

**BEFORE THE
MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION**

Filed

DEC 5 2025

Missouri Ethics
Commission

MISSOURI ETHICS
COMMISSION,

Petitioner,

v.

WESTERN CASS FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT,

Respondent.

Case No. 24-0077-I

**JOINT FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER**

The Missouri Ethics Commission ("MEC"), together with Western Cass Fire Protection District ("Respondent"), collectively the "parties" jointly stipulate and consent to action as set forth here (the "agreement").

Respondent acknowledges its right to have this agreement reviewed by counsel. Respondent further acknowledges it has received actual notice of the legal complaint filed by the MEC in this case, have reviewed the contents of the Complaint, and submit to the jurisdiction of the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Respondent further acknowledges it is aware of the various rights and privileges afforded by law, including but not limited to: the right to appear and be represented by counsel at a hearing before the MEC; the right to have all allegations against Respondent proven upon the record by competent and substantial evidence; the right to cross-examine any witnesses appearing at the hearing against Respondent; the right to present evidence on Respondent's behalf at the hearing; and the right to a decision upon the record of the hearing. Being aware of these rights,

Respondent knowingly and voluntarily waives each one of these rights and freely enters into this agreement and agrees to abide by its terms.

I.

The parties mutually agree and stipulate, subject to adoption by the Missouri Ethics Commission, the following shall constitute the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this matter:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Western Cass Fire Protection District is governed by a five (5) member elected Board of Directors.
2. At all relevant times, Sue Hosterman was Board President of the Western Cass Fire Protection District.
3. At all relevant times, John Webb was Board Vice Chair/Vice President of the Western Cass Fire Protection District.
4. At all relevant times, Tom Reintjes was Director B of the Western Cass Fire Protection District.
5. At all relevant times, Michael Bigg was Director C of the Western Cass Fire Protection District.
6. At all relevant times, Theresa Hawkins was Director E of the Western Cass Fire Protection District.
7. Respondent placed a question on April 2, 2024, special election ballot seeking authorization to levy an additional tax.

8. Pursuant to § 105.961, the MEC's staff received complaints against Respondent. Upon investigation of the allegations, a report was presented to the Commission.

9. The Commission determined there were reasonable grounds to believe violations of the law had occurred and authorized a hearing pursuant to § 105.961.3.

10. On March 15, 2024, Respondent made two (2) expenditures at The Cass Gazette to support the proposed tax levy ballot measure totaling \$1,372.21. These expenditures should have been reported on a Non-Committee Expenditure Report filed no later than March 29, 2024. Respondent did not file a Non-Committee Expenditure Report for these expenditures.

11. On March 25, 2024, and April 1, 2024, Respondent made two (2) expenditures at The Cass Gazette to support the proposed tax levy increase totaling \$202 and \$134, respectively. These expenditures should have been reported on two Non-Committee Expenditure Reports filed within 48 hours of making the expenditures due to being within 14 days of the April 2, 2024, election. Respondent did not file Non-Committee Expenditure Reports for these expenditures.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

12. "Any person who is not a defined committee who makes an expenditure or expenditures aggregating five hundred dollars or more . . . in support of, or in opposition to, the qualification or passage of one or more ballot measures . . . shall file a report signed by the person making the expenditures, or that person's authorized agent." § 130.047, RSMo.

13. The non-committee report must include, "the name and address of the person making the expenditure, the date and amount of the expenditure or expenditures, the name and address of the payee, and a description of the nature and purpose of each expenditure." § 130.047, RSMo.

14. The non-committee expenditure report must be filed with the, "appropriate officer having jurisdiction over ... ballot measure in question as set forth in section 130.026." § 130.047, RSMo.

15. Pursuant to § 130.047, the report is due,

no later than fourteen days after the date of making an expenditure which by itself or when added to all other such expenditures during the same campaign equals five hundred dollars or more. If, after filing such report, additional expenditures are made, a further report shall be filed no later than fourteen days after the date of making the additional expenditures; except that, if any such expenditure is made within fourteen days prior to an election, the report shall be filed no later than forty-eight hours after the date of such expenditure.

