

I. Meeting Packet



State of Florida
Public Service Commission
INTERNAL AFFAIRS AGENDA
AMENDED Tuesday – February 4, 2025
Immediately Following Commission Conference
Room 105 – Gerald L. Gunter Building

1. Presentation on the Office of Inspector General, Valerie Peacock, Inspector General, Florida Public Service Commission (Attachment 1)
2. Legislative Update
3. General Counsel's Report
4. Executive Director's report
5. Other Matters

BB/aml

OUTSIDE PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON
ANY OF THE AGENDAED ITEMS SHOULD CONTACT THE
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT (850) 413-6463.



FLORIDA PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

OFFICE OF
Inspector General



Role of the Inspector General in a state agency

Section 20.055, Florida Statutes establishes an office of inspector general in each state agency to provide a central point for coordination of and responsibility for **activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government.**



*Enhancing
Public Trust
in
Government*

Transparency, Efficiency & Agency Success

The OIG strives to be trusted business advisors to agency leadership; the goal being to promote transparency in government operations as well as transparency in our activities

Our goal is to contribute to the Commission's on-going success through audits, reviews, and investigations that:

- Promote efficiency effectiveness
- Strengthen internal controls
- Detect, deter, and prevent, fraud, waste and abuse.



*Enhancing
Public Trust
in
Government*

MISSION

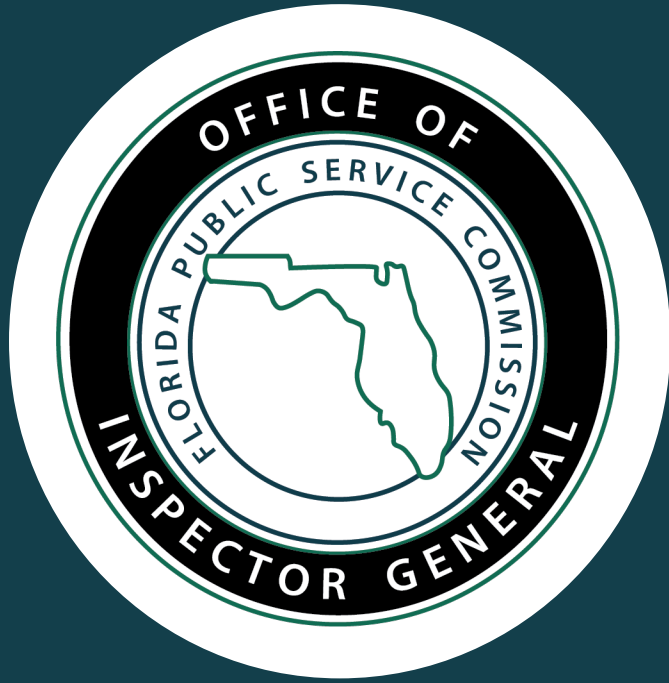


The Inspector General conducts audits and investigations that support process improvement and detect, deter, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct and other abuses.

These processes are put in place to assist the Florida Public Service Commission in accomplishing its overall mission of facilitating the efficient provision of safe and reliable utility services at fair prices.



RESPONSIBILITY

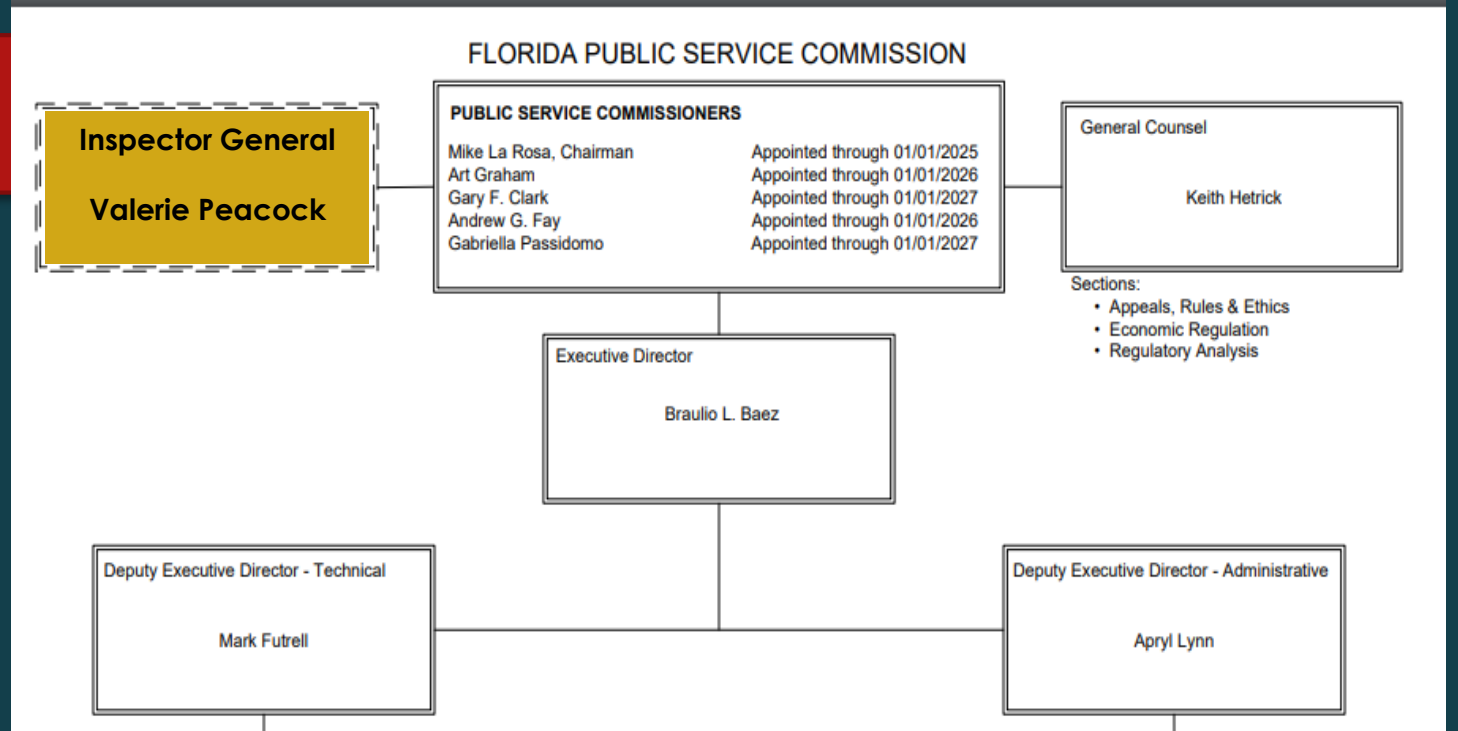


The Inspector General is responsible for keeping the Chairman of the Commission informed about fraud, abuses, and deficiencies of operations within the commission.

The Inspector General recommends corrective actions to address any concerns identified through audits and investigations. The Inspector General also reports on progress made implementing corrective actions taken by management to address those concerns.

INDEPENDENCE

- ▶ To be effective, the Inspector General must be appointed and report to the agency head. The Inspector General is not subject to oversight by any other employee of the agency.
- ▶ At the PSC, the Inspector General reports directly to the Chairman of the Commission.

