



North Dakota Ethics Commission Regular Meeting

Minutes of January 28, 2026

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

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Cynthia Lindquist at 9:03 a.m. The following members of the Ethics Commission were also present: Vice Chair Ron Goodman, Commissioners Pamela Sharp, Mark Western, and Jared Huibregtse, as well as Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, General Counsel Logan Carpenter, and Operations Administrator Adilene Moos.
2. **Agenda Additions:** Executive Director requested the addition of Complaint Nos. 25-083 and 25-084 to the agenda for discussion.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The Commission discussed regular meeting minutes from December 17, 2025. Chair Lindquist requested changes and additions be made to the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion: Vice Chair Goodman moved to approve the amended regular meeting minutes from December 17, 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Huibregtse. Chair Lindquist called for a voice vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

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

- a. OA Moos provided a budget update for December 2025 for the 2025-27 biennium budget. She noted the following totals: current appropriation for the 2025-2027 biennium is \$1,378,956, which includes intern funding from OMB. Expenditures in December were \$50,540, bringing the total for the biennium to \$286,196, leaving a remaining appropriation for the 2025-2027 biennium of \$1,092,760. OA Moos projected expenditures through the end of the biennium to be at \$1,090,502, leaving an estimated ending balance for the biennium on June 30, 2027, at \$2,258. This number will fluctuate. OA Moos noted she added an area on the budget sheet to track the budget for outside counsel on the federal case. COGEL reimbursement fees for cancellations will be reflected in the January budget update.

ED Binstock gave further information on the outside counsel budget. She emphasized that \$25,000 for outside counsel is not part of the commission's budget appropriations. This amount is money the Commission requested from the Attorney General's

litigation funds. ED Binstock gave a brief overview of the process of how outside counsel invoices are paid from that fund.

ED Binstock noted, under the professional fees and services, the projected amount for a temporary attorney has not been updated and will fluctuate until an individual is hired for this position.

b. Executive Director Rebecca Binstock provided an update to the Commission on filings.

In December 2025, the Commission received the following filings:

- Complaints: 3
- Quasi-Judicial Forms: 0
- Conflict of Interest Forms: 0
- Meeting Notices: 1

The Commission dismissed 6 complaints.

The Commission currently has 42 pending complaints as of December 31, 2025. Of the 42 pending complaints, 3 complaints are from 2023, 5 are from 2024, and the remainder are from 2025.

c. ED Binstock provided a human resources update. As previously discussed in previous meetings, ED Binstock worked with HRMS on a job posting of a temporary attorney to help with attorney complaint work. During the February meeting, ED Binstock will be giving a more detailed update on this temporary position once more information is made available. This job was posted in mid-October and closed on October 31, 2025. To expand the hiring pool, the job was then reposted again on December 3, 2025, and closed on December 12, 2025. Staff conducted interviews in the following weeks.

ED Binstock provided an update on the internship process. Seven individuals were interviewed by both ED Binstock and GC Carpenter in early December. Two job offers were extended. One offer was accepted and the second was declined due to difficulty finding affordable temporary housing. ED Binstock then extended an offer to the next highest scoring law student and is awaiting a response. The summer internships will begin in May.

ED Binstock discussed preparations for OA Moos' departure on leave from mid-May through mid-August. During the transition period between the former operations administrator and OA Moos, the former OA helped on a limited temporary basis. This left a lot of work for OA Moos to catch up on. Based on this, ED Binstock recommended and discussed having a temporary employee or temporary intern with the Commission's HR business partner, Jill Mugaas. If the Commission opts to hire a temporary intern, the Commission can apply to participate in OMB's internship program, where OMB can cover up to 50% of the cost. Cost would be higher if the Commission opted to hire a temporary employee instead. Focus would be on recruiting a college student majoring in business administration, communications, accounting, or marketing. The Commission discussed the options and supported hiring a temporary intern.

Motion: Commissioner Huibregtse moved to authorize ED Binstock to develop a job description, solicit applications, and hire a business intern for the summer of 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sharp. Chair Lindquist called for a voice vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

- d. ED Binstock provided an update on transcription services. NDIT has asked Commission staff to test a few recommended platforms. This will be done over the next several weeks.
- e. ED Binstock provided an update on the public priorities survey. The Commission has now published the public priorities survey on its website and a link to the survey was sent out in a press release on Monday, January 26, 2026. Chair Lindquist recorded a video to be used for a social media post to encourage the public to respond. As of the morning of January 28, 2026, the Commission has received over 500 responses. Due to the large number of responses, ED Binstock spoke to NDIT about compiling the data from the survey. The survey will remain open until February 17, 2026.

5. **Ongoing Business:**

- a. GC Carpenter reviewed the changes made to the proposed complaint rule amendments that were discussed during the special meeting on January 22, 2026. The Commission discussed the changes.

