

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

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



BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
RICK REAMES III
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

AMENDED (January 18, 2018)

November 16, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian M. Barnwell at 9:44 a.m. 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 9:49 a.m., and Commissioner Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived at 10:16 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, Rynne G. Caldwell, Frank Schumpert, Kevin Hinson, Sandra M. Willis, and Susan Bickley.

Others present: Terri W. Connor.

MINUTES

Chairman Barnwell called for approval of the Minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Pinkston, seconded by Vice Chair Li to accept the Minutes. Chairman Barnwell asked for any discussion or opposition. There being none, the motion carried with no opposition to approve the Open Session Minutes and the Executive Session Minutes from the September 21, 2017 and October 10, 2017 Commission meetings. The motion was carried unanimously with a 5 - 0 vote. Commissioners Donald Gist and Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived after the vote. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Mr. Hamm asked Terri Connor to come forward. Mr. Hamm read a Resolution he had prepared based on statements from the staff concerning Mrs. Connor's positive and lasting impressions on their lives. Chairman Barnwell then presented Mrs. Connor with the plaque and thanked her for her many years of dedicated service. Mrs. Connor then thanked everyone for the plaque, and gave an emotional farewell speech to all present.

Commissioner Donald Gist arrived at 9:49 a.m.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Hamm asked to recognize the return of Investigator Ryanne G. Caldwell. Investigator Caldwell had been out on maternity leave after the birth of twins Cam and Lili.

Mr. Hamm also asked the staff members that were present to give an introduction and a brief description of their job at the State Ethics Commission.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Mr. Hamm presented for information only an update on the agency's scheduled move to a new location, the current budget situation, approval for additional personnel, and noted that the next Commission meeting would be in January, 2018, at the new office located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150. Mr. Hamm also passed out the 2018 Hearing Panel schedule.

Commissioner Childs Cantey Thrasher arrived at 10:16 a.m.

Discussion ensued concerning the planned announcements for the Postal Service, press release, telephone message, and the web site's Home Page of the move to the new location. Staff confirmed that those steps had already been taken.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hamm asked to make the commissioners aware of a request that staff had received. There was no opposition. Mr. Hamm then presented a request for a formal advisory opinion concerning a candidate for statewide office and the contribution limits that were made through various LLCs, as well as to the national level. Discussion ensued concerning the Commission's authority to respond to this request. Chairman Barnwell asked Mr. Hamm to table the issue until the next meeting. There was no opposition.

Mr. Hamm noted that there would be no Probable Cause matters heard at today's meeting. Discussion ensued concerning how the penalty fees, fines, and administrative fees were used, and which monies were used for personnel positions, and which monies were used for the agency

head salary position. Further discussion ensued concerning the breakdown of salaries for positions at the State Ethics Commission.

It was decided that at the January meeting, a current list would be given to the commissioners indicating people who still owed the State Ethics Commission money, and also indicate the current amount they owe. Discussion ensued concerning the penalty cap and the Department of Revenue's garnishments of funds and property as a result of GEAR and the SOD sent by the State Ethics Commission.

Chairman Barnwell thanked the staff for a great job well done this year, and Commissioner Thrasher wanted to give a special thanks to Mrs. Franklin for her hard work dealing with the staff and the commissioners this year. All agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Barnwell asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Commission's Agency Head Search. A motion was made by Commissioner Pinkston, seconded by Commissioner Thrasher, to go into Executive Session. 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 11:27 a.m., there was no motion taken to adopt and ratify actions in Executive Session since it was for informational purposes only and no actions were taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Barnwell asked for further discussion. There being none, a motion was made by Commissioner Jackson, seconded by Vice Chair Li, to adjourn at 11:28 a.m. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Ashleigh R. Wilson was absent from the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,


Karen A. Wiggins