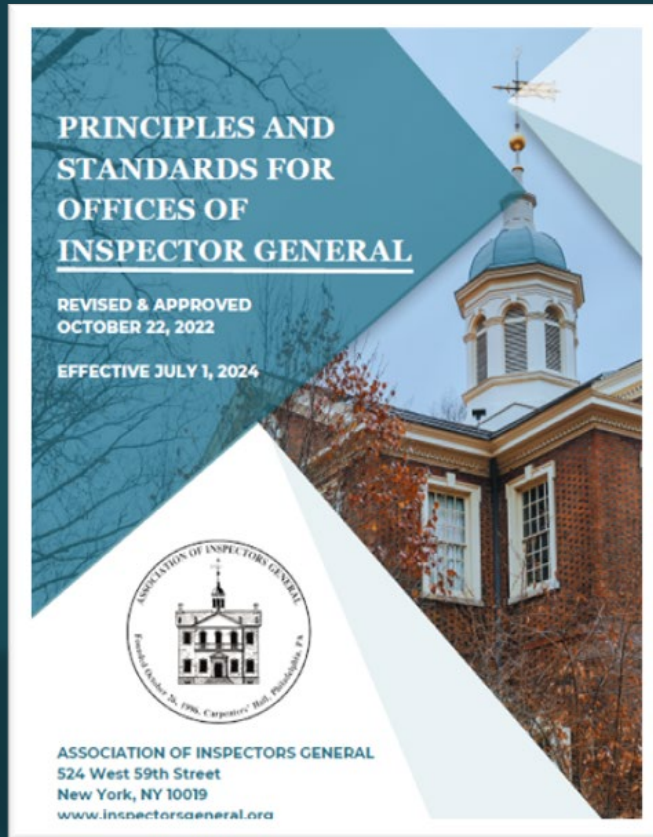


What constitutes Inspector General “Independence”?

The Inspector General has a responsibility to operate free from personal and external impairments and maintain independence in attitude and appearance.

Office of Inspector General

STANDARDS

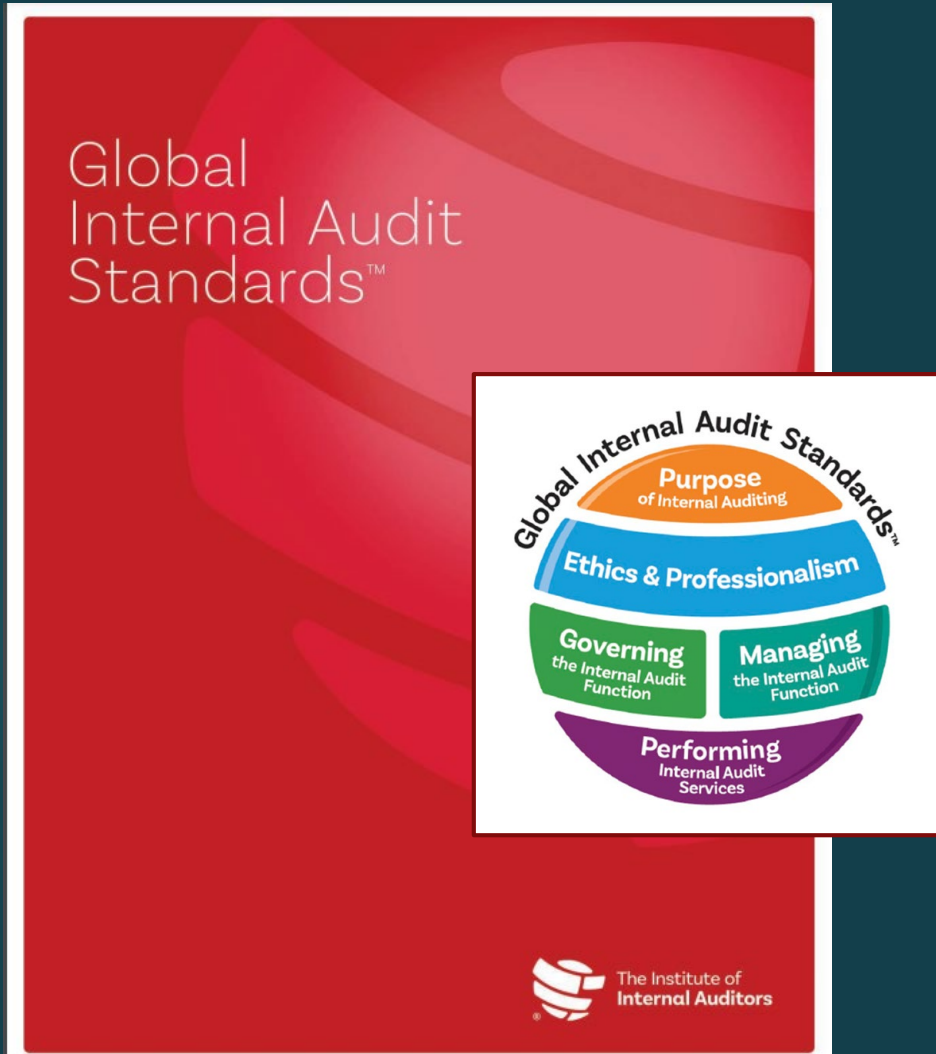


ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL

Advancing Professionalism, Accountability & Integrity

- ▶ The OIG is statutorily mandated under Section 20.055, F.S. to follow established standards to ensure the quality of audits and investigations.
- ▶ Overall, the OIG follows the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General Published by the Association of Inspectors General.

AUDIT STANDARDS



- ▶ For audits, the OIG follows the *Global Internal Audit Standards* published by the Institute of Internal Auditors.
- ▶ The *Global Internal Audit Standards* are commonly called the “Red Book”.

INVESTIGATION STANDARDS

Recent changes to the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General mandate an external quality review of OIG Investigation activities.



To adhere to the updated requirements, the PSC's OIG is currently working to seek accreditation from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc., for Offices of Inspectors General.



AUDITS & INVESTIGATIONS



Internal Audit – Risk Assessment

The OIG conducts an agency-wide risk assessment each year as part of the development of its annual audit plan. During this process, the OIG considers:

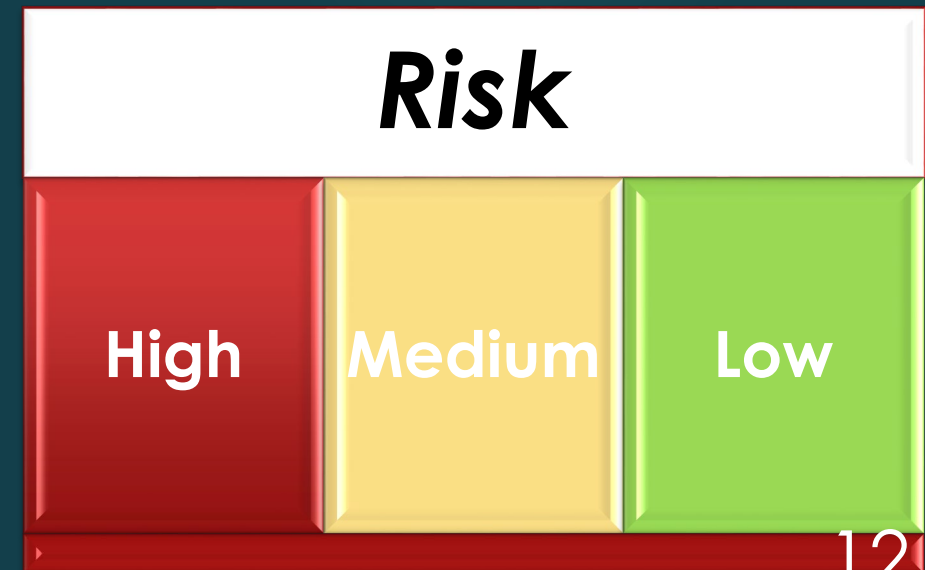
- significant risks and events that could impact a Division's areas of responsibility;
- processes managed in each Division which may be cause for concern;
- areas of concern that have potential to constitute fraud, waste, or abuse;
- processes or practices that would limit the Commission's effectiveness in meeting its [goals](#);
- issues that would constitute a Commission-wide concern.

We value the input of all Commission management and staff.

Internal Audit – Risk Assessment

The OIG also considers risk which may impact:

- ▶ The reliability and integrity of financial and operational information;
- ▶ Effectiveness and Efficiency of operations;
- ▶ Safeguarding of assets;
- ▶ Compliance with laws/rules/policies.



INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS

- Risk Assessment
- Develop Scope and Objectives
- Review Relevant Criteria
- Develop an Audit Plan

Planning

- Analysis and Evaluation
- Test processes/activities against established criteria
- Develop potential findings

Fieldwork

Follow-Up

- Monitoring and reporting on corrective action plans.

Reporting

- Audit conclusions
- Findings
- Communications and Response



INTERNAL AUDIT: FINDINGS

What Constitutes an Audit Finding?

