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MAR 23 2022

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE ETHICS
COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2022-026

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Barbara A. Beeks
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Former Trustee – Laurens County School District 55

Section 8-13-1120, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires certain officials to file a Statement of Economic Interests prior to assuming the duties of the office, and Section 8-13-1140, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires the filing of an updated Statement of Economic Interests for the previous calendar year annually thereafter prior to March 30. Records in the State Ethics Commission indicate that the Respondent was required to file the 2018 and 2020 Statement of Economic Interests.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by a certified letter dated November 22, 2021, as described in the attached. In addition, an email reminder was sent thirty days prior to the deadline. To date, no properly completed 2018 or 2020 Statement of Economic Interests has been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1140, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

All investigations, inquiries, hearings, and accompanying documents must remain confidential unless respondent waives the right to confidentiality. If there is a finding of probable cause, the following documents become public record: the complaint, the response (if any) by respondent, and the notice of hearing. If a hearing is to be held, the final order and all exhibits become public record. If no hearing is held following a finding of probable cause, the final disposition of the matter becomes public record. The willful release of confidential information is a misdemeanor, and any person releasing such confidential information, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned not more than one year. Section 8-13-320(10)(g).

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan L. Walker who, first being duly sworn, says that she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
23rd day of March, 2022

[REDACTED]
Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director

[REDACTED]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/22/26

SEC-7 (Revised 8/2019)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
FAXED COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
Complaint C2022-026)
Barbara A. Beeks)
Respondent.)
State Ethics Commission)
Complainant.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, to support the allegations made in the above-captioned complaint. The Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegations will be heard:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbra Beeks, former Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2018 Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbra Beeks, former Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976 as amended the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.



Meghan L Walker, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 25th day,
of July 2022.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the Barbara Beeks, 151 Milam Heights Road, Waterloo, SC 29384 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 26th day of July 2022, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant

Columbia, South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
)	
Complaint C2022-026)	
)	
Barbara A. Beeks)	AMENDED
Respondent.)	NOTICE OF HEARING
)	
State Ethics Commission)	
Complainant.)	
)	

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, to support the allegations made in the above-captioned complaint. The Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on Thursday, February 17, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegations will be heard:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED


That Barbra Beeks, former Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2018 Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbra Beeks, former Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976 as amended the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.


Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 23 day,
of August 2022.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **AMENDED NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the Barbara Beeks, 151 Milam Heights Road, Waterloo, SC 29384 by depositing said **AMENDED NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 24th day of August 2022, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant

State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2022-026)
)
State Ethics Commission,) **DECISION AND ORDER**
Complainant.)
)
Barbara Beeks,)
Respondent.)
_____)

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a complaint filed on March 23, 2022. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991 (Ethics Act), the Commission reviewed the above-captioned complaint against Barbara Beeks (Respondent) and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing. Present at the hearing on October 20, 2022, were Commissioners F. Xavier Starkes, Mary Hunter B. Tomlinson, and Neal D. Truslow, Hearing Chair. Respondent appeared *pro se*. Complainant was represented by Courtney M. Laster. The following charges were considered:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbra Beeks, Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2018 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbra Beeks, Laurens School District 55 Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Having carefully reviewed the evidence presented, the Panel finds as fact:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent served on the Laurens School District 55 Board of Trustees. Most recently, Respondent was defeated in the November 3, 2020 general election.
2. Respondent failed to file an annual SEI on or before March 30 in 2018 and 2020.
3. In a November 22, 2021 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of her failure to file 2018 and 2020 SEIs.
4. According to the United States Postal Service, the certified letter was delivered to Respondent's address of record on November 27, 2021 at 9:31 a.m.
5. Penalties began to accrue at \$20 per day on December 7, 2021 (\$10 per SEI).
6. Penalties began to accrue at \$200 per day on December 17, 2021 (\$100 per SEI).
7. On April 14, 2022, Respondent filed her 2020 SEI.
8. On April 23, 2022, Respondent filed her 2018 SEI.
9. At the time Respondent came into compliance, she had accrued \$10,000 in late-filing penalties (\$5,000 on each SEI).
10. Respondent appeared at the hearing and testified on her own behalf. Respondent stated that she was caring for her ailing parents at or around the time of the Commission's certified letter and that she neglected to respond to the letter. Respondent stated she continues to be the primary caregiver for her mother. Respondent further accepted responsibility for her failure to timely file her 2018 and 2020 SEIs.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Findings of Fact, the Panel concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a public official pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27) of the

Ethics Act. Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.

2. Section 8-13-1140 of the Ethics Act provides, in part:

A person required to file a [SEI] under this chapter annually shall file, pursuant to Section 8-13-365, an updated statement for the previous calendar year, no later than noon on March thirtieth of each calendar year . . .

3. Section 8-13-1510(A) of the Ethics Act provides, in part:

. . . a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report or fails to file a required statement or report must be assessed a civil penalty as follows: (1) a fine of one hundred dollars if the statement or report is not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter; and (2) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement or report has not been filed, a fine of ten dollars per calendar day for the first ten days after notice has been given, and one hundred dollars for each calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

6. Section 8-13-130 of the Ethics Act allows the Commission to levy an administrative fee on any person who is found in violation of the Ethics Act.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Panel has determined, based on a preponderance of evidence, that Respondent Barbara Beeks is in violation of two (2) counts of Section 8-13-1140 for failure to timely file 2018 and 2020 SEIs.

THEREFORE, Respondent is hereby Publicly Reprimanded and assessed a reduced late-filing penalty of \$3,000 and an administrative fee of \$650, for a total of \$3,650. Respondent is ordered to contact Commission staff within sixty (60) days from her receipt of this Order to set up a payment plan. The assessed amount of \$3,650 must be paid, pursuant to Respondent's agreed-upon payment plan with staff, no later than one-hundred and twenty (120) days from Respondent's receipt of this Order.

AND, pursuant to Section 8-13-320 of the Ethics Act, if the \$3,650 is not paid within one hundred and twenty (120) days from Respondent's receipt of this Order, a judgment in the amount of \$5,650 shall be entered against Respondent. In the event of a failure to pay, upon the Commission's filing of said Judgment with the Clerk of Court in the County of Respondent's last known residence, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$5,650 in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

FINALLY, Respondent Barbara Becks, has ten (10) days from receipt of this Order to appeal this Decision and Order to the full Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 30th DAY OF November 2022.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION



NEAL D. TRUSLOW
HEARING CHAIR

Columbia, South Carolina