

State of South Carolina State Ethics Commission

CHILDS C. THRASHER, CHAIR
DONALD GIST, VICE CHAIR
BRIAN M. BARNWELL
SAMUEL L. ERWIN



DON JACKSON
VICTOR K. LI
BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
ASHLEIGH R. WILSON

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

MEGHAN L. WALKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES COMMISSION MEETING OPEN SESSION

July 18, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 9:41 a.m. by Chairman Brian M. Barnwell at the State Ethics Commission's Hearing Room located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina. Commission members present were Samuel L. Erwin, Donald Gist, Vice Chair Victor K. Li, Brandolyn T. Pinkston, and Childs Cantey Thrasher. Commissioners Don Jackson and Ashleigh R. Wilson had excused absences for this meeting.

Staff present: Meghan L. Walker, Ami Franklin, Jimmy Bagnall, Ryanne Caldwell, Kevin Hinson, Courtney Laster, Reggie Gaymon, Richard Provencher, Susan Bickley, Deaven Linen, Vanessa Johnson, Lindsey New, and Karen A. Wiggins.

Others present: Vernon D. Beatty and Kerry Barrowclough.

Chairman Barnwell called for the first order of business swearing in Commissioner Thrasher as the new Chairwoman and Commissioner Gist as the new Vice Chairman of the South Carolina State Ethics Commission. After the swearing in proceedings, congratulations were given by the Commissioners and staff for the great leadership, guidance, admiration, and cutting-edge ideas provided by Chairman Barnwell and Vice Chairman Li.

Director Meghan Walker welcomed everyone and noted for the record that the news media was duly and timely notified.

MINUTES

Chair Thrasher called for approval of the Minutes. A motion was made by Vice Chair Gist, seconded by Commissioner Erwin, to accept the Minutes. Chair Thrasher 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 May 16, 2019 Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously with a 6 - 0 vote.

APPEALS

C2018-040 Vernon D. Beatty

Director Walker called this Appeal. Chair Thrasher, Commissioner Barnwell, and Commissioner Li had served on the original panel and were requested to leave the room. Vice Chair Gist served as Acting Chair, with Commissioners Erwin and Pinkston serving on the panel. Respondent gave an opening statement, gave a history of events, and alleged that he did not receive timely notice of the hearing, and asked for the Commission to re-schedule another hearing. General Counsel Laster replied. Lengthy discussion ensued. Vice Chair Gist thanked the Respondent for attending and stated that the Commission would take this matter under advisement. Chair Thrasher, Commissioner Barnwell, and Commissioner Li returned to the meeting.

POINT OF ORDER

C2018-040 Vernon D. Beatty

Later after returning from Executive Session for deliberations in the matter of Vernon D. Beatty, Vice Chair Gist asked for a motion in this matter. A motion was made by Commissioner Erwin, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to grant the Appeal to send the matter back to the Commission for further proceedings. The motion carried with a 3- 0 vote.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

New Business

Director Walker called this matter. Chair Thrasher presented on behalf of the Commission and staff plaques for former Chair Barnwell and former Vice Chair Li, recognizing their service on the South Carolina State Ethics Commission, their bravery through the transition with a new Commission, and all the changes that have taken place the past two years. There was great applause, and fellow Commissioners gave comments of the honor to serve under their leadership.

2018-2019/2019-2020 Budget Report, Compliance Report, and Pending and Paid Orders Report

Director Walker presented the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Budget reports and the Compliance report, noting that an e-mail was sent to the Commissioners concerning all of the accomplishments supplied by the staff this past fiscal year. All agreed. The reports were accepted as presented.

Director Walker recognized three new employees for the Commission: Deaven Linen, Vanessa Johnson, and Lindsey New, and stated that they would be helping to reduce the backload of work in the Disclosure and Non-Compliance Divisions. Director Walker also recognized the birth of Commissioner Barnwell's second son.

Director Walker announced that the Commissioners would be getting their new I-pads after the meeting for receiving their electronic meeting books for the next Commission meeting—not via the Postal Service. The Commissioners are to let staff know which e-mail addresses to use.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:02 a.m. Chair Thrasher asked for further discussion or a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal advice and probable cause matters. A motion was made by Vice Chair Gist, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to go into Executive Session. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon return from Executive Session, a motion was made by Commissioner Pinkston, seconded by Vice Chair Gist, to adopt and ratify actions taken on probable cause matters in Executive Session. Discussion ensued concerning action to be taken on the legal advice matter. Vice Chair Gist requested that General Counsel Laster provide to each commissioner a revised draft of the Motions' policy. Chair Thrasher asked for further discussion or opposition. There being none, the motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

Director Walker reminded the Commissioners to stay after Adjournment for a training class on their newly-issued I-pads.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Thrasher asked for further discussions. There being none, a motion was made by Vice Chair Gist, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to adjourn the meeting. There was unanimous consent.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen A. Wiggins