Criteria

Relevant
authoritative
requirement

Condition

Difference between the
criteria and the existing
state of the activity.

Cause

Root cause of the deviation
from relevant requirements
and the current state

Effect

Potential effect, significance, and
risk exposure from the condition or
deviation from requirements

Recommendation

Corrective action steps

Internal Audit – Key Takeaways

- ▶ OIG is committed to contributing to the success and continuous improvement of the Commission in serving Florida's citizens. OIG's audits are not “gotcha” events.
- ▶ It is our goal that internal audits serve as an independent assessment of Commission functions and operations to assist and support the success of management's responsibilities.
- ▶ Risks identified and addressed through an internal audit can help mitigate exposure to external criticism and/or operational shortfalls.



Internal Investigations



- ▶ Complaint Intake
- ▶ Whistle-blower Determination
- ▶ Preliminary Inquiry
- ▶ Investigative Review
- ▶ Investigations
- ▶ Whistle-blower Investigation
- ▶ Management Advisory
- ▶ Internal/External Referral

Internal Investigations

What Prompts an Investigation?

- ▶ Internal or External Complaints
- ▶ Management Request
- ▶ Issues Identified in an Audit
- ▶ Misconduct Noted in a Report

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS: COMPLAINTS

- ▶ The OIG is typically the central receiving point for all internal complaints in a state agency
- ▶ Complaints within the jurisdiction of the OIG include Commission employees, contractors, or subcontractors that may have participated in administrative actions considered to involve fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, or other abuses in state government.

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS:

SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS

- ▶ Complaints may be received from:
 - ❖ citizens,
 - ❖ current and former employees,
 - ❖ contractors and their current and former employees,
 - ❖ other state agencies, or
 - ❖ the Office of the Chief Inspector General.

- ▶ The complainant may make their identity known to us or they may file a complaint anonymously.

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS:

HOW COMPLAINTS ARE FILED

To submit complaints about utilities, use the [On-Line Utility Complaint Form](#).

The Office of Inspector General conducts investigations involving allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct within the Commission. Please use this form to submit a complaint to our office.

Enter Your First Name

Enter Your Last Name

If you would like to be contacted, please include an email and/or phone number where we may reach you.

Enter Your Email Address

Enter Your Phone Number

Have you reported this complaint to the
PSC previously?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Name of Subject (Who committed the
alleged violation?)

Allegation(s) (What did the employee(s) do
that you believe was improper? Please
provide as much detail as possible.)

SUBMIT

Complaints may be written or verbal and may be communicated to the OIG online on the OIG's web page, by phone, mail, email, or hand delivery.

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

- Complaint Receipt
- Category Determination
- Whistle-Blower Determination
- Assignment

Intake

Case Planning

- Develop a written case plan

- Evidence Must be:
 - Relevant
 - Consistent with Facts
 - Sufficient

Evidence Gathering

Interviews

- Complainant
- Witness
- Subject

Taken Under Oath

- (Non Whistle-Blower) Investigation Report is provided to:
 - Chairman
 - Executive Director
 - Subject
 - Other Parties as Deemed Necessary

Reporting



A Whistle-blower is any person who discloses:

- a) Violations of law that presents a clear and present danger to the public's health, safety, or welfare
- b) Any act of gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, or gross neglect of duty

Internal Investigations: Whistle-Blower Determination

- ▶ The OIG receives and coordinates all activities of the Department for Whistle-blower's Act investigations pursuant to Sections 112.3187 – 112.31895, Florida Statutes.
- ▶ Individuals who meet the criteria as defined in the Whistle-blower's Act will be granted whistle-blower status. In these instances, their identity will remain protected from public disclosure during and after the investigation is completed.

Internal Investigations: Interviews

- ▶ During most OIG investigations, the complainants, witnesses, and subjects are interviewed.
- ▶ Formal interviews are taken under oath and audio recorded for the protection of the person being interviewed and the investigator.
- ▶ Typically, complainants are interviewed first, followed by witnesses, then subjects, who are interviewed last.
- ▶ Employees should not discuss details of interviews with other employees or management.

Internal Investigations: Reports

- ▶ Investigative reports include the disposition of all allegations investigated. Allegations are either substantiated, unsubstantiated, or unfounded based upon the preponderance of the evidence.
- ▶ The OIG does not recommend discipline in any investigative reports. All disciplinary actions are at the sole discretion of management.
- ▶ The OIG typically requests management provide a written response regarding actions taken in response to process or operational findings in the report.



Internal Investigations:

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Anonymous complaints can be filed, but they must provide detailed information and evidence, where available, of the incident(s) related to the complaint for it to be considered by the IG for a potential case.
- ▶ OIG investigations are administrative in nature. As required by Section 20.055 (7)(c), F.S., the OIG will report criminal violations to FDLE or other relevant law enforcement agency whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe there has been a violation of criminal law.

RECENT OIG ACTIVITIES



- ▶ Operational audit of APA
- ▶ Three internal cybersecurity audits
- ▶ Internal performance measure assessments
- ▶ Contract and procurement advisory research
- ▶ Facilitated external audits of the Commission by the Auditor General
- ▶ Review and input on the Commission's COOP
- ▶ Review of standard Commission reports
- ▶ Review of the Commission's intranet
- ▶ Review of ESF-12 response efforts
- ▶ Since July 2023, addressed 70 complaints
- ▶ OIG webpage updates
- ▶ OIG External Quality Assurance Review

OIG Contact Information

Valerie Peacock, Inspector General
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Telephone Number:
(850) 412-6017
Email Address:
Inspector.General@PSC.STATE.FL.US

Website and online complaint form:
<https://www.psc.state.fl.us/inspector-general>



II. Outside Persons Who Wish to Address the Commission at Internal Affairs

Note: The records reflect that no outside persons addressed the Commission at this Internal Affairs meeting.

III. Supplemental Materials for Internal Affairs

Note: The records reflect that there were no supplemental materials provided to the Commission during this Internal Affairs meeting.

IV. Transcript

1 BEFORE THE
2 FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

3
4
5
6 PROCEEDINGS: INTERNAL AFFAIRS

7 COMMISSIONERS
8 PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA
9 COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
10 COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
11 COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
12 COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

13 DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2025

14 TIME: Commenced: 11:25 a.m.
15 Concluded: 12:20 p.m.

16 PLACE: Gerald L. Gunter Building
17 Room 105
18 2524 Shumard Oak Boulevard
19 Tallahassee, Florida

20 REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
21 Court Reporter and
22 Notary Public in and for
23 the State of Florida at Large

24 PREMIER REPORTING
25 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
 (850) 894-0828

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. I think we can
3 go ahead and jump into this. I don't know if my
4 microphone is on. I don't see a light on or off
5 for my microphone. It doesn't matter. I think I
6 am being picked up somewhere, right?

7 All right. So today is January 22nd. Welcome
8 to our Internal Affairs -- today is not January
9 22nd. I start reading a script, right. This was
10 supposed to be -- this is a postponement from our
11 January 22nd Internal Affairs meeting. Today is
12 February 4th. And if you do recall, all of us were
13 a little bit frozen on January 22nd, at least I
14 know I had a few inches of snow in my front yard.
15 I thought I had woken up and was maybe still
16 dreaming. But we have defrosted since, and we are
17 now back to everyday business. So love to hear the
18 stories of where everybody was.

19 But if you did hear a little bit of music on
20 your way in, the song today was Private Eyes
21 submitted by Christina Slaton. Now, Christina has
22 a close connection to the Chairman, so she was able
23 to sneak that song in, and it made kind of perfect
24 sense of -- I think perfect sense, it made a little
25 bit of sense of why -- what we are doing here

1 today.

2 Our Employee of the Month for January it was
3 Lorena Hollett. Now, I had an opportunity to
4 surprise her this morning because, again, a little
5 bit of postponement. It was not expected to come,
6 and as far as naming the Employee of the Month, but
7 of course, she's done a great job.

