

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

F. XAVIER STARKES, CHAIRMAN
NEAL D. TRUSLOW, VICE
CHAIRMAN
BRYANT S. CALDWELL
SCOTT E. FRICK



AJ HOLLOWAY
BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
MATTHEW N. TYLER

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150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN WALKER DAYSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

OPEN SESSION

January 16, 2025

The January 16, 2025, meeting was called to order at 9:33 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 Brandolyn T. Pinkston and Commissioner AJ Holloway appeared via Zoom call. Commissioner Bryant Caldwell was not present.

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

SWEARING IN OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Commissioner Frick issued the Oath of Office to Commissioner Starkes, swearing in Commissioner Starkes as the Commission Chairman. Commissioner Starkes then issued the Oath of Office to Commissioner Truslow, swearing in Commissioner Truslow as the Commission Vice-Chairman.

After being sworn in, Chairman Starkes presided over the Commission's meeting.

APPEALS

C2021-016 Kim Benson vs. Kenneth Loveless

The Commission was represented by Courtney Laster and Respondent was represented by Desa Ballard. Commissioner Truslow presided as the Appellate Chair. Both sides were given an opportunity to present their case. Attorney Laster requested that she and Ms. Ballard each submit proposed orders as they had in the past. Ms. Ballard was in agreement to submitting dueling proposed orders, and Commissioner Truslow gave 30 days for the attorneys to submit the proposed orders to each other, and 15 days to provide responses and feedback regarding the proposed orders before submitting the orders to the Appellate Panel. Commissioner Truslow stated that the matter would be taken under advisement and an order will be issued at a later date after the after the proposed orders are submitted. Commissioners Scott Frick, F. Xavier Starkes, and AJ Holloway recused from the appellate hearing since they comprised the Hearing Panel.

MINUTES

Chairman Starkes called for the approval of the November 21, 2024 minutes. Chairman Starkes asked for any discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Tyler, seconded by Commissioner Truslow, to accept the minutes from the November 21, 2024 Commission meeting. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Starkes asked for further discussion or a motion to go into Executive Session to hear probable cause matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Frick, seconded by Commissioner Tomlinson, 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 12:38 p.m. Chairman Starkes stated that no votes, other than those allowed by statute, were taken in executive session.

Chairman Starkes requested that an advisory opinion be issued regarding the question of law that arose from Complaint C2024-042.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Starkes asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Tyler, to adjourn at 1:38 p.m. The motion carried with a 7 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachael O'Bryan

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