

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIRMAN
F. XAVIER STARKES, VICE
CHAIRMAN
BRYANT S. CALDWELL
AJ HOLLOWAY



BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
NEAL D. TRUSLOW
MATTHEW N. TYLER

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

MEGHAN WALKER DAYSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

OPEN SESSION

July 18, 2024

The July 18, 2024, meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Chairman Scott E. Frick at the State Ethics Commission's Hearing Room located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina. Chairman Scott E. Frick, Vice Chairman F. Xavier Starkes, Commissioner AJ Holloway, Commissioner Mary Hunter B. Tomlinson, Commissioner Neal D. Truslow, and Commissioner Matthew N. Tyler were in attendance. Commissioner Bryant Caldwell appeared via Zoom call. Commissioner Brandolyn T. Pinkston was not present.

Staff present: Meghan Walker Dayson, Ami Franklin, Courtney Laster, Renique Brabham, Ryanne Caldwell, Kevin Hinson, Reggie Gaymon, James Bagnall, W.B. White, Jr., Thomas Yeager, Rachael O'Bryan, and Erin Caughman were in attendance.

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

MINUTES

Chairman Frick called for the approval of the May 16, 2024 minutes. Chairman Frick asked for any discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Starkes, seconded by Commissioner Tyler, to accept the minutes from the May 16, 2024 Commission meeting. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

APPEALS

C2022-060 State Ethics Commission vs. William C. Smith

Attorney Brabham informed the panel that Respondent's attorney, Maureen T. Coffey, had filed a Motion for Continue for Respondent's Appellate Hearing and that staff had no objection to the Motion. The continuance was granted by Chairman Frick.

C2023-003 State Ethics Commission vs. Troy Thomas

The Commission was represented by Attorney Brabham and the Respondent appeared *pro se*. Respondent acknowledged that his 2021 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was not timely filed. Respondent expressed that he had been unemployed during periods of the Complaint process and that he only paid a \$10.00 filing fee to run for Springfield Town Council. Chairman Frick stated that the matter would be taken under advisement and an order issued within a few weeks. Commissioners Matthew N. Tyler, Mary Hunter B. Tomlinson, and Neal D. Truslow recused from the appellate hearing since they comprised the Hearing Panel.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Director Dayson presented the Budget, Compliance Report, and Pending and Paid Orders Report for information.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Frick asked for further discussion or a motion to go into Executive Session to hear probable cause matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Tyler, seconded by Commissioner Starkes, to go into executive session to hear probable cause matters. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commissioners returned from Executive Session at 12:15 p.m.

ADVISORY OPINION

The Commission was presented with a draft of AO2024-001, which discusses whether services provided by a cyber security firm constitute a campaign contribution. A motion was made by Commissioner Starkes, seconded by Commissioner Tyler, to adopt the drafted AO2024-001. The motion passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Frick asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioners Tomlinson and Tyler, to adjourn at 12:18 p.m. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachael O'Bryan

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