8 She joined the Commission in September of 2022
9 as Commission Deputy Clerk in the office of the
10 Commission Clerk. She has since been promoted to
11 Commission Deputy Clerk, and serves as a Commission
12 confidential documents coordinator.

13 Lorena comes to work each day with a great
14 attitude and is always willing to go above and
15 beyond her job duties and assist her coworkers in
16 the Clerk's Office.

17 Lorena is an excellent communicator, and is in
18 the Clerk's Office as a go-to resource for both
19 Commission staff and outside parties on the
20 procedural and filing and handling of confidential
21 documentation.

22 If you had a chance to spend a little bit of
23 time of with her, I did, of course this morning,
24 and she is well deserving of the Employee of the
25 Month and the recognition for January. So, again,

1 congratulations.

2 Is she in the room? Oh, there she is.

3 (Applause.)

4 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Congratulations again.

5 So let's -- is it okay if maybe we jump right
6 into the Inspector General discussion, and then we
7 will go back and rehash our legislative update and
8 so forth.

9 So, you know, in discussion today, and kind of
10 what we should -- we thought we should talk about,
11 I asked Valerie to come in and just talk about her
12 role as the Inspector General, and what she does.
13 And I have got -- I have had an opportunity as
14 Chairman to work, you know, closely with her on
15 things that she's, you know, working on, and things
16 that she's overlooking. And it's a crucial part of
17 what we do day in and day out. It doesn't
18 necessarily get the spotlight that maybe other
19 positions, and other things that happen within our
20 commission, but I think it's an incredibly
21 important aspect to make sure that we are running
22 and operating efficiently; and in my concern, to
23 make sure that we are transparent. She helps a lot
24 of times with kind of digging through things and
25 really kind of bringing things to light to me, and

1 I see them from a very different perspective. And
2 I am very appreciative for her coming here today.

3 She always updates me on if she's going to
4 different conferences, what she pulls out of them
5 and what she learns. And just speaking to other
6 agencies, there is certainly a high level of
7 respect for her. And we are honored to have her,
8 not just here today but, of course, as part of our
9 agency.

10 And Valerie, I will kick it off to you to get
11 us started.

12 MS. PEACOCK: Thank you. Than you, Chairman.
13 And thank you, Commissioners, for having me and
14 length me giving me the opportunity to speak today.

15 I really value being in this agency and what
16 we do here, and the opportunity to just tell you
17 all a little bit more about what our office does
18 and how we fit in in the agency. So I will get
19 going there.

20 So the Inspector General is mandated through
21 Section 20.055, Florida Statutes, which establishes
22 that every state agency will have an office of
23 inspector general to provide a central point for
24 the coordination responsibility, for activities
25 that promote accountability, integrity and

1 efficiency in government.

2 The Inspector General Act of Florida was first
3 established in 1994. And, you know, I don't want
4 to date myself, but I came to the Inspector
5 General's Office right about that time. So I have
6 been as part of an inspector general office for
7 quite some time.

8 And I can say that the role has evolved over
9 time, but that Florida is unique in that every
10 state agency has an office of inspector general.
11 Other states don't have that sense of transparency
12 and accountability. And so to me, you know, I
13 am -- I think Florida is head and shoulders, you
14 know, kind of leading the way in accountability and
15 transparency of other states, but, you know, I am
16 biased.

17 But in going through that, transparency, so we
18 strive to be a trusted business advisor. That's
19 what our -- my standards require, that we are a
20 trusted business advisor. The agency leadership,
21 the goal being to promote transparency in
22 government operations, as well as transparency in
23 the things that I do.

24 Our goal is to contribute to the Commission's
25 ongoing success through audits, reviews,

1 investigations that promote efficiency and
2 effectiveness, strengthen internal controls and
3 deter, detect and prevent fraud, waste and abuse.
4 I know that's a big mouthful, but that is what we
5 are -- we strive to do.

6 I think -- you know, we do audits. We do
7 investigations. We do advisory reviews. And I
8 can't say enough for, in my opinion, and over the
9 years, that the value of being -- of the work that
10 we do as an advisory, in an advisory capacity as
11 much as audits or investigations. So those, to me,
12 have proven to be some of the most valuable things
13 that we can provide to an agency.

14 So what is our responsibility as an office?
15 We are responsible for keeping the Chairman and
16 Commissioners informed about fraud, abuses,
17 deficiencies of operations within the Commission.
18 And so what we do is we recommend corrective action
19 to address any concerns identified through our
20 audits or investigations. And then we don't just
21 do those audits and investigations. We follow up
22 on corrective actions to make sure that everything
23 has been corrected, and that we are functioning as
24 we should.

25 In doing those things, independence is a big

1 deal, because we are internal audit, an internal
2 investigations. There is an implied, you know,
3 okay, well, how can you be completely, you know,
4 independent if you are internal? So what we have
5 to do is ensure that layer of independence. And I
6 put our org chart up here just to show that to be
7 effective, the Inspector General must be appointed
8 and report to the agency head and not be subject to
9 the oversight of any other employee of the agency.

10 So in the PSC, you know, the IG reports
11 directly to the Chairman. In Governor's agencies,
12 the inspector general reports to the Chief
13 Inspector General for the Governor's Office. But
14 we are, you know, situated differently. The
15 Chairman is -- serves in that function.

16 So when I say independence, what constitutes
17 independence? And so to me, that we -- I have to
18 maintain a personal -- to operate free of personal
19 and external impairments and maintain independence
20 in attitude and in perception. So to me, it's not
21 just, okay, I am independent, but I need to, you
22 know, kind of operate to that higher standard of
23 being, you know, independent in perception. There
24 should be no appearance of any kind of impairment,
25 and I take that really seriously.

1 Just like the Commission operates, you know,
2 based on procedure. Procedure is very important at
3 the Commission, and it is to my role as well. We
4 have a series of different standards, so Section
5 20.055 recommends that -- or not recommends. They
6 mandate that we follow established standards. And
7 specifically, this -- you know, I put it up here.
8 The principles and standards for offices of
9 inspector general, it's published by the
10 Association of Inspectors General. This is the
11 overarching standards that we follow. And then we
12 further divide our standards into the two areas
13 that make up our office, our role, the audit
14 standards and investigation standards.

15 So here on the slide is the red book, which is
16 our audit standards. They've recently been
17 updated, and now they are -- as of January of this
18 year, they are called the Global Internal Audit
19 Standards. There was a major overhaul of these
20 standards by the Institute of Internal Auditors to
21 refine and improve these standards for offices of
22 inspector generals so that we are, you know, more
23 attune, more transparent, more, you know,
24 communicating than before.

25 So, you know, I think about it, as a group,

1 you know, auditors are not the most, you know,
2 extroverted group of individuals. And what our
3 updated standards have called for is increased
4 communications and increased professional
5 development with our organizations.

6 And so, again, this is why I appreciate this
7 opportunity to kind of get our role out, and get to
8 know and develop those professional relationships
9 with you all more so now than ever. So there is
10 our new audit standards.

11 On the -- the little clicky -- on the
12 investigations side, recent changes to our
13 Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector
14 General, they were recently updated as well, and
15 now they mandate that every three years, I have an
16 external quality review of our investigation
17 activities. So the Auditor General looks at our
18 audit unit once every three years, and does an
19 audit of us. And now I am required to get an
20 external evaluation of my investigation side as
21 well.

22 So in order to adhere to the updated
23 requirements, Cindy and I have been working really
24 hard to update all our processes so that we can
25 seek accreditation from this commission for law

1 enforcement accreditation for offices of inspector
2 general. This is a lot of process, but this is
3 kind of our goal on our investigations side that we
4 are working towards.

5 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: It's kind of like the
6 auditor is getting audited.

7 MS. PEACOCK: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. You know, I
8 was going to save this until the end, but I will go
9 ahead and say now. I could argue with everyone in
10 this agency that I am more audited than anyone here
11 because, without fail, I am going to be audited
12 every three years. So, you know, in keeping with
13 that, there is nobody above having someone look
14 over your shoulder, not any of us, and as we should
15 be. But, yeah, I get audited.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: We will ask more questions
17 at the end, but I am curious to that point. Do you
18 feel that that, like, makes you sharper in your
19 job --

20 MS. PEACOCK: Oh, yes.

21 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- because now it kind of
22 reverse a little bit?

