

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

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



AJ HOLLOWAY
DON JACKSON
BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON

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COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN L. WALKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

OPEN SESSION

March 18, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Chairman Childs C. Thrasher via Zoom at the State Ethics Commission's Hearing Room located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina. Other members present via Zoom calling were Vice Chairman Donald Gist, Commissioner Brian M. Barnwell, Commissioner AJ Holloway, Commissioner Donald H. Jackson, and Commissioner Brandolyn T. Pinkston.

Staff present: Meghan L. Walker, James T. Bagnall, Ryanne Caldwell, Reggie J. Gaymon, Kevin Hinson, Courtney M. Laster, and Deaven Linen were in attendance. Ami R. Franklin and Karen A. Wiggins joined 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 an approval of the minutes. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Gist, seconded by Commissioner Pinkston, 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 January 21, 2021 Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously with a 6 - 0 vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:33 a.m. Chairman Thrasher stated that the amended agenda called for a legal matter to be discussed in executive session at the request of General Counsel Laster. All agreed to go into executive session to discuss a legal matter.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon return from executive session at 9:46 a.m., Acting Chairman Gist noted a legal matter was discussed in executive session, and there were no actions to ratify.

APPEAL

C2019-049 Phillip Merry

Because Chairman Thrasher served on the original hearing panel, she recused herself and left the room. Acting Chairman Gist presented this matter. General Counsel Laster gave a statement concerning this Appeal and presented a draft of a Consent Order agreeing to a new hearing. Discussion ensued. A motion was made by Commissioner Pinkston, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to accept staff recommendation to approve to vacate the prior Order and have a new hearing. The motion carried with a 5 – 0 vote. Chairman Thrasher recused.

Chairman Thrasher returned to the meeting and thanked Vice Chairman Gist for assisting with the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:53 a.m. Chairman Thrasher asked for a motion to go back into executive session for the purpose of discussing probable cause matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnwell, seconded by Commissioner Holloway, to go into executive session. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Gist, seconded by Commissioner Holloway, to adopt and ratify actions taken with regard to probable cause matters in executive session. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.


OFFICE OPERATIONS

Director Walker presented the Budget, Compliance Report, and Pending and Paid Orders. Discussion ensued concerning the review of the House Oversight Committee. Any further discussions would need to be presented to Director Walker.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Thrasher asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. There being no further discussion, Commissioner Barnwell made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Gist, to adjourn at 10:39 a.m. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,


Deaven Linen