

**Judicial Merit System Commission
Tuesday, March 3, 2026
General Session Meeting Minutes**

The Judicial Merit System Commission met on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, for its regularly scheduled quarterly open meeting. The meeting was conducted out of the Cordova room and via Microsoft Teams video conference with Commissioners Lauren Eiler and Casey Newcomb joining in-person, and Commissioner Roger Geddes joining virtually.

I. Meeting Convened

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. with the following Commissioners in attendance: Commissioners Lauren Eiler Chair, Roger Geddes, and Casey Newcomb. Commissioners Stephen Burg and Yvonne Hunter sent their regrets. Also, in attendance were Jennifer Fish, Secretary to the Commission, Nichole Fleshman, HR Manager, and Maria Washburn, Human Resources Associate.

II. Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes of the December 2, 2025 General and Executive Session meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Newcomb moved to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2025 General Session Meeting, as presented.

Commissioner Geddes seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.

Motion: Commissioner Newcomb moved to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2025 Executive Session Meeting, as presented.

Chair Eiler seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.

III. Approval of 2026 Meeting Schedule

The Commission reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2026.

Motion: Commissioner Newcomb moved to approve the proposed Judicial Merit Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule, as presented.

Commissioner Geddes seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.

IV. Follow up on Commission Requests from December 2, 2025 meeting regarding Appeal Process

Secretary Fish overviewed the Commission's requests from the last meeting and provided a refresher on the information and updates that were provided to the Commission for each item.

The Commission debated whether to establish procedures for the appellant or their attorney, and the Court or their attorney to present comments to the Commission. Factors such as past practice, purpose for the Commission and purpose for the appellant were considered. The Commission requested that Secretary Fish prepare draft procedures for the Commission's consideration at a future meeting.

The Commission also discussed the burden of proof. Secretary Fish to confirm with legal counsel whether the Rules need to explicitly state which party has the burden of proof and whether the Commission has the authority to include this in the Hearing Officer's Handbook. There was agreement from the Commission that the burden of proof should be the same for officers and non-officers.

The Commission agreed that rather than having legal counsel attend the Commission's next meeting, email correspondence would be sufficient to address the Commission's questions.

V. Review of Hearing Officer's Handbook, Report Template, and Appellant Guide

Commissioner Newcomb identified one adjustment to page 7 of the Hearing Officer's Handbook. The reference to "Appellant" in the first paragraph should read "Respondent".

The Commission agreed to table the review of the Hearing Officer's Handbook, the Report Template and Appellant Guide to a future meeting once the Commission has

had a broader discussion on the appeal process and following additional information and guidance from legal counsel.

VI. Appeals Pending Decision

Secretary Fish reported there were no appeals pending decision.

VII. Appeals For Notification of Status

Secretary Fish advised the Commission that there were a number of pending disciplinary actions to be issued. Once decisions have been made regarding the disciplinary actions, there could be three appeals pending decision.

VIII. Executive Session

There was no motion to enter into an Executive Session.

IX. Future Agenda Items

The following agenda items were identified for the next meeting:

- Revisit the appellant process.
- Review of Hearing Officer's Handbook, Report Template and Appellant Guide.

X. Call to the Public

No response was received from the Call to the Public.

XI. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Chair Eiler moved to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Newcomb seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2026.