23 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah. Yeah. I know. It does.
24 It does. We stay on always high alert. Okay, we
25 got to make sure we do this, and this, and this,

1 and we have to be transparent. So like even down
2 to our time, we track everything we do with our
3 time, and we are kind of over the top with our
4 training, with our process. We have to document
5 our process. And, you know, it's because we know
6 the Auditor General is going to come, and they are
7 going to look over our shoulders.

8 But, you know, to me, it's just such a good
9 thing. You know, I am like, oh, yeah, please come
10 audit me. But it really is because it does keep
11 us, you know, operating at that higher level, and
12 that standard of accountability, okay, I got to
13 make sure that we don't, you know, miss anything,
14 or that we do our due diligence, so at the end of
15 an audit, end of an investigation, that we are, you
16 know, we have something -- we have credibility
17 about what we do. So, yeah, it's good. It's
18 tough, but it's good.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: It's interesting.

20 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah.

21 So audits and investigations, both of them,
22 the goal is to address real or potential problems
23 or risk in an agency. They just go about it two
24 different ways.

25 So audits are proactive, and investigations

1 are reactive. I mean, I guess this is kind of, you
2 know, intuitive that, you know, we initiate our
3 audits and reviews and advisory services, but
4 investigations are reactive. So we don't, you
5 know, initiate an investigation until we get a
6 complaint. So that's, you know, simplistically the
7 difference.

8 So I will go through really quick on the
9 internal audit side.

10 So every year we do this risk assessment, an
11 annual risk assessment, agency-wide risk
12 assessment, to develop our annual audit plan. So
13 we think, okay, what are you going to audit every
14 year? Well, in order to kind of come up with that,
15 we do this risk assessment, and we look at things
16 like I have got up here on the slide, any risk or
17 events that could impact the Division's area
18 responsibility. Processes managed by the Division
19 which may cause concern. Any areas of concern that
20 might have, you know, control weaknesses, where
21 there might be fraud, waste or abuse. Processes or
22 practices, or the lack thereof, that would affect
23 the Commission's effectiveness in meeting its
24 goals. And then anything else that might be a
25 Commission-wide concern.

1 And with all those things that we are
2 considering, you know, you can't just, you know, go
3 to a few people and say, hey, I want your input.
4 To me, you get -- you know, you come up with a
5 better plan the more people you get input from.
6 And so I put at the very bottom, we value input of
7 all Commission management and staff. So yeah.

8 I can't make it go forward. Well, I think I
9 might need he help. I know, I can't make it go is
10 it on the top?

11 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: No, there.

12 MS. PEACOCK: There it is. Okay. I think I
13 am click happy maybe.

14 So just real quick again on the risk
15 assessment. We also look at risk which may impact
16 the reliability and integrity of financial and
17 operational information, effectiveness and
18 efficientness of -- effectiveness and efficiency of
19 operations. Safeguarding assets. All those things
20 that you can think of that go along with risk.

21 And then once we get, you know, a collection
22 of ideas and thoughts and issues, then we try to
23 categorize them, high, medium, low. We might look
24 at the things that are high risk, you know,
25 immediately, and then, you know, maybe medium and

1 low risk, we put them on a long-term audit plan.

2 So all this to say, you know, in the spring,
3 we will be starting our annual audit plan, where I
4 will be coming around to everyone to say, hey, I
5 need input, you know. These will be the kind of
6 things that I will be discussing with management
7 and staff, so just kind of get ready, because there
8 it will be.

9 And then I want to talk really quick about our
10 internal audit process. You know, I know that's
11 probably not, oh, wow, what is your process? This
12 is probably really familiar to APA. I have worked
13 with APA a little bit, and so we probably have a
14 similar process.

15 We do our planning, our fieldwork, our
16 reporting and our follow-up, and, you know, rinse
17 and repeat. We do the same thing. And so with the
18 individualized projects, we do a risk assessment.
19 We develop your scope and objectives. We look at
20 our criteria, and we develop an audit plan.

21 And, you know, in looking, you know, at
22 going -- looking at what APA does, you know, that's
23 like our ASR. You know, we develop our own audit
24 plan and, you know, for, like, the test year that
25 staff uses when they are looking at a rate case,

1 it's a very similar process. Then we do our
2 fieldwork, the analysis and the evaluation. We
3 conduct a lot of interviews, and then we develop
4 potential findings.

5 And then once we get all the information, we
6 put our work together. Then we do a report. We
7 draw a conclusion. There is always going to be a
8 conclusion that's going to match our objective. So
9 the objective was to determine whether, you know,
10 this process is functioning in accordance with, you
11 know, the established criteria, and we conclude,
12 yes, it is, no, it isn't, or it is partially. We
13 report on the findings. We communicate, and then
14 we ask for a response.

15 And then after we issue the report, we follow
16 up to ensure that corrective actions have happened
17 and we report out on that.

18 And so I have talked about a finding. I
19 mentioned findings a couple of times. So what
20 constitutes a finding? You know, I am a very, you
21 know, in awe of the legal minds and the legal
22 component that just runs this agency, and so I
23 think about our findings are like, you know, the
24 standard elements of a legal case. You know, you
25 have duty, breach, causation and damages in a

1 legal -- I mean, just the basis.

2 So, you know, way back -- whoever came up with
3 an audit finding, I think, was probably a legal
4 minded person, because it's the same thing. So a
5 finding includes criteria. So whatever the
6 authoritative requirement is. The condition.
7 What's the difference between the authoritative
8 requirement and the current state? The cause. We
9 always look for the root cause. What is causing
10 this deviation? And then the effect. What's
11 the -- that's the so what, you know, what's the
12 risk? If it's just a one-off, or it's just, you
13 know, a small error, you know, then there is not
14 really a significant risk, but the effect, to me,
15 is huge, because that determines whether, you know,
16 this is really a finding or not?

17 And then recommendation. I have always said
18 if you articulate a finding well enough and
19 constructive enough, then the recommendation is
20 something that everybody says, okay, well, yes,
21 that's exactly what needs to happen.

22 And so I know I am kind of going through this
23 quickly, but, you know, I want to move on from
24 internal audit. But there is a couple of key
25 takeaways that I really want to emphasize for

1 everyone, that we are committed to contributing to
2 the success and continuous improvement of the
3 Commission, and so, you know, you see me. I am
4 always trying to attend every agenda event that we
5 can, because I want to learn -- you know, I like to
6 be involved and know, you know, the things that we
7 are up against, the things that the Commission is
8 kind of grappling with, and all the different cases
9 and agenda items so that we understand what, you
10 know, what we are up against.

11 So I always -- OIG's audits are not gotcha
12 events. I don't -- you know, I know private eyes
13 are watching you, but really, these are not gotcha
14 events. We really --

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I'm sorry, wrong song.

16 MS. PEACOCK: Oh, no. No. No. I love it. I
17 love it. No.

18 But we are here, you know, our success is your
19 success, and your success is our success. And
20 that's really what I want at the end of the day.
21 You know, this is a great agency. No doubt about
22 it. We have talked about it several times, but if
23 we can play a part in that success, then I feel
24 like we've added value.

25 And so, you know, the last thing, risk

1 identified and addressed through internal audit can
2 help mitigate exposure to external criticisms
3 and/or operational shortfalls. So, you know, it's
4 mitigating things that might be on the horizon.

5 I don't -- you know, I don't add a lot of
6 graphics or pictures to my presentations, but, you
7 know, I don't want to be overly entertaining. You
8 know, I want to stay in my auditor role. But I
9 have to add the picture of the rhino and the
10 tickbird. There is a good analogy.

11 So I don't know how many of you all are my
12 environmental scientists out there who like to
13 study that, but there is a symbiotic relationship,
14 mutual beneficial relationship between the rhino
15 and the tickbird.

