

Merom Brachman, *Chairman*
Mark A. Vander Laan, *Vice Chairman*
Megan C. Kelley
Mary M. Ross-Dolen
Jennifer L. Sheets
Christian H. Stickan



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Paul M. Nick
Executive Director

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OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
JULY 13, 2026

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Merom Brachman	Megan C. Kelley	Jennifer L. Sheets
Mary M. Ross-Dolen	Christian H. Stickan	Mark A. Vander Laan

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Ohio Ethics Commission was called to order at 12:08 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, Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Sheets, Mr. Stickan, and Mr. Vander Laan. Staff present: Executive Director Paul M. Nick; Deputy Director/General Counsel Jed Hood; HR & Fiscal Manager Alan Carlson; Chief Advisory Attorney Chris Woeste; Advisory Attorney Tim Gates, Investigative Attorney Molly Bruns; and Assistant Attorney General Brittany Collins.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Vander Laan, seconded by Ms. Kelley, to go into Executive Session to discuss matters that are statutorily confidential, including pending litigation, updates on investigations and complaints, and the confidential financial disclosure report. Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Mr. Stickan, Ms. Sheets, 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 12:10 p.m.

The Commission returned to open session at 1:15 p.m.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from June 5, 2026 Commission meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Stickan, seconded by Ms. Sheets, that the Commission approve the minutes of the June 5, 2026 Commission meeting. Ms. Kelley, Ms. Ross-Dolen, Ms. Sheets, Mr. Stickan, Mr. Vander Laan, and Mr. Brachman voted yes. The motion was approved.

ADVISORY OPINIONS AND STATISTICS

Mr. Nick introduced the advisory summaries and the advisory and investigative activity report in the meeting packet. Mr. Woeste highlighted an advisory opinion request from the Assistant Solicitor for the City of Cincinnati related to a recently enacted statute dealing with the confidentiality of certain records. Mr. Woeste noted that the statute was amended after the advisory opinion request was submitted, and based on the amendment, the Assistant Solicitor for the City withdrew the request.

Mr. Brachman asked whether the advisory opinion involving the candidate for the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority Board was sent to the Port Authority as well as to the City. Mr. Woeste responded that the advisory opinion went to the requester and to several members of the city committee. Mr. Woeste said he would send a copy to the Port Authority.

Ms. Ross-Dolen asked whether two people were the subject of an advisory opinion request from legal counsel for the Ohio Department of Health regarding potential outside employment with University Hospital – Portage Medical Center. Mr. Woeste pointed out that there is a typographical error in the summary, and only one Department of Health employee was the subject of the request.

Mr. Nick complemented the advisory staff on the volume of opinions they were able to issue even though that section is down one staff member. He noted that Ms. Candelora-Norman has helped out by taking phone call inquiries for guidance so Mr. Woeste and Mr. Gates can focus on writing staff opinions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nick noted that this morning there was a public hearing on the proposed amendment to Ohio Administrative Code section 102-5-05. Mr. Nick shared that he received a written comment with Safe Ohio Parks advocating that members of the Oil and Gas Land Management Commission should file public financial disclosure statements but currently their disclosure statements are confidential. Mr. Nick stated that he will share that comment with JCARR in the hearing summary report. He noted that the comment is outside the scope of the amendment, however. Mr. Brachman and Ms. Ross-Dolen asked about the Oil and Gas Land Management Commission and Mr. Nick responded. Mr. Nick noted that there are some new boards recently created by the legislature and described how the Commission will continue to review these boards but then file an amendment to OAC 102-5-05 with JCARR if the Commission determines that any of these boards should be required to file disclosure statements.

Mr. Nick reported that Mr. Hood filed an update to the Commission's retention schedules and it was just approved on July 7, 2026 by the State Archivist and the Ohio Auditor of State's Office. Moving forward, the Commission will only retain financial disclosure statements for ten years and the Commission will be moving forward with this change.

LEGISLATION UPDATE

Mr. Hood reviewed the legislative packet material and mentioned that SB 331 was not passed but we are still monitoring that. Mr. Hood also noted that HB 292 has not yet been signed by the Governor. Mr. Hood stated that Mr. Nick and Mr. Woeste have done preliminary research on this bill which would

create the Ohio Defense and Space Advisory Commission. Mr. Brachman had a question about this bill and Mr. Hood and Mr. Woeste responded.

