

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the 2026 Interim

July 8, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Local Government was held on July 8, 2026, at 3:00 PM ET/2:00 PM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Patrick Flannery, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Representative Patrick Flannery, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Greg Elkins, Scott Madon, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Steve Rawlings, and Lindsey Tichenor; and Representatives George Brown Jr., Steven Doan, Chris Freeland, Tony Hampton, Mary Beth Imes, Chris Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Michael Meredith, Amy Neighbors, Rebecca Raymer, Rachel Roarx, Sarah Stalker, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Shellie Hampton, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo); Gracie Kelly, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky League of Cities (KLC); Mac Johns, Senior Counsel, English, Lucas, Priest and Owsley, LLP; Gary Ginn, Fayette County Coroner, Kentucky Coroner's Association (KCA); Jimmy Cornelison, Madison County Coroner, KCA; Farris Marcum, Lincoln County Coroner, KCA; Patrick Elmore, Hardin County Coroner, KCA; Jeff Ivers, Shelby County Coroner, KCA; Todd Ruckel, Executive Director, Kentucky County Judge/Executive Association (KCJEA) ; Adam O’Nan, Union County Judge/Executive; John Simms, Jr., Fleming County Judge/Executive; Frank Minnifield, Kentucky Pro Football Hall of Fame; and Jason Dunn, Kentucky Pro Football Hall of Fame .

LRC Staff: Christopher Jacovitch and Faithe Wheatley.

Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2026 Meeting

A motion was made by Representative Freeland and seconded by Representative Witten to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Discussion of Large Project Siting in Local Governments Following Clover Creek Solar v. Breckinridge County

Shellie Hampton, Director of Government Affairs, KACo; Gracie Kelly, Director of Government Affairs, KLC; and Mac Johns, Senior Counsel, English, Lucas, Priest and Owsley, LLP, provided a general overview of the recent decision of the Kentucky Court of Appeals in Clover Creek Solar Project, LLC v. Breckinridge County Fiscal Court and discussed the implications of the case on local government's handling of large project siting.

Chair Flannery stated he asked for discussion of the case to be put on the agenda due to its implication on land use and planning for local governments that have not established planning and zoning under KRS Chapter 100. Chair Flannery stated he expects some legislation related to siting for large projects, such as data centers, may be considered during the next legislative session.

Discussion of Coroners' Issues

Gary Ginn, Fayette County Coroner, KCA; Jimmy Cornelison, Madison County Coroner, KCA; Farris Marcum, Lincoln County Coroner, KCA; and Patrick Elmore, Hardin County Coroner, KCA, discussed the assistance that coroners provide to federal, state, and local governments, the hazards and difficulties associated with the office, and their advocacy for legislation similar to 2026 RS HB 138 that would mandate a salary scale for coroners.

In response to Co-Chair Nemes, Mr. Ginn stated the salaries and benefits for the offices of county judge/executives, sheriffs, county clerks, and jailers are mandated by the state and coroners are requesting similar salary and benefit mandates for the office of coroner.

In response to Chair Flannery, Mr. Ginn stated coroners have not met with county judge/executives and magistrates regarding compensation issues, but plan to soon.

In response to Senator Elkins, Mr. Ginn confirmed that fiscal courts do have the ability to set the coroners' salaries at any amount they choose and other county offices, such as magistrates and constables, do not serve the entire county population.

In response to Representative Stalker, Mr. Ginn discussed the education, training, and certificates required for the position of coroner.

Todd Ruckel, Executive Director, KCJEA; Adam O'Nan, Union County Judge/Executive; and John Simms, Jr., Fleming County Judge/Executive, provided a summary of survey results

regarding the position of coroner and discussed their position that counties should retain the flexibility to set a coroner's salary.

In response to Co-Chair Nemes, Judge/Executive Simms stated the General Assembly did not provide a subsidy for the statutorily mandated salaries of select local officials, and returning local control regarding these mandated salaries would benefit some counties and not others.

Chair Flannery announced the next meeting of the committee will be August 18, 2026, at 9:00 AM in Room 149 of the Annex.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.