

State of South Carolina
State Ethics Commission

BRIAN M. BARNWELL, CHAIR
VICTOR K. LI, VICE CHAIR
DONALD GIST
DON JACKSON



BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
CHILDS CANTEY THRASHER
ASHLEIGH R. WILSON

201 EXECUTIVE CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN L. WALKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES
COMMISSION MEETING
OPEN SESSION

January 18, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian M. Barnwell at 9:17 a.m. at the Public Service Commission's Hearing Room located at 101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100, Columbia, SC. Commission members present were Brandolyn T. Pinkston, Donald H. Jackson, James F. "Rick" Reames, III, and Vice Chair Victor K. Li. Commissioner Donald Gist arrived at 10:13 a.m., and Commissioner Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived at 9:29 a.m. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

The news media was duly and timely notified.

Staff present: Steven W. Hamm, Ami R. Franklin, James T. Bagnall, Kristin S. Nabors, Karen A. Wiggins, Ryanne G. Caldwell, Frank Schumpert, and Kevin Hinson.

Others present: Jo Wheat.

Interim Director Steven W. Hamm welcomed everyone and thanked the Public Service Commission for the use of their Hearing Room, and shared his wishes that he hopes to have a version of the layout built in the State Ethics Commission's new Hearing Room.

Mr. Hamm then noted that each Commissioner had in front of them a black book which replaces the State Ethics Commission's old Red Book entitled *The Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991 as Amended and 1997 Regulations* (last published July, 2009). The Commissioners are to review it and get back with staff any comments and changes for the publication of a new Red Book later this year. Mr. Hamm also praised staff for their hard work in preparing and printing the black books.

Mr. Hamm then reviewed the Flow Chart which shows the operating procedures for complaints when they are received by the Commission's staff.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Hamm shared for information only a matter that was brought to his attention concerning a wealthy individual making contributions to a candidate from his multiple LLCs. Mr. Hamm stated that the Commission would be receiving a request for an advisory opinion from a State senator in the coming months.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Mr. Hamm presented for information only an update on the Commission's current budget situation. Discussion ensued concerning approved additional personnel, costs involved for the recent move to the new offices, and a recent meeting with the Governor's office on the proposed budget.

Mr. Hamm recognized Investigator Ryanne G. Caldwell on her score at a recent law enforcement training event.

MINUTES

Chairman Barnwell called for approval of the Minutes. Commissioner Barnwell noted a correction under New Business should read that the matter was to be tabled until the next meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to accept the Minutes as Amended. Chairman Barnwell asked for any discussion or opposition. There being none, the motion carried with no opposition to approve the Open Session Minutes as Amended and the Executive Session Minutes from the November 16, 2017 Commission meeting. The motion was carried unanimously with a 6 - 0 vote. Commissioner Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived after the vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

Commissioner Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived at 9:29 a.m., and gave her apologies, noting a conflict.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Barnwell asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing probable cause matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Thrasher, seconded by Vice Chair Vi, to go into Executive Session at 9:34 a.m. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried with a 6 - 0 vote. Commissioners Donald Gist and Ashleigh R. Wilson were absent from the meeting.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon return from Executive Session at 11:22 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Thrasher, seconded by Vice Chair Li, to adopt and ratify actions taken in Executive Session, noting for the record that two matters will be revisited. Discussion ensued concerning actions taken in Executive Session and actions being adopted and ratified for Open Session. Chairman Barnwell asked for further discussion or opposition. There being none, the motion carried unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

Chairman Barnwell asked to take a break. All agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Barnwell asked for a motion to go back into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Thrasher, seconded by Vice Chair Vi, to go into Executive Session at 11:37 a.m. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon return from Executive Session at 4:48 p.m., Chairman Barnwell noted for the record that no actions were taken in Executive Session while considering personnel matters. Chairman Barnwell stated for the record that the Commission wanted to thank the Search Subcommittee for the countless hours and efforts they put into the personnel matter.

Commissioner Thrasher stated for the record how thankful the Commission was for Mrs. Franklin's participation in the process, helping with drafting and posting of the job description, accepting and organizing all the applications, the scheduling, her participation in the first round of the interview process, and her valuable feedback to the subcommittee, which was all valuable in their decision making.

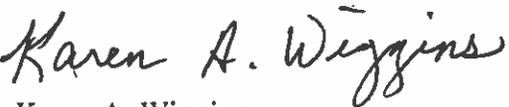
Chairman Barnwell then stated for the record that on behalf of the South Carolina State Ethics Commission, he wanted to thank Steve Hamm for his 10-plus months of service as the Interim Executive Director, stepping up in the time of need, and kept the Commission steady during its period of grave and complex transition. His service and dedication to the Commission and State of South Carolina is duly noted and greatly appreciated by this Commission.

Chairman Barnwell asked for a motion. A motion was made by Commissioner Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Gist, to offer the position of Executive Director of the South Carolina State Ethics Commission to Meghan L. Walker. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Barnwell asked for further discussion. There being none, a motion was made by Commissioner Gist, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to adjourn at 4:50 p.m. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,


Karen A. Wiggins