Mr. Brachman asked about HB 255, which would create the Ohio Sports Council. Mr. Hood responded that it did not get finalized. Ms. Ross-Dolen inquired about a recent newspaper clip article and asked if there was any overlap in HB 113. Mr. Hood responded.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

In Ms. Willeke's absence, Mr. Nick reviewed the material in the packet and shared additional details on the speech he gave to special agents and investigative staff at the FBI Columbus Field Office. Mr. Nick explained to that specific group what we do, our jurisdiction, and the financial disclosure requirements. Ms. Sheets asked if we had given a speech to this group before and Mr. Nick stated that he had a number of years ago and that the new supervisory special agent had asked him to speak. Mr. Brachman asked how many people attended the speech to which Mr. Nick responded there were about 25 agents from all of the field offices in the southern district of Ohio. Mr. Brachman also asked about the advanced webinar that Ms. Willeke presented at and Mr. Nick responded that it was done online. Ms. Sheets shared positive feedback and praise towards Mr. Rohrbaugh and Ms. Willeke for the material they have created and are presenting.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATISTICS REPORT/COMPLAINT REPORT

In Mr. Ring's absence, Mr. Nick reviewed the material in the report. Mr. Nick noted that the Ohio Attorney General's Office collection efforts are continuing to bring results now that we are providing that office with additional taxpayer information to aid collection efforts.

Ms. Sheets asked for additional details as to what a "voluntary filer" means in the FDS report, to which Mr. Nick responded. Ms. Sheets pointed out that there are multiple items listed from different cities and if there are pockets or areas where there are more of these non-compliance filers and if outreach is taking place, to which Ms. Bruns responded.

MOTIONS

Complaints to be Dismissed:

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

Late Fee Waivers:

MOTION by Ms. Sheets, seconded by Ms. Ross-Dolen, to waive the financial disclosure statement late fees for the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion passed unanimously.

Referrals for Collections:

MOTION by Mr. Stickan, seconded by Ms. Sheets, to refer to the Attorney General's Office for collections the individuals listed in the packet report. The motion passed unanimously.

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Commission scheduled its next meeting for Monday, August 24, 2026 at 12:00 p.m., with the Investigative Committee meeting at 11:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by:

/s/ Paul M. Nick

Paul M. Nick
Executive Director

Hearing Summary Report

Note: Upload completed document to the Electronic Rule Filing System.

Hearing Date: July 13, 2026.

Today's Date: July 13, 2026.

Agency: Ohio Ethics Commission.

Rule Number(s): OAC 102-5-05.

If no comments at the hearing, please check the box. ☐

List organizations or individuals giving or submitting testimony before, during, or after the public hearing and indicate the rule number(s) in question.

1. Cathy Cowan Becker, Boad President, Save Ohio Parks – OAC 102-5-05

Hearing Summary Report

Consolidated Summary of Comments Received

Please review all comments received and complete a consolidated summary paragraph of the comments and indicate the rule number(s).

The Comment was submitted by email on July 11, 2026 concerning the amendments to OAC 102-5-05. On behalf of Save Ohio Parks, Cathy Cowan Becker is requesting that the financial disclosure statements filed by members of the Oil and Gas Land Management Commission be made fully public, not confidential, and that they be made available for public inspection.

Hearing Summary Report

Incorporated Comments into Rule(s)

Indicate how comments received during the hearing process were incorporated into the rule(s).
If no comments were incorporated, explain why not.

This Comment was not incorporated into the rule because it was beyond the scope of the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments would change the procedure by which the Ethics Commission determines whether certain public officials or employees under the Commission's authority should be required to file annual financial disclosure statements and also provide a website address where anyone can find a copy of the list of boards and commissions whose members and directors are required to file disclosure statements. The amendments do not address the filing requirement for members of the Oil and Gas Land Management Commission or whether the disclosure statements filed by these members are public or confidential under R.C. 102.02(B).