STATE OF FLORIDA
COMMISSION ON ETHICS

Friday, September 12, 2025

Third Floor Courtroom, First District Court of Appeal
2000 Drayton Drive
Tallahassee, Florida

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

At 8:35 a.m. Chair Luis Fusté called the meeting to order with the following members present:

PAUL D. BAIN
JAMES BUSH, III
LUIS FUSTÉ
MICHAEL H. HELLMAN
ASHLEY LUKIS
JON M. PHILIPSON
JEREMY M. RODGERS
LINDA STEWART

Laird A. Lile was absent from the meeting.

The presence of a quorum was noted.

Commissioner Bain, seconded by Commissioner Bush, moved to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2025 Public Session meeting. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF FINAL ACTION – JOINT STIPULATION

Complaint No. 22-082, In re VENNIS GILMORE

Present were Joseph Grant, Attorney for the Respondent; and Melody A. Hadley, Commission Advocate.

Ms. Hadley summarized the proposed joint stipulation calling for a finding of violation of Section 112.313(7)(a), Florida Statutes, and a recommended penalty of public censure and reprimand, and a civil penalty of $1,000.

Mr. Grant was heard by the Commission.

Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bush, moved to approve the proposed joint stipulation. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF ADVISORY OPINIONS

File 2817. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER AND PRIVATE BUSINESS OWNER VOLUNTEERING ON BEHALF OF HER PRIVATE BUSINESS AND PROMOTING HER PRIVATE BUSINESS WITHIN HER DISTRICT'S SCHOOL

General Counsel Steven Zuilkowski explained the basis of the draft advisory opinion and the rationale behind its conclusion.

Commissioner Lukis, seconded by Commissioner Bain, moved to approve Questions 2 – 5, with added language, in the draft opinion, but then withdrew the motion.

Commissioner Philipson, seconded by Commissioner Bain, moved to approve Version 1A and Questions 2 – 5, with added language. The motion carried, with Commission Lukis and Commissioner Rodgers voting no.

File 2821. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NEWLY APPOINTED SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WHOSE LAW FIRM IS DOING BUSINESS WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

Staff Attorney Michael Terry explained the basis of the draft advisory opinion and the rationale behind its conclusion.

Commissioner Bush, seconded by Commissioner Hellman, moved to approve the draft opinion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF SECOND ORDER ON REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

Extension Request 25-24, In re RICHARD GIUFFREDA

Commissioner Bain, seconded by Commissioner Philipson, moved to approve the proposed order. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF LITIGATION EXPENDITURES

Executive Director Kerrie Stillman explained her spending authority is limited to $10,000 and requested the Commission's approval to pay the Commission's legal bills in the matter of *Jonathan L. Owens v. State of Florida, Office of the Attorney General, Florida Commission on Ethics, and Division of Administrative Hearings* litigation, in the event they exceed her spending authority.

Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Bush, moved to approve the litigation expenditure. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF 2026 LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Director Kerrie Stillman explained that the Commission is statutorily required to make recommendations for legislation and gave a brief explanation of the memo provided to Members.

The Commission discussed the proposals and its desire to move forward with the recommendation of including current and former foster parents and children in the definition of relative in the gift law, and Whistle Blower-like Protection for Ethics Complaints.

Commission Stewart, seconded by Commission Bush, moved to discuss Personal Knowledge Other Than Hearsay with Senator Gaetz. The motion carried, with Commissioner Lukis and Commissioner Philipson voting no.

The Commission voted to adopt First-Time Fine Waiver for Financial Disclosure as a legislative priority. The motion carried, with Commissioner Rodgers voting no.

The Commission voted to adopt the Public Records Exemptions for Commission Members and Commission staff as a legislative priority. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commission Stewart volunteered to serve as legislative liaison with the Senate, and Commissioner Bush volunteered to serve as legislative liaison with the House of Representatives. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Kerrie Stillman identified other operational matters for which staff would seek legislative changes.

CONSIDERATION OF RULEMAKING

Rule Hearing on amendments to Chapter 34-8, F.A.C.

Assistant General Counsel Gray Schafer explained the changes in the financial disclosure forms incorporated by reference in the rule being amended.

The Chair asked whether there was anyone present who wished to be heard on the proposed rule changes. There was no one.

Commissioner Bain, seconded by Commissioner Philipson, moved to approve the consideration of the proposed rule/form changes. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Commissioner Fusté, seconded by Commissioner Lukis, moved to nominate Commissioner Jon Philipson as Commission Chair.

Commissioner James Bush moved to nominate himself as Commission Chair. The motion died for lack of a second.

By unanimous vote, the motion carried for Jon Philipson as Chair carried.

Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bush, moved to nominate Commissioner James Bush as Commission Vice Chair.

Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Philipson, moved to nominate Commissioner Ashley Lukis as Commission Vice Chair.

After a roll call vote, the motion for James Bush as Vice Chair carried, with Commissioner Bain, Commissioner Bush, Commissioner Hellman, Commissioner Lukis, and Commissioner Stewart voting for Commissioner Bush, and Commissioner Fusté, Commissioner Philipson, and Commissioner Rodgers voting for Commissioner Lukis.

REPORTS

The Chair had no report.

Executive Director Kerrie Stillman elaborated on her written Executive Director's report previously provided to the Commissioners.

Executive Director Kerrie Stillman updated the Commission on the e-filing system, and the financial disclosure compliance numbers for the current filing year.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items on the agenda, the Public Session adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Westberry, *Secretary*

Approved:

Jon M. Philipson, *Chair*

Date