INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2026 Interim

June 23, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call
The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on State Government was held on June 23, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Michael J. Nemes, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:
Members: Representative David Hale, Co-Chair; Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, and Keturah J. Herron; and Representatives Shane Baker, Beverly Chester-Burton, Anne Gay Donworth, Al Gentry, Peyton Griffee, Erika Hancock, Thomas Huff, Mary Beth Imes, Matthew Koch, Matthew Lehman, Scott Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Rebecca Raymer, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Colonel Phillip Burnett, Jr., Commissioner, Kentucky State Police (KSP); Scott Baker, Executive Director, Office of Facility Development and Efficiency, Division of Engineering and Contract Administration (DECA), Finance and Administration Cabinet; and Stacy Blank, Executive Director, Office of Procurement Services (OPS), Finance and Administration Cabinet.

LRC Staff: Daniel Carter, Jesse Farler, Christina Gordley, and Peggy Sciantarelli.

Police Recruitment and Retention
Colonel Phillip Burnett, Jr., Commissioner, KSP, discussed KSP recruitment, training and retention, salaries and benefits, and challenges to hiring and retaining troopers and other law state law enforcement officers.

Commissioner Burnett discussed how KSP duties and requirements differ from local police and sheriff's departments; factors, limitations, and obstacles that make recruiting to KSP more challenging; and outside employment initiatives and other benefits offered to troopers. KSP provides all clothing and equipment to troopers and the use of take-home vehicles.

Like many state agencies, KSP has experienced difficulties recruiting. Most agencies are experiencing a personnel deficit of about 10%. Changes in pension benefits have, according to Colonel Burnett, negatively impacted hiring. Currently, 165 troopers and officers have at least 18 years of service and are eligible to retire. However, expanded recruitment initiatives have been successful and the recruitment staff is the largest ever.

Increased financial support, including increases in salary and benefits, have also helped with recruitment and retention. The Governor and General Assembly approved a $15,000 base pay raise for KSP troopers, effective in fiscal year 2023. With the passage of 2026 RS HB 500, officers can receive up to $4,600 in available overtime annually, not including federal overtime grants. Mileage travel reimbursement is now provided for new cadets. Sworn officers and new recruits receive a starting salary of $71,000.

Efforts have also been made to increase the number of cadet graduations. The majority of cadets who resign do so because law enforcement is not what they expected, they are not physically fit or mentally prepared, or they are homesick. Starting with the next cadet class, the length of the training will be reduced from 24 to 22 weeks, with more activities conducted virtually to allow cadets more time at home.

In response to Representative Koch, Commissioner Burnett stated KSP has expanded its mentorship program and is partnering with community colleges to attract students into law enforcement. Students who complete an apprenticeship are guaranteed a spot in the academy. KSP also conducts a weeklong youth academy at Trooper Island.

Representative Donworth complimented KSP's legislative detail and applauded the mentorship program and focus on attracting youth into law enforcement. She also expressed concern about shortening academy training to 22 weeks.

In response to Senator Chambers Armstrong, Commissioner Burnett said KSP is focusing on increasing the number of female applicants. A women's summit has been incorporated into the process.

In response to Representative Gentry, Commissioner Burnett discussed program elements relating to retention of officers and expansion of health and wellness initiatives.

Representative Lewis, who formerly served as a KSP trooper, said he positively views the 2-week shortening of cadet training and past legislative changes—especially the $15,000 pay raise. He suggested a change in pension benefits should be considered for review.

In response to Co-Chair Hale, Commissioner Burnett said certified officers from other agencies and retirees returning to KSP are subject to the same screening process and physical training as new cadets.

In response to Representative Lehman, Commissioner Burnett discussed how the change in pension benefits has negatively impacted retention.

State Procurement Process

Scott Baker, Executive Director, Office of Facility Development and Efficiency, DECA, Finance and Administration Cabinet, and Stacy Blank, Executive Director, OPS, Finance and Administration Cabinet, provided an overview of the state procurement process.

OPS is the central procurement agency for the executive branch, responsible for purchasing all commodities and nonprofessional services for state agencies in excess of small purchase authority. It provides administrative oversight of all personal service contracts (PSCs) and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and ensures compliance with the Kentucky Model Procurement Code and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing Code of Ethics. In FY 2025, OPS managed 22,751 contracts totaling more than $46 billion.

Solicitations and contracts for professional services are reviewed for compliance with statute, regulation and policy, and requirements of LRC's Government Contract Review Committee.

The Office of Facility Development and Efficiency is the centralized authority for capital project delivery and facility efficiency and initiatives. It includes DECA and the Division of Facility Efficiency (DFE). DECA is the Commonwealth’s centralized authority for the planning, procurement, design, construction, spacing, and administration of state capital projects. DECA is actively managing more than 1,300 capital projects in more than 85 counties on behalf of 31 agencies. In FY 2025, DECA managed construction and construction-related contracts totaling more than $557 million, professional service contracts totally more than $40 million, and delivery orders for small architectural and engineering services totaling over $9 million.

Ms. Blank and Mr. Baker reviewed common challenges and recommended solutions for contractors during the procurement and contracting process, and guidance for small businesses interested in pursuing DECA contracts.

Mr. Baker stated that competitive contracts are operating in an increasingly challenging environment—labor shortages, material availability, supply chain disruption, and inflationary pressures. DECA is committed to continuous improvement through involvement with the National Association of State Facility Administrators and collaboration with peers across the country.

In response to Chair Nemes, Mr. Baker and Ms. Blank discussed procedures for handling contracts that include nonbudgeted items or projects.

Co-Chair Hale asked about a February 2026, report released by the state auditor indicating that millions of dollars had not been properly awarded through the competitive bidding process. Ms. Blank stated that any contract that went through her office would have been vetted, and she was not aware that the bidding process was not followed.

Adjournment

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned.