



North Dakota Ethics Commission Regular Meeting

Minutes of August 27, 2025

600 E Boulevard Ave, Room 321, Bismarck and MS Teams

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Cynthia Lindquist at 9:02 a.m. The following members of the Ethics Commission were also present: Vice Chair Ward Koeser, Commissioners Ron Goodman, and Murray Sagsveen, Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, General Counsel Logan Carpenter, and Operations Administrator Adilene Moos.
2. **Agenda Additions:** Executive Director Rebecca Binstock noted during item No. 10, further business, logistics for the September 17th meeting as well as the September 9th Rules Hearing will be discussed.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The Commission discussed special meeting minutes from July 30, 2025.

Motion: Commissioner Goodman moved to approve special meeting minutes from July 30, 2025. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Koeser. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

4. **Review Annual Report:** ED Binstock walked through each page of the most up to date draft of the Annual Report. The Commissioners provided feedback, updates, and cosmetic changes. ED Binstock made edits throughout the discussion. A final draft will be shared with the Commissioners for review.

The Commission recessed at 11:16 a.m. and all Commission members reconvened at 11:41 a.m.

Motion: Commissioner Goodman moved to approve the edited version of the Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Koeser. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

5. **Executive Director's Report:**

- OA Moos provided a budget update through the end of July 2025 for the 2025-27 biennium budget. She noted the following totals: current appropriation for the 2025-2027 biennium is \$1,368,016, expenditures in July were \$38,706.63, leaving a remaining appropriation for the 2025-2027 biennium of \$1,329,309.37. OA Moos presented an

estimated ending balance for the biennium on June 30, 2027, at \$42,602. This number will fluctuate.

Commissioner Sagsveen inquired about the possibility of acquiring a subscription service for transcripts to be used for meetings and hearings. ED Binstock will provide more information during the next meeting.

- Executive Director Rebecca Binstock provided an update to the Commission on filings. A new graphic was created and will be used going forward to provide this information.

In July 2025, the Commission received the following filings:

- Complaints: 0
- Quasi-Judicial Forms: 2
- Conflict of Interest Forms: 0
- Meeting Notices: 8

The Commission closed 2 complaints.

The Commission currently has 41 pending complaints as of July 30, 2025.

The new graphic also shows the average days for Summary Dismissal, which is at 91, Informal Resolution, which is at 98, and Unethical Findings, which is at 752.

Going forward, the “average days until” section will not be included in the graphic.

- ED Binstock provided an update on education & outreach. The Bad*** Grandmas for Democracy has invited ED Binstock and General Counsel Carpenter to speak at an event for the organization on August 27, 2025. ED Binstock and General Counsel Carpenter will discuss the current process and operations of the Commission. Commissioner Sagsveen will also be attending.

ED Binstock suggests hosting a fall educational series to inform others about the amendments to the complaint process.

- ED Binstock provided a human resources update. ED Binstock has engaged an attorney on a contract basis to handle one complaint and is awaiting an engagement letter from another attorney. This additional attorney would also be used on a contract basis for several complaints and is still waiting to be appointed as a SAAG.

During the last meeting temporary employee(s) was discussed to help with attorney work. Since then, ED Binstock has reached out to HRMS to draft a job description for this position. ED Binstock is hoping to get this posted in September.

ED Binstock will be traveling to the UND Law School on September 8th to meet with law students and talk about internships with the Commission. The internship opportunity will be available next summer 2026.

- ED Binstock provided an audit update. The audit is for a four period, beginning July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2025. ED Binstock and OA Moos are working with the auditor's office to compile information, answering questions, and provide documentation. ED Binstock anticipates finishing the audit at the end of September or beginning of October.
- ED Binstock provided a multi-factor authenticator update for VPN services, which will be going live on September 3. This multi-factor authenticator will be used for accessing our VPN, which is needed for accessing certain secure applications. ED Binstock sent out an email with information regarding the multi-factor authenticator. If the Commissioners have any issues setting this up, Commission staff will help with those issues at the Commission's September meeting in Grand Forks.
- ED Binstock provided a COGEL update. The COGEL conference will be held on December 7-10 in Atlanta, GA. Four registrations have been secured and paid for already. These registrations were secured early to be able to reserve rooms at the group rate. ED Binstock asked Commissioners to let herself or OA Moos know if they would like to attend the COGEL conference in December.

6. **Ongoing Business:**

- Commissioner Sagsveen provided an update on the travel disclosure rules. The travel disclosure rules hearing was held on July 14, 2025, and the Commission received seven comments regarding the proposed rules. Commissioner Sagsveen would like to review a transcript of the hearing and these comments before the September meeting and provide a report recommendation by then.
- GC Carpenter provided an update of the proposed complaint rules amendments. The complaint rules hearing is set for September 9, 2025, at 9:30 AM in the Commission's conference room and on Teams. Commissioner Sagsveen plans to provide information

and comments during this hearing. Commissioner Goodman will serve as the hearing officer.

