

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

COMPLAINT FORM

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER

C 2024 041

COMPLAINANT: Wyvette Douglas

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: Citizen

RESPONDENT: Tex Allen Taylor II

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: City Council District 3

Set forth in detail specific facts upon which you based your complaint against above-named respondent (only detailed, clear factual allegations will be considered. If additional space is needed, attach supplemental sheets).

Mr. Tex Allen Taylor II was elected to the City of Bennettsville Council in January 2022. While serving as a council member, Mr. Taylor's father was doing business with the city as an exterminator. Mr. Taylor voted on budgets that would cover his father's business expense. Mr. Taylor never disclosed on his ethics filings that his father was being paid by the city he is running.

In 2023, Tex Allen Taylor II started his own exterminating business called A & H Solutions, LLC, and began working with the city without a contract and made his wife (Ashley) the point of contact. Mr. Taylor continues to vote on budgets to make sure funds are available for his personal business. Mr. Taylor did not disclose this on his ethics filings and later made an amendment to his filings when people started asking questions.

How can Mr. Taylor have personal business with the city he is a council member in?

Does it matter if his business is in his wife's name?

Should Mr. Taylor include all of this information on his ethics filings?

Mr. Taylor is getting paid as a council member and getting paid as a business owner doing business with the city. He makes sure that the budget has money in it for his business every year.

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 Wyvette who, first being duly sworn, says that he/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 his/her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those he/she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this

2nd day of JUNE, 2024

[REDACTED]
Complainant Signature

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires My Commission Expires July 25, 2026

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

C102form

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

05/11/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC

PO BOX 1471

BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512

Check # 31262

05/11/23

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC		
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
05/11/23	0352	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC		
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
05/11/23	0352	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>4/10/23</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>29512</u>			PHONE _____
SERVICES PERFORMED		TARGET PEST(S)	APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Termite treatment</u>			
<u>(141 P)</u>			
<u>600</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>[Signature]</u>	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL	<u>350.00</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE _____			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

04/20/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512



Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check # 31116	04/20/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
04/10/23	0288	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 1 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31116	04/20/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
04/10/23	0288	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 1 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

4594

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>3/14/23</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP _____			PHONE _____
SERVICES PERFORMED	TARGET PEST (S)		APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☐ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Fire Ant services</u>			
<u>Marlboro St. Park</u>			
<u>Kids Pond Park</u>			
<u>South Park / Ball field</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>Allen</u>	LIC. NO. <u>130</u>	TOTAL	<u>440</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE _____			
SERVICE REPORT			

Four Hundred Forty and NO/100 Dollars**

03/23/2023

440.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512



Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 79915	03/23/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
03/14/23	0271	FIRE ANT SERVICES (PARKS)	440.00

Total: 440.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 79915	03/23/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
03/14/23	0271	FIRE ANT SERVICES (PARKS)	440.00

Total: 440.00

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>3/14/23</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>B.C.C.</u>		PHONE _____	
SERVICES PERFORMED	TARGET PEST (S)		APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
<u>Twice per year.</u>			
<u>Electric</u>			
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Term Ant Service</u>			
<u>Salem Ht. Substation</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>7/16</u>	LIC. NO. <u>Bill</u>	TOTAL	<u>500.00</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE _____			
SERVICE REPORT			

Five Hundred and NO/100 Dollars**

03/16/2023

500.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512

William C. Simon Jr.
Angela W. Hurd

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 30990	03/16/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
03/14/23	0272	SPRING 1 OF 2 FIRE ANT SUBSTATION SALEM	500.00

Total: 500.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 30990	03/16/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
03/14/23	0272	SPRING 1 OF 2 FIRE ANT SUBSTATION SALEM	500.00

Total: 500.00

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>5/11/22</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS <u>614 E. 1st St</u>			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>SC 29512</u>			PHONE _____
SERVICES PERFORMED		TARGET PEST (S)	APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Fire Ant Service</u>			
<u>(2400) WP</u>			
<u>Bill</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>Bill</u>	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL	<u>350.00</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE _____			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

