

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2022 - 129

COMPLAINT FORM

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
RECEIVED OCT 12 '22 PM 11:18:15

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

RESPONDENT: Angela S. Williamson
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Candidate – Wagener City Council

Section 8-13-1308, S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires candidates to file Campaign Disclosures within ten (10) days of receiving or expending \$500; fifteen (15) days prior to each election; within ten (10) days of the end of each quarter; and a final report when the campaign account is closed. In addition, certified campaign reports detailing campaign contributions and expenditures must contain the total of contributions accepted, the name and address of each person making a contribution, the total expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate or committee, and the name and address of each person to whom an expenditure is made from campaign funds. Pursuant to Section 8-13-1362 and Regulation 52-504 (C), the Pre-Election and quarterly report are required even when there have been no contributions or expenditures.

Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between November 7, 2018 and November 13, 2018. Respondent was sent an email reminder thirty days before the Campaign Disclosure deadline.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by letters dated January 31, 2022, March 4, 2022, March 24, 2022, March 31, 2022, April 19, 2022, and July 28, 2022 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure has not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A), Section 8-13-1308(D)(1) and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

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.

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
12th day of October, 2022

[REDACTED]
Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director

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

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

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

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
Complaint C2022-129)
Angela S. Williamson)
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, April 20, 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 allegation will be heard:

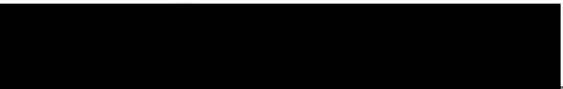
COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Angela S. Williamson, candidate for Wagener Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2018 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

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 Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 16th day,
of March 2023.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Angela Williamson, 645 Big Branch Road, Wagener, SC 29164 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 16th day of March 2023, 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)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2022-129)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
Angela S. Williamson,)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on October 12, 2022. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Angela S. Williamson (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing on one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to file a 2018 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR). Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. On October 12, 2018, Respondent paid \$15.00 to run as a first-time candidate for Wagener Town Council in a November 27, 2018 election.
2. Respondent did not file a Pre-Election CDR before the election.
3. On approximately November 20, 2018, Respondent contacted the Town Clerk and attempted to withdraw from the election. The clerk advised Respondent that the ballots had already been printed, but stated she would remove Respondent from consideration for the position.
4. From November 2019 through February 2022, Respondent was employed by the Lexington County Soil and Water Conservation District (District). In this position, Respondent was responsible for updating the District's Entity List and assisting its Board Members with filing their Statements of Economic Interests (SEI).

5. In a January 31, 2022 certified letter mailed to 201 Sand Dam Road in Wagener,¹ the Commission notified Respondent of her failure to file a 2018 Pre-Election CDR. This letter was returned as “Return to Sender – Not Deliverable as Addressed” on February 14, 2022.
6. On March 4, 2022, the penalty letter was re-mailed first-class with a United States Postal Service (USPS) tracking number to 201 Sand Dam Road. Despite being properly posted, this letter was returned for insufficient postage on March 23, 2022.
7. On March 24, 2022, the penalty letter was re-mailed first-class with a USPS tracking number to 201 Sand Dam Road. This letter was returned as “Return to Sender – Not Deliverable as Addressed” on March 28, 2022.
8. On March 31, 2022, the first-class letter with USPS tracking was re-mailed to 648 Big Branch Road in Wagner.² Despite being properly posted, this letter was returned for insufficient postage on April 12, 2022.
9. On April 19, 2022, the penalty letter was mailed via certified mail to 648 Big Branch Road. This letter was never delivered or returned.
10. On July 28, 2022, the penalty letter was re-mailed first-class with a USPS tracking number to 648 Big Branch Road. According to USPS, this letter was delivered “in or at the mailbox” on July 29, 2022 at 11:24 a.m.
11. The Complaint was filed on October 12, 2022 and mailed to Respondent via certified mail on October 13, 2022.
12. As of January 4, 2023, the Complaint had not been delivered or returned. It was therefore re-mailed via certified mail. According to the USPS, the Complaint was delivered and signed for on

¹ This address was provided by Respondent to election officials when she signed up to run for office.

² This address originated from a CLEAR report, a law enforcement tool designed to locate recent contact information for individuals.

January 6, 2023 at 12:06 p.m.

13. On January 13, 2023, Respondent submitted a written response to the Complaint stating she had attempted to remove herself from the ballot prior to the election. Respondent further stated:

I was employed with the [District] from November 2019-February 2022. I am not sure of the correct term, but I was the Point of Contact with the [Commission] for the [District Board] during that time. I was responsible for updating the Entity List (annual listing of individuals required to file [SEIs]). I still work in the same office, but with a different agency. When I first started receiving the certified letter notice, I assumed (which I now know I should not have) that it was regarding my affiliation with [the District]. I never imagined it was for something 4 years ago. Working 9 hours a day at my new job makes it very difficult to get to our local post office in Wagener, SC that has very limited hours. I notified my former supervisor (who I still see on a daily basis) numerous times that I was receiving these notices and that he needed to remove me from being the contact person. . . . the first time I received a certified letter notice was at the end of March – first of April 2022, which was approximately a little over a month since I had left [the District]. And knowing that reporting was due around that time I assumed it was related to that.

14. Following receipt of Respondent's response, a Commission Investigator contacted Respondent and advised that she still needed to file a 2018 Pre-Election CDR. Respondent filed immediately, disclosing no money raised or spent.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Statements of Fact, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a candidate pursuant to Section 8-13-1300(4). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1308(A) provides, in relevant part:

. . . a candidate who does not receive or expend campaign contributions totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more must file an initial certified campaign report fifteen days before an election.
3. Section 8-13-1510(A) provides, in relevant part:

. . . a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late 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 . . .

4. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation” of the Ethics Act.

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1308(A) for not filing a Pre-Election CDR 15 days prior to the November 27, 2018 election. Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits she failed to timely file a 2018 Pre-Election CDR. In mitigation, Respondent asserts she was a first-time candidate with no knowledge of the Commission’s filing requirements. Respondent states that she attempted to withdraw her candidacy prior to the election, but was informed the ballots were already printed. Respondent states she received notice from USPS in late March or early April of 2022 that a certified letter was waiting for her at the post office. Respondent incorrectly assumed it was related to her District employment. Because she was not employed by the District at the time, she simply advised her former supervisor and took no further action. Respondent states she submitted a response promptly after receiving the Complaint and that she came into compliance the same day she was contacted by the Commission Investigator.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of Section 8-13-1308(A).
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this written warning to Respondent, and orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within six (6) months from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$100 and an administrative fee of \$200, for a total of \$300.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that she is not only admitting to a violation of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$300 in the event she does not make

payment as provided for in this Order, in which case the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent with the County Clerk of Court in Respondent's last known County of residence, who shall enter this Order in the amount of \$300 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 14th DAY OF April 2023.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR

DocuSigned by:
Angela S. Williamson
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ANGELA S. WILLIAMSON
RESPONDENT