- ED Binstock discussed the process for investigating relevant information. During the May meeting, motions were made directing staff to draft rules regarding the process for investigating relevant information. ED Binstock requests the Commission take notice of this open item, but table it until GC Carpenter completes the memo requested by Chair Anderson during the May meeting.
 - ED Binstock discussed the Memorandum Re: (1) the Commission's constitutional duties and authority; (2) the impact of SB 2004 on the Commission's internal processes and procedures; and (3) evaluating potential actions of the Commission regarding the same. During the May regular meeting, Chair Anderson requested this memo. GC Carpenter has started working on this memo, and ED Binstock requests the Commission to also take notice of this open item, but table until it has been completed.
7. **Update on Process for Appointment of Commissioners:** ED Binstock provided an update on the process for Appointment of Commissioners. Applications closed on August 8, 2025. 39 individuals applied to be on the Commission. On August 15, the Governor, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader met to discuss the appointment process. During that meeting, the selection committee decided to send out 8 questions to the applicants. These questions were emailed to applicants on August 22 with a deadline of September 2, 2025. The selection committee will meet again to review the applicants' answers after the deadline to determine who they want to interview.
8. **Update of Policies & Procedures:**
- ED Binstock provided an update on the case management reporting policy and is requesting the Commission consider the adoption of the case management reporting policy. Commissioner Sagsveen discussed the case management reporting policy. The policy would be as follows: The Executive Director shall report on the status of each complaint that has been pending for more than 180 calendar days at the regular Commission meetings in March, June, September, and December.

Motion: Commissioner Sagsveen moved to adopt the Case Management Reporting Policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

- ED Binstock provided an update on the Commission Terms Policy amendment. The Commission Terms Policy includes a section that requires members to remain on the Commission until they are replaced. This section was previously in the Commission's Internal Code of Ethics, but was removed to be implemented in the Commission's Policies and Procedures. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and this section has been absent for several months from both the policies and procedures and internal code of ethics. ED Binstock recommends the Commission add the language to the Commission Terms Policy.

Motion:

Commission Sagsveen moved to add the following language to the Commission Terms Policy: "Commission should make every effort to provide advance notice of intent to seek reappointment to the governor, the senate majority leader, and the senate minority leader. Each Commissioner's term shall continue until a successor is duly appointed by the governor, the senate majority leader, and the senate minority leader." The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Koeser. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

9. **Executive Session:** The Commission entered executive session during the general meeting at 12:31 p.m. to discuss Complaint Nos. 23-011, 23-013, 23-014, 24-008, 24-011, 24-014, 24-031, 24-041, 25-021, 25-022, 25-038, 25-039, 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, 25-046 and 25-072. Information regarding the content and parties to a complaint to the Ethics Commission is confidential. The following participants entered the executive session: Chair Lindquist, Vice Chair Koeser, Commissioners Ron Goodman, and Murray Sagsveen, Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, General Counsel Logan Carpenter, and Operations Administrator Adilene Moos.

Executive Session ended at 1:20 p.m. and all participants returned to the regular meeting.

During the Executive Session, the Commission discussed Complaint Nos. 23-011, 23-013, 23-014, 24-008, 24-011, 24-014, 24-031, 24-041, 25-021, 25-022, 25-038, 25-039, 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, 25-046 and 25-072.

After Executive session, the following motions were made:

Motion: Vice Chair Koeser moved to close complaint no. 24-011 as recommended in the preliminary report and recommendation. The motion was seconded by

Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: Commissioner Sagsveen moved to direct Executive Director Binstock to act on the following complaints as discussed during executive session, Complaint Nos. 24-031, 25-021, 25-022, 25-038, 25-039, 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, and 25-046. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Koeser. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

10. **Further Business:**

- ED Binstock provided logistics for the September 17, 2025 Regular Meeting at UND Law School. Prior to the regular meeting, UND is hosting a naturalization ceremony at 11:00 a.m. At the end of the regular meeting, there will be time for questions and answers from the audience. An email will be sent with a schedule for that day. If hotel reservations need to be extended, please let OA Moos know.
- ED Binstock let Commissioners know that OA Moos is working on catching up on minutes and those will be sent as they are finished rather than a lump.

11. **Adjourn:** Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2025, at 12:30 p.m., livestreamed with MS Teams.

Approved on 11/19/2025



Rebecca Binstock, Executive Director, North Dakota Ethics Commission