noted that the original language that would require county coroners to be appointed rather than elected has been removed. However, the language that would dissolve the Ohio Elections Commission seems to be moving forward in the bill. Staff will monitor whether any of the duties of that office would be shifted to the Ethics Commission.

#### LEGISLATION UPDATE

Mr. Hood reported that the conference committee regarding the budget bill should be commenced soon, and he will notify the members when it is scheduled. He also noted that staff is monitoring HB 250 as a potential vehicle for any amendments members may like to see in the Ethics Law.

Mr. Brachman inquired about HB 133 and Mr. Hood replied that a hearing was held this week allowing for proponent testimony. The portion of the bill that would impact the Ohio Ethics Law was not discussed at the hearing.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Ms. Willeke directed the members' attention to the packet report and provided an update on the Commission podcast which is planned to be posted online in September.

#### FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATISTICS REPORT/COMPLAINT REPORT

Mr. Ring noted that financial disclosure compliance letters were sent the day after the May 15 filing deadline and that certified warning letters were being sent this week. As of today, only one state employee is non-compliant (likely left state service and is at a new address) with 73 overall non-compliant filers who will later be identified as late filers.

Staff attention will now shift from compliance issues to confidential reviews.

Ms. Ross-Dolen asked why some filers appear more than once and Ms. Bruns explained that it represents their delinquency for more than one filing year. Ms. Bruns also stated that hearings will likely be scheduled for late August and a hearing officer will be needed from the board.

#### Late Fee Waivers:

MOTION by Mr. Vander Laan, seconded by Mr. Bailey, to waive the financial disclosure statement late fees for the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion pass unanimously.

#### Complaints to be Dismissed:

MOTION by Ms. Kelley, seconded by Ms. Tracy, to dismiss the financial disclosure complaints filed against the individuals listed in the packet report, for good cause shown. The motion passed unanimously.

Referrals to Ohio Attorney General's Office for Collections:

MOTION by Ms. Ross-Dolen, seconded by Ms. Kelley to refer to the Attorney General's Office for collections the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Compensation

MOTION by Ms. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Vander Laan, to authorize the Chairman to submit to the Ohio Department of Administrative Services the salary increases approved by the Commission for Mr. Nick and Mr. Hood in accordance with R.C. 102.05. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by:

*/s/ Paul M. Nick*

---

Paul M. Nick  
Executive Director