

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

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



AJ HOLLOWAY
DON JACKSON
BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON

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

MEGHAN L. WALKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

OPEN SESSION

January 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Childs C. Thrasher at the State Ethics Commission's Hearing Room located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina. Present was Commissioner Brian M. Barnwell. Joining via Zoom call were Vice Chairman Donald Gist, and Commissioners AJ Holloway, Donald H. Jackson, and Brandolyn T. Pinkston.

Staff present: Jimmy Bagnall, Ryanne Caldwell, Kevin Hinson, Courtney Laster, Reggie Gaymon, and Deaven Linen were in attendance. Director Meghan Walker, Ami Franklin, Richard Provencher, and Karen A. Wiggins joined via Zoom call.

Others present: S. Jahue Moore, Esquire, Suzanne D. Carver and Sandra K. Backman. Ariel Slade, Kierra Howell and Schuyler Kropf attended via Zoom call.

Chairman Thrasher declared a quorum present. Director Walker noted for the record that the news media was duly notified.

MINUTES

Chairman Thrasher called for approval of the Minutes. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Gist, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to accept the Minutes. Chairman 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 December 3, 2020 Commission meeting. The motion carried with a 6 - 0 vote.

APPEALS

C2015-089 State Ethics Commission vs. Suzanne D. Moore

Commissioner Barnwell and Commissioner Pinkston recused themselves. Chairman Thrasher presented this matter. Respondent's Attorney, S. Jahue Moore, gave an opening statement. General Counsel Laster gave a history of events. Rebuttal statements ensued. Chairman Thrasher thanked everyone for coming and stated the Commission would take this matter under advisement and contact Respondent with their decision.

Commissioner Barnwell, and Commissioner Pinkston returned to the meeting.

C2019-062 State Ethics Commission vs. Sandra K. Backman

Chairman Thrasher, Vice Chairman Gist and Commissioner Barnwell recused themselves. Acting Chairman Pinkston presented this matter. Respondent Backman gave her testimony. General Counsel Laster gave a history of events. Acting Chairman Pinkston thanked Respondent for coming and stated the Commission would take this matter under advisement and contact Respondent with their decision.

Chairman Thrasher, Vice Chairman Gist and Commissioner Barnwell returned to the meeting.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Director Walker presented the Budget, Compliance Report, and Pending and Paid Orders for information and requested any opposition or discussion. There was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Thrasher asked for further discussion or a motion to go into Executive Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnwell, seconded by Commissioner Holloway, to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a legal matter and probable cause matters. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon return from Executive Session at 11:29 a.m., Chairman Thrasher asked for a motion to adopt and ratify actions taken on legal and probable cause matters in Executive Session. Chairman Gist made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to adopt and ratify actions taken with regard to matters in Executive Session. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

ADVISORY OPINION

AO2021-001

General Counsel Laster presented a draft of Advisory Opinion 2021-001 concerning Campaign Contributions and Digital Cryptographic Currency. Lengthy discussion ensued. A motion was

made by Commissioner Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, to accept draft. All agreed.

LEGAL

2017-055 In the Matter of Phillip Merry – Offer of Judgment

General Counsel Laster presented this matter. Chairman Thrasher asked for a motion or discussion in this matter. Vice Chairman Gist made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Barnwell, in favor of accepting the offer. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Thrasher asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. There being no further discussion, Commissioner Pinkston made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Gist, to adjourn at 11:34 a.m. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Deaven Linen