Motion: Commissioner Western moved to remove two sentences in 115-02-01-08, subsection 6, and remove the last sentence 115-02-01-13, subsection 4. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a voice vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Motion: After consideration of all submitted comments, Commissioner Western moved to adopt the complaint rules as amended and publish in the North Dakota Administrative Rules. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a voice vote. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

- b.** At the December meeting the Commission discussed changes to the rules related to the Ethics Commission organizational structure. GC Carpenter reviewed the only proposed change in the updated draft, which was omitting the relations with citizens and media section. Commissioner Western noted removing the omitted section from the heading. went through the rough draft of the organizational structure that was put together.
6. **Annual Review of Code of Ethics and Policies and Procedures:** ED Binstock stated that the annual review and acknowledgement of the internal code of ethics and policies and procedures is due this January. She briefly reviewed the internal code of ethics. ED Binstock asked the Commissioners to review the policy and procedures on their own. After reviewing, Commissioners and staff must sign the acknowledgements. During the February meeting, Commissioners will be considering the adoption of an infant at work policy.
7. **COGEL Takeaways Presentation:** ED Binstock provided a presentation on key lessons Commission staff took away from the COGEL 2025 conference. The Commission discussed how these key takeaways can be used towards strategic planning, concerns on staffing issues, and suggestions on education opportunities.

The Commission recessed at 10:41 a.m. and all Commission members reconvened at 10:57 a.m.

8. **Discussion of Public Comment Opportunity at Future Ethics Commission Meetings:** After discussion at the December meeting, GC Carpenter drafted a policy to facilitate an orderly public comment period. GC Carpenter reviewed the drafted policy. After reviewing, the Commission discussed how much time should be allotted for public comment and how the comment period should be set up.

GC Carpenter will make revisions based on discussion on time for public comment. After the meeting, staff will submit a request with NDIT to create a form for the commission's website. The Commission will review this form during the February meeting, and the form will be available on the commission's website by March 1, 2026.

9. **Discussion of Citizens Alliance of North Dakota et al v. Wrigley et al 1:25-cv-256 (D.N.D. 2025):** GC Carpenter provided an overview regarding the Citizens Alliance of North Dakota et al v. Wrigley et al. A motion to dismiss was filed on January 9, 2026, in consultation with outside counsel. The Commission is waiting for a response to this motion to be filed, which has a deadline of January 30, 2026. Once the response is filed, GC Carpenter will distribute to Commissioners.
10. **Executive Session:** The Commission entered executive session during the general meeting at 11:35 a.m. to discuss Complaint Nos. 23-011, 23-013, 23-014, 24-008, 24-013, 24-015, 24-031, 24-032, 24-035, 25-004, 25-021, 25-022, 25-038, 25-039, 25-040, 25-047, 25-048, 25-049, 25-050, 25-051, 25-052, 25-053, 25-054, 25-055, 25-056, 25-057, 25-058, 25-059, 25-060, 25-061, 25-062, 25-068, 25-083, and 25-084. 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 Goodman, Commissioners Pamela Sharp, Mark Western, and Jared Huibregtse, Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, General Counsel Logan Carpenter, and Operations Administrator Adilene Moos.

Executive Session ended at 12:16 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, 24-013, 24-015, 24-031, 24-032, 24-035, 25-004, 25-021, 25-022, 25-038, 25-039, 25-040, 25-047, 25-048, 25-049, 25-050, 25-051, 25-052, 25-053, 25-054, 25-055, 25-056, 25-057, 25-058, 25-059, 25-060, 25-061, 25-062, 25-068, 25-083, and 25-084.

After Executive session, the following motions were made:

Motion: Commissioner Western moved to stay Complaint No. 23-014 as discussed during executive session. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Goodman. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: Commissioner Huibregtse moved to direct Executive Director Binstock to summarily dismiss Complaint No. 25-083 for lack of personal jurisdiction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sharp. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: Vice Chair Goodman moved to direct Executive Director Binstock to summarily dismiss Complaint No. 25-084 for lack of personal jurisdiction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sharp. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

The Commission entered executive session during the general meeting at 12:24 p.m. to discuss Complaint Nos. 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, and 25-046. 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 Goodman, Commissioners Pamela Sharp, Mark Western, and Jared Huibregtse, Executive Director Rebecca Binstock, General Counsel Logan Carpenter, and Operations Administrator Adilene Moos.

Executive Session ended at 12:31 p.m. and all participants returned to the regular meeting.

During the Executive Session, the Commission discussed Complaint Nos. 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, and 25-046.

After Executive session, the following motion was made:

Motion: Vice Chair Goodman moved to direct Executive Director Binstock to summarily dismiss Complaint No. 25-043, 25-044, 25-045, and 25-046 for lack of personal jurisdiction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Western. Chair Lindquist called for a roll call vote. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

11. **Review of 2026 Schedule and Workplan:** ED Binstock reviewed the 2026 schedule and tentative locations set for the commission meetings and workplan.
12. **Further Business:** No further business.
13. **Adjourn:** Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 18 & 19, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., livestreamed with MS Teams.



Approved on 2/18/2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Binstock". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rebecca Binstock, Executive Director, North Dakota Ethics Commission