16 So the tickbird stays on the rhino's back and
17 is constantly pecking away at the rhino's back.
18 But what he is doing is he is eating parasites, and
19 flees, and mosquitoes, and all kinds of things that
20 would otherwise cause disease and problems for the
21 rhino, keeping the rhino healthy, and he serves an
22 additional valuable benefit to the rhino of having
23 this vantage point of being to say -- being able to
24 see danger on the horizon, or any threats, you
25 know, approaching, and then he can, you know,

1 squawk really loudly and let the rhino know that
2 danger is on the way.

3 So, you know, to me, sometimes I say, okay,
4 maybe we are like the tickbird and the organization
5 is a the rhino. We are here, you know, to, you
6 know, help promote the success of the organization
7 like the tickbird. So that's my fun analogy for
8 the day.

9 On the internal investigations side, there are
10 several different activities that constitute
11 investigations. So we do complaint intake. We do
12 whistleblower determination. We do preliminary
13 inquiries. So that's, like, if there is something
14 of that's come up that we don't know whether or not
15 it's go to be an investigation, we will look into
16 it a little bit further. It might just be, okay,
17 well, it was just a little preliminary research.
18 We will do an investigative review. Sometimes
19 that -- maybe that's an extensive background check.

20 Investigations, of course. A whistleblower
21 investigation, which is a little bit more, you
22 know, it's a little different. We do some
23 management advisory for the investigations side,
24 and then we do a lot -- a lot of internal and
25 external referrals of complaints.

1 Okay. What prompts an investigation? So
2 sometimes there -- we will -- how do we get an
3 investigation? We can get in a complaint
4 internally or externally. We can get one via
5 management request. Issues identified in an audit.
6 So maybe we are doing an audit and something comes
7 up. Oh, well, this may look to be a little bit
8 more like a personnel action, or misconduct noted
9 in a separate report. So there is -- it can come
10 from a variety of sources.

11 So complaints. So the OIG is typically the
12 central receiving point for all internal complaints
13 of a state agency. So complainants that would fall
14 within that jurisdiction include Commission
15 employees, contractors, subcontractors that may
16 have participated in administrative actions that
17 consider to involve fraud, waste, mismanagement,
18 those kind of abuses.

19 Okay. Sources of complaints. They can come
20 from anywhere, citizens, employees, former,
21 current, contractors, other state agencies. And,
22 you know, from time to time, we get some complaints
23 from the Chief Inspector General's office. So they
24 may, you know, make their identity known or they
25 can be anonymous, so either way.

1 So how are they filed? I put a picture here
2 of our web page, where you can file a complaint if
3 you would like, but they can be written, verbal,
4 on-line, email, phone, hand delivery, either way.
5 So we are -- we are accessible, but, you know,
6 anybody can get to us anyway, but here is our web
7 page where they can be filed.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I see that there is -- go
9 ahead.

10 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: No, I am sorry.
11 My only -- is there -- do we have -- does the --
12 does each agency typically have the inspector --
13 like, access, like a link to this page on our
14 website, like, does it, so that the PSC has it
15 on --

16 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: Okay.

18 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah. Yeah. Typically. Now, I
19 think there -- I have seen -- because I went all
20 over looking at other agencies, but typically they
21 will have -- each agency has an office of inspector
22 general which has an on-line complaint, you know,
23 portal to be able to do that on-line, so, yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: Okay.

25 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah. Yeah. Because I would

1 just think --

2 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: Well, it helps,
3 yeah, because it's like you would think you would
4 go to the agency website versus the OIG website,
5 just, you know, just --

6 MS. PEACOCK: But -- well, I guess -- okay, I
7 should clarify. The OIG web page is part of our
8 website.

9 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: Okay.

10 MS. PEACOCK: So I have a page in our website.
11 Yeah, you got a little link to it. But, yeah, it's
12 on the PSC website.

13 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO SMITH: Okay. Good.

14 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I see there is an on-line
15 utility complaint form. Is there ever confusion
16 from customers?

17 MS. PEACOCK: Oh, yeah. Yeah. You keep
18 taking my thing --

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sorry.

20 MS. PEACOCK: -- what I was going to save to
21 the end, but yeah --

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I just started looking
23 through it and make sure --

24 MS. PEACOCK: Right. yeah. You know what, I
25 appreciate it. That's a good segue. Yes. Yeah.

1 There is a lot of. So -- let me see if that was --

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, we have the whole
3 customer service side --

4 MS. PEACOCK: No. No. No. So am going to --
5 I will go ahead -- let me go to that.

6 So generally, I would say since I have been
7 here since, I guess, the middle of '23, Cindy and I
8 counted, it's been about 70 complaints that we have
9 gotten in our office that we have needed to refer
10 to CAO, which people are complaining to us, which
11 they should be reaching out to CAO, and we will
12 refer those and work with Cindy's group, and they
13 are wonderful in handling those things.

14 But before I got here, it was more than double
15 that amount. This office was just getting so many
16 complaints that were utility related, and not
17 related to, you know, internal complaints of --
18 that involved employee conduct.

19 And so I looked into why we were receiving so
20 many utility type complaints, and when I looked at
21 the web page -- our web page on the PSC's website,
22 I saw that there was -- there was a lot of
23 confusion. And so I made some -- I worked with IT
24 and CAO, and I just did some clarification, just
25 some minor clarification to our web page to say,

1 okay, on our web page, you know, you go here if you
2 are filing a complaint about the conduct of an
3 employee, you know, and what did the employee --
4 what was the allegation against the employee or the
5 contractor? And so when they look at that -- and
6 so then I say, if you have -- you know, to submit a
7 complaint about a utility, here is the on-line
8 utility complaint form, which takes them to the
9 CAO.

10 And just by these minor tweaks, I was able to
11 reduce, you know, by half, the complaints. And to
12 me, I am, you know, really proud of that, because,
13 you know, for the citizens who are filing those
14 complaints, they don't -- they don't need to have
15 to go through multiple layers to get to where they
16 need to be. You know, I definitely don't want to
17 be a cog in that wheel. We want to be able to get
18 directly to where they need to go.

19 So, yeah, there was some confusion, but I am
20 working on really, you know, tweaking everything to
21 reduce that. Yeah.

22 All right. So I have talked about my internal
23 audit process. Similarly, we have an internal
24 investigations process. It's intake, case
25 planning, evidence gathering, interviews,

1 reporting.

2 So intake, we just receive the complaint. We
3 make a determination of what category it is. We
4 make a whistleblower determination, and then we
5 assign it.

6 Case planning is just developing a plan. So
7 we develop a written plan. We gather evidence, and
8 the evidence has got to be relevant, consistent
9 with facts and sufficient. And then we interview
10 the complainant, witnesses, the subject. And all
11 of these are taken under oath.

12 And so for non-whistleblower complaints, or
13 investigations, we give the report -- the
14 investigative report to the Chairman, the Executive
15 Director, and other parties deemed necessary. So,
16 you know, we will issue a investigative report.

17 And now I have mentioned whistleblower quite a
18 few times. And I know that in the statute there
19 are several different references to whistleblower,
20 and in different contexts. But whistleblower as it
21 applies to the Office of Inspector General is
22 established under Chapter 112, Florida Statutes.

23 And so you are saying, okay, well, what
24 constitutes a whistleblower? Well, as far as the
25 Inspector General's Office goes, a whistleblower,

1 it's here on the left, is defined as anyone who
2 discloses violation of law that presents a clear
3 and present danger to the public's health, safety
4 or welfare -- so if we get a safety concern -- or
5 any act of gross mismanagement, gross waste of
6 funds or gross neglect of duty.

7 And I know, you know, you think, okay, well,
8 the term gross is subjective. But it's got to be
9 something determined to be significant. It can't
10 just be, okay, well, this is just maybe a one-time,
11 a one-off. It's got to be systemic or something
12 significant.

13 So we will receive and coordinate all
14 activities with the Whistleblower's Act, and then
15 those people who meet that Whistleblower Act
16 determination, they are granted protection from --
17 their identity is protected from public disclosure
18 during and after the investigation, but they have
19 to meet that definition.