16. For purposes of Chapter 130, RSMo, the definition of a person includes, but is not limited to "an individual, group of individuals, . . . board, institution or other entity of the state or any of its political subdivisions . . . or any officer or employee of such entity acting in the person's official capacity [.]” § 130.011(22), RSMo.

17. The definition of expenditure is defined in §130.011(16), as any:

payment, advance, conveyance, deposit, donation or contribution of money or anything of value for the purpose of supporting or opposing ... the qualification or passage of any ballot measure[.]

18. Where Respondent made four (4) expenditures in support of a ballot measure and failed to file Non-Committee Expenditure Reports as required, there is

probable cause to believe Respondent violated § 130.047, giving this Commission power to act, as permitted under § 105.961.

II.

Based on the foregoing, the parties mutually agree and stipulate, subject to adoption by the Missouri Ethics Commission, the following shall constitute the Order issued by the Missouri Ethics Commission in this matter:

CONSENT ORDER

The Missouri Ethics Commission finds probable cause to believe Respondent violated § 130.047, and pursuant to § 105.961.4, hereby **ORDERS**:

1. Prior to finalizing settlement, Respondent will be required to file and amend reports and statements with the Commission.
2. Respondent shall comply with all relevant sections of Chapter 130.
3. It is the order of the Missouri Ethics Commission that a fee is imposed against Respondent in the amount of \$1,708.21, pursuant to Section 105.961.4(6), RSMo. However, if Respondent pays \$170.00 within forty-five days after the date of the Consent Order, the remainder of the fee will be stayed. The fee will be paid by check or money order made payable to the Missouri Ethics Commission.
4. Regardless of the stay in paragraph 3 above, if there is probable cause to believe that Respondent commits any further violation of the campaign finance laws under Chapter 130, RSMo, within the two-year period from the date of this order, then the Respondent who committed the violation will be required to pay the remainder of the fees. The fee will be due immediately upon final adjudication finding that there was probable cause to believe that Respondent has committed such a violation.

III.

1. The parties understand the Missouri Ethics Commission will maintain this agreement as an open record of the Commission.

2. This agreement does not bind the Missouri Ethics Commission or restrict the remedies available concerning any violations not expressly detailed here, including any future violations.

3. Each party agrees to pay all their own fees and expenses incurred as a result of this case, its litigation, and/or its disposition.

4. Respondent, together with its heirs, assigns, agents, representatives and attorneys, do hereby waives, releases, acquits and forever discharges the Missouri Ethics Commission, the Commission's respective members, employees, agents and attorneys including former members, employees, agents and attorneys, of, or from any liability, claim, actions, causes of action, fees, costs, expenses and compensation, including, but not limited to, any claim for attorney's fees and expenses, whether or not now known or contemplated, including, but not limited to, any claims pursuant to Section 536.087, RSMo, as amended, or any claim arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, which now or in the future may be based upon, arise out of, or relate to any of the matters raised in this case or its litigation or from the negotiation or execution of this Joint Stipulation. The parties acknowledge that this paragraph is severable from the remaining portions of this agreement in that it survives in perpetuity even in the event that any court or administrative tribunal deems this agreement or any portion thereof void or unenforceable.

5. This agreement shall become effective immediately upon (1) the signature of all parties; (2) adoption of the Joint Proposed Findings of Fact,

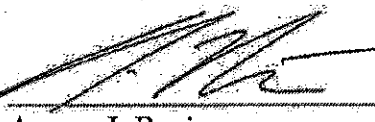
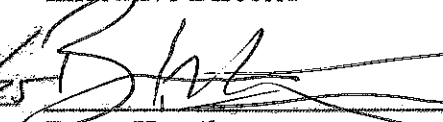
Conclusions of Law by the Missouri Ethics Commission; and (3) issuance of a Final Order by the Commission, without any further action of the parties.

SO AGREED:

RESPONDENTS WESTERN CASS
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

 12/4/25  12/5/2025
Sue Hosterman Date Stacey Heislen Date
Executive Director

 12/4/25  12/5/25
Aaron J. Racine Date Brian Hamilton Date
Attorney for Petitioner Attorney for Petitioner

Filed

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Commission

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Jeremy Schneider, Chair
Missouri Ethics Commission