

# *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**

### **November 21, 2024**

The November 21, 2024, meeting was called to order at 9:36 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 Mary Hunter B. Tomlinson, Commissioner Matthew N. Tyler, and Commissioner Neal D. Truslow were in attendance. Commissioner Bryant Caldwell, Commissioner Brandolyn T. Pinkston, and Commissioner AJ Holloway appeared via Zoom call.

Staff present: Meghan Walker Dayson, Ami Franklin, Courtney Laster, Renique Brabham, Kevin Hinson, Ryanne Caldwell, Reggie Gaymon, James Bagnall, W.B. White, Jr., 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.

### **APPEALS**

C2022-006 State Ethics Commission vs. Brian Taylor

The Commission was represented by Attorney Brabham and the Respondent appeared *pro se*. Commissioner Truslow presided as the Appellate Chair. Respondent did not dispute that he violated the Ethics Act but asserted that it was his first time running for office and that he was confused by the requirements and also was experiencing personal hardships due to the loss of several family members which contributed to his response time to the Commission and his late filings. Commissioner Truslow stated that the matter would be taken under advisement and an order issued within a few weeks. Scott Frick, F. Xavier Starkes, and AJ Holloway recused from the appellate hearing since they comprised the Hearing Panel.

## **MINUTES**

Chairman Frick called for the approval of the September 19, 2024 minutes. Chairman Frick asked for any discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Tyler, seconded by Commissioner Truslow, to accept the minutes from the September 19, 2024 Commission meeting. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

## **COMMISSION OFFICERS**

Director Dayson went over updates that had been made to Commission policies for Commission Chairman, Commission Vice-Chairman, and Election of Commission Officers. Chairman Frick called for a motion to approve the policies.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tyler, seconded by Commissioner Truslow to adopt the updated Commission Chairman policy. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Tomlinson to adopt the updated Commission Vice-Chairman policy. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Tyler to adopt the updated Commission Election of Officers policy. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

After the adoption of the updated policies, Chairman Frick called for nominations for Commission Chairman. Commissioner Pinkston nominated Commissioner Starkes. Commissioner Tyler seconded the nomination. Commissioner Starkes accepted the nomination. The nomination was held to a vote and carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

Chairman Frick then called for nominations for Commission Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Starkes nominated Commissioner Truslow. Commissioners Pinkston and Tyler seconded the nomination. Commissioner Truslow accepted the nomination. The nomination was held to a vote and carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

Director Dayson stated that the newly elected officer would be sworn in during the January meeting.

## **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 Truslow, seconded by

Commissioners Tomlinson and Tyler, to go into executive session to hear probable cause matters. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

**RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Commissioners returned from Executive Session at 12:51 p.m.

**ADVISORY OPINION 2024-002**

The Commission was presented with two drafts of AO2024-002, which discusses whether a gift card constitutes “money” under Section 8-13-720 of the Ethics Reform Act. A motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Tyler, to adopt draft 1 AO2024-002. The motion passed with a 7 – 1 vote, with Commissioner Pinkston opposing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Frick asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioners Pinkston and Truslow, seconded by Commissioners Starkes and Tomlinson, to adjourn at 1:02 p.m. The motion carried with an 8 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rachael O'Bryan*

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