20 So interviews. So if you are ever interviewed
21 as part of an investigation, we will conduct a
22 minimum of three interviews. The complainant, the
23 witnesses and the subjects are all interviewed
24 under oath, and they are audio-recorded for
25 everybody's protection, so -- and we do them in

1 those -- that order. The complainant is
2 interviewed first, witnesses and then the subject.

3 And then we ask, you know, not to bias anyone,
4 if there is -- if ever there is an investigation
5 that you are part of, you know, try not to discuss
6 it with anyone because we don't want people to be
7 biased.

8 Let me see. I have to do it twice. There we
9 go.

10 So our reports. So the reports include the
11 disposition of allegations investigated. So it's
12 got to be an allegation, and it's either sustained
13 -- or, excuse me, substantiated, unsubstantiated or
14 unfounded based on the preponderance of the
15 evidence. And so we don't recommend any
16 disciplinary action, that is at the sole discretion
17 of management.

18 And then we request management to make a
19 written response regarding the actions taken in
20 response to the process or operational findings in
21 the report. Keep going.

22 All right. So key consideration. Just two
23 things for investigations. Anonymous complaints
24 are filed, but, you know, we can ask -- we have to
25 ask, you know, please provide enough detail. You

1 know, you can keep your identity, you know,
2 anonymous, but we need enough information and
3 evidence, where available, in order to -- in order
4 for a complaint to be considered for an
5 investigative case.

6 And then also just key to note that all our
7 investigations are administrative in nature. We
8 don't do any criminal investigations. Those are
9 all referred to FDLE or relevant law agency. So we
10 went through those.

11 And then some of the things that we have been
12 doing. How does all of this translate to some of
13 the things we have been doing? So in the last year
14 or so, we have done a couple of cybersecurity
15 audits. We did an operational audit of APA. We
16 have worked with the Auditor General when they were
17 doing an operational audit of the agency, worked
18 very closely with AIT to get the Auditor General
19 everything they could -- they needed to make sure
20 they had sufficient information to come to their
21 conclusions.

22 We look -- we are looking right now as an
23 advisory review at the Commission's intranet. So I
24 hope everybody has gotten our survey on the
25 intranet. Please, I ask you all to take some time

1 to answer that because I really value your input on
2 that. That's a real fun project. And then we
3 looked at the EOC ESF-12 response, activities
4 recently.

5 Like I said earlier. We have addressed, you
6 know, about 70 complaints and, you know, made the
7 web updates I talked about earlier. So that was my
8 bragging point from earlier, so I will let it go,
9 but -- and then, you know, here is my thing at the
10 end. We went through a very successful external
11 quality assurance review with the Auditor General,
12 and I got into findings there, but, you know, they
13 will be coming around again here in another
14 year-and-a-half, so keep on track.

15 But with that, I think that is my
16 presentation. I think I have gone through it
17 pretty quick, but, yeah.

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah. Well, I appreciate
19 that, especially, like, the recent activities,
20 because you are doing investigating, normally I was
21 looking at people that did a lot of stuff that we
22 do operationally that you are looking at, and
23 sometimes the perspective the outside lens in
24 anything you do is extremely helpful. You know, we
25 have -- I have been so, you know, far in the middle

1 of this thing and didn't see these things on the
2 outside or on the fringe, and then you look at it
3 from a different lens and bring a whole different
4 insight, which is extremely helpful for us to -- at
5 least for me to make efficient decisions, so thank
6 you.

7 Curiosity, was it difficult for you to learn
8 the depth of what we do here at the agency?
9 Because inspector general, you are -- you know, you
10 have got kind of your framework, but then having to
11 learn kind of what we do and how we do it. And I
12 noticed that when you came onboard, you were at a
13 lot of our Agenda meetings. I'm thinking, oh,
14 that's interesting.

15 MS. PEACOCK: Right. Yes. Yeah. Yeah.
16 Yeah. So I was at the Department of Environmental
17 Protection for many, many years. And over time,
18 you really get to learn the agency, just through
19 audits and investigations. And, you know, I was
20 with them for a long time. Well -- so I don't
21 understand what the Commission does, and the only
22 way I can learn that is to go to as many agenda
23 events, conferences, you know, hearings, just to
24 learn that. It helps to do some of these advisory
25 projects. So I learn more. But with every audit,

1 I am learning, you know, a lot more. So it's --
2 really, it's learning by, you know, just
3 experience.

4 But again, with my updates to the standards,
5 which, you know, they -- I guess the Institute of
6 Internal Auditors, they know we are kind of, like,
7 we like to work in our little silo. So they are
8 forcing us to get out, and they should. We can't
9 be effective at our job unless we understand, you
10 know, the mission and the goals of the agency.

11 So, yeah, I have the -- I have the
12 Commission's goals right printed out in my office,
13 and say, okay, this is what they -- this is what
14 they strive to do, and how can I -- and I am always
15 thinking, even when them developing my audit plan,
16 how can I come along and inside and promote that.
17 So, yeah, it's a learning experience, even now,
18 it's -- I am learning something every day.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: What would you say is the
20 influence of why maybe some of those changes are
21 happening from -- you said international side, is
22 that truly international, or is it --

23 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah. Yeah. The international
24 -- the Institute of Internal Auditors is the global
25 audit standard. So they were -- before they were

1 the Global Internal Audit Standards, they were the
2 -- it was called the International Professional
3 Practices Framework, so -- and it was always
4 international.

5 So these internal audit standards, they apply
6 to governments, private entities, American, you
7 know, anybody. So they are really far-reaching,
8 but I think as a body, you know, there was a lot of
9 -- there was a lot of gaps and a lot of missing
10 specific direction, and the IIA, you know, over the
11 last year or two has really worked hard to try to
12 address some of those things. And I think
13 communication was a big one.

14 And I see that even in state government. I
15 have worked enough with other offices of inspector
16 general, and I see some that are a lot more
17 successful than others, you know. And the ones
18 that are the most successful are the ones that
19 learn their agency, that develop those professional
20 relationships, that learn, you know, get out there
21 and communicate more. So, you know, that's what I
22 want to do here, so, yeah.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome.

24 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome.

1 Commissioners, thoughts?

2 Commissioner Clark.

3 COMMISSIONER CLARK: I will just take a second
4 to just say thank you to Valerie. I had an
5 opportunity to work with her a number of years ago
6 in my role at DEP. I always told her, I said, keep
7 me out of jail and out of the headlines. That's
8 your number one responsibility.

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Was she successful?

10 COMMISSIONER CLARK: She was successful at it.
11 I didn't make it in either on -- well, headlines,
12 we will discuss. But it was -- it was a very
13 different agency. We had about 2,000 employees
14 located in 200 different locations just within our
15 parks system, and it made for a different type of
16 investigative resources that were required.

17 But I want -- the one thing I wanted to say
18 that I did appreciate was the attitude and the
19 approach, and the integrity. And it was always,
20 the Inspector General is here to help. It's not a
21 gotcha role. And I appreciate the exact word. We
22 have used that phrase many times.

23 This shouldn't be a surprise. Nothing in an
24 audit should be a surprise. It's -- everything
25 should be on the up and up and above board, but it

1 shouldn't be a gotcha mentality that the inspector
2 general comes from. I greatly appreciate that
3 attitude and the reverence that you give to the job
4 that you are doing. I appreciate that a bunch.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. PEACOCK: Thank you. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Fay.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: I would just be remiss if I
9 didn't take the opportunity to recognize Valerie
10 and her team. They do an awesome job. I mean,
11 when we talk to other agencies, I mean, it's very
12 apparent. She said, you know, kind of going above
13 and beyond, and I thought, you know, this agency, I
14 am like, man, I do this all the time. It's really
15 obnoxious, you know. And then Valerie started
16 doing it, and I was like, this is great, like, it's
17 so nice to have somebody else who is just like --
18 you go to the agenda meetings. I mean, I can't get
19 my wife to watch an agenda meeting, like it's not,
20 like, nobody wants -- like, you go to all those
21 meetings, you are engaged at every level. I think
22 you make the agency operate so much better. I
23 mean, I just think it's so healthy to have you in
24 here, and we are just lucky to have you a part of
25 our team. I mean, you really do stay committed to

1 that mission. And that mission has changed. I
2 mean, I -- yeah, I think, you know, you have a
3 certification on the cyber side most people don't
4 have. That's becoming just a bigger and bigger
5 issue every year, and so I think your ability to of
6 adapt and not stand still, knowing that we will see
7 new problems that we don't predict today as an
8 agency, and I think that's super healthy and it's
9 just really served us well.

