



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Town Justice in St. Lawrence County Resigns While Under Investigation for Financial Reporting Failures

Jessica A. Matthews¹, a Justice of the Clare Town Court, St. Lawrence County, resigned while under investigation by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct for failing to file reports or remit funds to the State Comptroller, as required by law.

The Commission apprised Judge Matthews in June 2021 that it was investigating, but she failed to respond to three Commission inquiries into the matter. In April 2022, the judge testified concerning the complaint and her failure to respond to the Commission's inquiries.

Judge Matthews resigned from judicial office effective June 1, 2022, and agreed never to seek or accept judicial office at any time in the future. The Commission accepted a stipulation to that effect signed by the judge, her attorney and the Commission's Administrator.²

¹ The judge is also known as Jessica Barr.

² The Stipulation was signed on July 13, 2022. The Commission issued an order accepting it on August 11, 2022.

Judge Matthews waived the statutory provision of confidentiality applicable to Commission proceedings, to the limited extent that the stipulation and Commission's order accepting it would be public.

Judge Matthews, who is not an attorney, had been a Justice of the Clare Town Court since 2017. Her current term would have expired on December 31, 2023.

The stipulation and the Commission's order can be found on the Commission's website: www.cjc.ny.gov.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Public confidence in the courts is shaken whenever a judge fails to account for court funds without a valid excuse. Failing to cooperate with the Commission only compounds the misconduct.”

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 118 such permanent resignation stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has also issued 280 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 342 determinations of censure and 177 determinations of removal.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 101 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 85 cases (76 of which were removals, six were censures and three were admonitions). Of the remaining 16 cases, two sanctions were increased from censure to removal, and 13 were reduced: nine removal determinations were modified to censure, one removal was modified to admonition, two censures were modified to admonition, and one censure was rejected and the charges dismissed. The Court remitted one matter to the Commission for further proceedings.

Counsel

Judge Matthews represented herself.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Cathleen Cenci, Staff Attorney Shruti Joshi, and Senior Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Background Information on Judge Matthews

First Took Office: 2017
 Current Term Expires: December 31, 2023

Members of the Commission

The Commission members serve four-year terms. A list of members is appended.

The Public File

The stipulation and order are attached.

MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Member	Appointing Authority	Term End
Joseph W. Belluck, Esq., Chair	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2024
Taa Grays, Esq., Vice Chair	Senate President Pro Tem Andrea Stewart-Cousins	March 31, 2023
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2024
Jodie Comgold	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2023
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2025
Hon. Angela M. Mazzairelli	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	December 31, 2022 ³
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2026
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026
Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq.	Former Senate Minority Leader John J. Flanagan	March 31, 2024
Graham B. Seiter, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2025
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2025

³ Judge Mazzairelli's term on the Commission will end upon her retirement from judicial office on December 31, 2022.