Approved Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2026

A meeting of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission (MSGC) was held on March 12, 2026, in the Itasca Room at the Department of Corrections, 1450 Energy Park Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55108; and by telephone and/or electronically.

Commission members present in person were Kelly Lyn Mitchell, Chair and Designee of the Commissioner of Corrections; Keala Ede, Court of Appeals Judge; Richard Frase, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota Law School; Kyra Ladd, Wadena County Attorney; Cathryn Middlebrook, Chief Appellate Public Defender; Gordon L. Moore, III, Minnesota Supreme Court Justice; Chief Brian Mueller, Stillwater Police Department; and Latonya Reeves, Hennepin County Career Probation Officer. Also present in person were MSGC Executive Director Nate Reitz; MSGC staff members Leah Bower, Matthew Hlina, Linda McBrayer, Jill Payne, and Devonte Roache.

Commission members present by telephone and/or electronically were Amirthini Keefe, Public Member and Executive Director, Domestic Abuse Project; Marlin Meszaros, Director of Residential Services, FreedomWorks; Tim Morin, Public Member; and Surya Saxena, Public Member, the notice required by Minn. Stat. § 13D.015 having been posted on the MSGC website on February 13, 2026. Also present by telephone and/or electronically was staff member Kathleen Madland; and members of the public Professor Christopher Uggen, University of Minnesota; Dr. Julia Laskorunsky, University of Minnesota; Professor Kevin Reitz, University of Minnesota; and Elizabeth Ruhland.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Director Reitz called the roll. Present were Chair Mitchell and members Ede, Frase, Keefe, Ladd, Meszaros, Middlebrook, Moore, Morin, Mueller, Reeves, and Saxena. Twelve members were present; one member was absent. A quorum was present.

2. Adoption of Draft Meeting Agenda (Action)

This was on the agenda as an action item.

The agenda item was taken out of order. This item was taken after agenda item 3.

Motion by Commissioner Ede and second by Commissioner Ladd to approve the draft meeting agenda for March 12, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously on a 12–0 roll-call vote.

Voting "Yes" was Chair Mitchell and members Ede, Frase, Keefe, Ladd, Meszaros, Middlebrook, Moore, Morin, Mueller, Reeves and Saxena

3. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2026 (Action)

This was on the agenda as an action item.

The agenda item was taken out of order. This item was taken before agenda item 2.

Motion by Commissioner Reeves and second Commissioner Middlebrook to approve the draft meeting minutes from February 12, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously on a 12–0 roll-call vote.

Voting "Yes" was Chair Mitchell and members Ede, Frase, Keefe, Ladd, Meszaros, Middlebrook, Moore, Morin, Mueller, Reeves and Saxena.

4. Vice-Chair Election (Action)

This was on the agenda as an action item.

Chair Mitchell explained that the Commission may elect officers, and has traditionally elected a Vice-Chair, and that the duty of the Vice-Chair is to serve in the Chair's place when the Chair is absent or temporarily vacates the chair.

Chair Mitchell **called for nominations**.

Hearing none, Chair Mitchell **nominated** Commissioner Middlebrook because, among other things, Commissioner Middlebrook was the longest serving member on the Commission.

Chair Mitchell **called for any additional nominations**. There were none.

Motion by Commissioner Moore and second by Commissioner Reeves to declare by acclamation that **nominations were closed**. There were no objections. Nominations were closed.

Commissioner Middlebrook being the sole nominee, Chair Mitchell **declared** by acclamation Commissioner Middlebrook to be elected to the office of Vice-Chair by unanimous consent. There were no objections.

5. Comprehensive Review Ranking Project Revisited (Discussion)

This was on the agenda as a discussion item.

Chair Mitchell called on Director Reitz to present.

A. Severity-Level Ranking Principles

Director Reitz presented “Ranking Project: Severity-Level Ranking Principles and process,” which described the severity-level ranking criteria, ranking options and unranked offenses.

The Commission discussed ranking principles and asked questions.

B. Introduction to Offense Group 6 – Other Offenses Resulting in Death

Director Reitz presented “Offenses for Reranking Consideration, Offense Group 6 – Other Offenses Resulting in Death,” and gave a deadline for completing the packet by noon on Monday, March 23, 2026.

The Commission discussed the packet and asked questions. Questions were about unranked offenses, the number of prison beds resulting from offense group 6, and whether and how to consider aiding and abetting under Minn. Stat. § 609.05 in light of the 2023 amendments to that statute, and about deterrence and public safety. The Commission discussed focusing on the principal defendant.

6. Committee Updates (Discussion)

This was on the agenda as a discussion item.

a) *Hernandez* Committee update: Chair Mitchell said that the committee met earlier in the day and focused on understanding the current *Hernandez* rules and rationale and how to identify data that the committee would be interested in discussing. Chair Mitchell said that no decisions were made.
b) Restructuring Committee update: Director Reitz said that the committee had not yet met and will do some of its work online. Director Reitz will be sending out a draft restructuring plan for the committee to read and consider.

7. Executive Director’s Report/Legislative Update (Discussion)

This was on the agenda as a discussion item.

Chair Mitchell called on Director Reitz, who reminded the public that they may share comments during the Public Input portion of the agenda.

Director Reitz provided the following two updates:

- The Commission’s staff are currently responding to 48 fiscal notes, approaching the highest total in an even-numbered legislative year in a decade. The majority originated from the House. It is still too early to determine whether any will result in significant criminal-law changes.
- We are four months away from the Commission’s proposed changes taking effect on August 1, 2026. None of the proposals have been blocked; but none of the Commission’s legislative recommendations have received action yet. MSGC staff are working with DOC-IT staff on the necessary updates to the Electronic Worksheet System (EWS), which will be required before August 1, 2026, when the Commission’s proposals go into effect.

8. Public Input

Chair Mitchell asked if there were members of the public who wished to speak.

Director Reitz mentioned there is a written public comment from Katie McCormick, who spoke at the last Commission meeting remotely.

There were no in-person public members present. There were no members online who wished to speak.

9. Adjournment

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m., without objection.