10 So I have to give some love to Commissioner
11 Clark, who gave me some leeway to work and bring in
12 folks onboard, and same with Commissioner La Rosa,
13 who was kind enough to kind of let me engage in
14 that at a level that I hadn't previously done from
15 a recruitment and hiring perspective. I always
16 think of the transfer portal with college football,
17 and we went, you know, and got somebody really
18 good. We don't have \$10 million like Michigan
19 does, to buy their quarterback, but I think we
20 still went out and got somebody great.

21 So I appreciate everything that you do, and
22 just could not miss the opportunity to thank you
23 publicly for the work you do.

24 MS. PEACOCK: Thank you. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER CLARK: If it was 10 million, she

1 would audit us.

2 MS. PEACOCK: Right. Let me write that down.

3 No. No. No. You know, just being here with
4 you all is worth more than all of that, so I have
5 just thoroughly enjoyed working with y'all, so, you
6 know, I feel the same way, so thank you. Thank you
7 all.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Well, thank you
9 and I appreciate you being a part of our process
10 and opening up kind of your world to us today.

11 MS. PEACOCK: Yeah. Absolutely.

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Thank you.

13 All right. Let's -- I will let David come on
14 up, and Mr. Franks will give us a legislative
15 update. Of course, he will tell us more, but the
16 legislative session is coming upon us really soon,
17 committee week is underway, so a lot of activity
18 going on downtown.

19 MR. FRANKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
20 morning, Commissioners. I just have a few updates.

21 This week is a committee week. Tomorrow
22 morning, staff will be presenting an overview of
23 the Commission to the House Economic Infrastructure
24 Subcommittee, which has a new chair, Representative
25 Chip LaMarca.

1 Since my last update, there are a few bills I
2 have been tracking. These bills include Senate
3 Bill 354. This is titled, Public Service
4 Commission, by Senator Don Gaetz. This bill
5 increases the number of Commissioners from five to
6 seven. Requires one member to be a certified
7 public accountant and one member to be a chartered
8 financial analyst. It directs the Commission to
9 establish a schedule for Public Utilities to submit
10 rate change requests. Instructs the Commission to
11 keep utility returns on equity close to the
12 risk-free rate, with deviations requiring
13 justification, and revises annual report
14 requirements.

15 The committees of reference for this bill
16 include Regulated Industries, Senate Appropriations
17 Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General
18 Government, and Fiscal Policy.

19 Another bill I am monitoring is Senate Bill
20 330, titled Residential Utility Disconnections by
21 Senator Lori Berman. This bill creates a new
22 section under Chapter 366 to regulate residential
23 utility disconnections. It prohibits electric
24 public and water utilities from disconnecting
25 service under certain weather conditions and on

1 specific days. The bill requires advanced notice
2 before disconnections, and sets a minimum period
3 before service can be disconnected for nonpayment.
4 It also requires utilities to share disconnection
5 policies with customers and establishes -- excuse
6 me -- establishes penalties for violations.

7 The committees of reference for this bill
8 included Regulated Industries, Appropriations
9 Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General
10 Government and Fiscal Policy.

11 And then Senate Bill 2344, titled
12 Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991, by
13 Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez. As I mentioned in my
14 previous update, staff has worked closely with FTRI
15 on legislation which aligns with the Commission's
16 recommendations found at 2024 Relay Report.

17 Those recommendations include authorizing FTRI
18 to acquire equipment that uses technologies beyond
19 basic landline telecommunications services and
20 broadening the eligibility of membership on the
21 TASA Advisory Committee.

22 The committee of reference for this bill
23 includes Regulated Industries, Appropriations on
24 Agriculture Environment and General Government and
25 Fiscal Policy.

1 Staff is working on bill analyses for these
2 three bills, which I will provide to your offices
3 as soon as they are complete.

4 That concludes my update for today. I am
5 happy to answer any questions.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioners, any thoughts
8 or questions?

9 All right. Not seeing any, but -- obviously,
10 I keep close contact with David, and you are doing
11 a phenomenal job of keeping us posted. I
12 appreciate that, and I appreciate the emails you
13 send out as things happen and the weekly recap as
14 they go. And of course, from here, we will just
15 see things just kind of go to lightning speed here
16 relatively soon, so thank you for everything you do
17 and keeping us, you know, in tune to what's going
18 on.

19 MR. FRANKS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Thank you.

21 Let's to go the General Counsel.

22 MR. HETRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
23 morning, Commissioners.

24 Mr. Chairman, you and I recently discussed GCL
25 making some presentations in the future, and so we

1 will be working with your office and Anna to
2 fine-tune those and come to you with some
3 presentations in Internal Affairs in the future,
4 but at this time, I have no report. And in
5 interest of lunch hour, I pass it on to my good
6 friend.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.
8 Executive Director.

9 MR. BAEZ: Good morning, Commissioner. I am
10 left standing in between the Commission and lunch.

11 Nothing official to roll out today. We have
12 got a couple of things that we are working on for
13 future IAs that I think you will be interested in
14 discussing.

15 I wanted to hop on the Valerie bandwagon here
16 briefly and let you know that she's been a
17 remarkable resource for us in executive management.
18 I have come to -- you know, for someone -- for
19 someone that is basically just getting into the
20 swing of what the agency does, and everything else,
21 she's incorporated herself, certainly in my mind,
22 to the work that we do super well, and we have
23 definitely come -- I have certainly come to rely on
24 her, and her therapy couch, you know. She brings
25 us fresh perspective that she's in the Commission

1 but not of, and I think that that, you know, I
2 think you alluded to it, you know, fresh eyes is
3 always a welcomed perspective. It's what you are
4 looking for really.

5 Beyond that, questions, if y'all have any
6 questions, or if there is anything that you want to
7 know about, I am happy to answer.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, no questions on --
9 from my end. I know we will be back together here
10 relatively soon.

11 MR. BAEZ: Yeah, on the 18th, where I will
12 just tease the nuclear feasibility report, you will
13 have that first draft. It's due at the end of
14 March. So we are teeing it up early so y'all can,
15 you know, have a good discussion on it and ask
16 questions, and we can go back and modify as
17 necessary. I am not suggesting it necessarily. I
18 think -- I have looked at drafts, and it looks
19 really thorough and really good, so I hope you will
20 agree.

21 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Well, I know I am
22 definitely looking forward to reviewing that, and
23 of course --

24 MR. BAEZ: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- it's been, you know, in

1 the works, so --

2 MR. BAEZ: It's a good topic.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Thank you for
4 that.

5 Commissioners, any other further business
6 before us?

7 All right. The only obvious thing is that,
8 Commissioner Clark, you have a great staff because
9 I was really expecting a certain song to be
10 proposed today being that it's your birthday, and
11 that song wasn't proposed. We went with the song
12 we had already chosen, so happy birthday, sir. And
13 I did not play happy birthday for you. I figured I
14 would just --

15 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- kind of keep it on the
17 low light, and beyond that, if there is no further
18 business before us, then let's go ahead and call
19 this meeting adjourned.

20 Thank you.

21 (Proceedings concluded.)

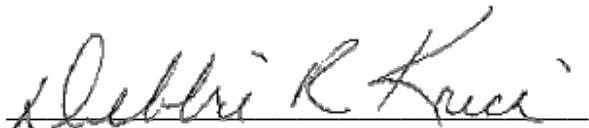
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45 I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby
6 certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the
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9 stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the
10 same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;
11 and that this transcript constitutes a true
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15 am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'
16 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I
17 financially interested in the action.18 DATED this 24th day of February, 2025.
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