06/08/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check # 31364	06/08/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
06/05/23	0388	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31364	06/08/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
06/05/23	0388	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>6/5/25</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>Bennettsville</u>		PHONE _____	
SERVICES PERFORMED	TARGET PEST (S)		APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Termite Fire Ant</u>			
<u>service 3rd 6</u>			
<u>(WP)</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>[Signature]</u>	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL <u>350.00</u>	
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE <u>[Signature]</u>			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

07/10/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512



Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check # 31498	07/10/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
07/07/23	0578	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 4 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31498	07/10/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
07/07/23	0578	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 4 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE <u>7/7/23</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>City of Bennettsville</u>			
ADDRESS <u>U U</u>			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>SC 29512</u>		PHONE _____	
SERVICES PERFORMED	TARGET PEST (S)		APPLICATION METHOD
☐ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
<u>Seasonal Fire Ant. Service</u>			
<u>4 of 6 (WP)</u>			
SERVICED BY <u>[Signature]</u>	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL	<u>350</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE <u>[Signature]</u>			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

08/04/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512



Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31618	08/04/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
08/04/23	0603	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 5 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31618	08/04/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
08/04/23	0603	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 5 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00



Contact: Tex Allen Taylor II
 PO Box 1471
 Bennettsville, SC 29512
 843-439-0700

DATE 8/4/25		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME City of Bennettsville			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP Bennettsville			PHONE _____
SERVICES PERFORMED	TARGET PEST (S)		APPLICATION METHOD
☒ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
Fire Ant Service			
(506) WP			
Full			
SERVICED BY Allen	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL	(350)
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE Hester			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

09/08/2023

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512

Check # 31723

09/08/23

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC		
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
09/07/23	0618	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 6 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 31723	09/08/23
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
09/07/23	0618	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 6 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00



A&H SOLUTIONS, LLC
 Contact: Tex Allen Taylor II
 PO Box 1471
 Bennettsville, SC 29512
 843-439-0700

DATE 9/1/23		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME City of Bennettsville			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP Burke			PHONE _____
SERVICES PERFORMED		TARGET PEST (S)	APPLICATION METHOD
☒ INSPECTION			
☒ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
- Seasonal Free Ant			350 ⁰⁰
(W7) Service (6 of 6)			
- Fall Free Ant Service to			PKT
(Ref 2) Salem Substation			1 ⁰⁰
SERVICED BY Allen	LIC. NO. _____	TOTAL	(350.00)
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE Bull			
SERVICE DEBENT			

Six Hundred and NO/100 Dollars**

04/11/2024

600.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512



Check # 32555

04/11/24

Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
04/09/24	1147	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 1 OF 6	350.00
04/11/24	1147 B	SPRING 1 FIRE ANT SUBSTATION SALEM RD	250.00

Total: 600.00

Vendor: A&H100 A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC

Check #: 32555

04/11/24

Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
04/09/24	1147	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 1 OF 6	350.00
04/11/24	1147 B	SPRING 1 FIRE ANT SUBSTATION SALEM RD	250.00

Total: 600.00



A&H SOLUTIONS, LLC
 Contact: Tex Allen Taylor II
 PO Box 1471
 Bennettsville, SC 29512
 843-439-0700

DATE <u>4/9/24</u>		TIME IN _____ OUT _____	
☒ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM. ☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR			
NAME <u>CITY OF DENVER</u>			
ADDRESS _____			
CITY, STATE, ZIP <u>Denver</u>		PHONE _____	
SERVICES PERFORMED		TARGET PEST (S)	
☒ INSPECTION			
☐ TREATMENT			
☐ _____			
CHEMICALS USED	AMOUNT	%	EPA NUMBER
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS			AMOUNT
- 1st Unit Fire Ant mound			350
(1 of 6) WP			
- Spring fire ant mound			150
to Solem Substation			
SERVED BY	LIC. NO.	TOTAL	<u>(Signature)</u>
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE <u>(Signature)</u>			
SERVICE REPORT			

Three Hundred Fifty and NO/100 Dollars**

05/16/2024

350.00

A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC
PO BOX 1471
BENNETTSVILLE, SC 29512

Check # 32715

05/16/24

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC		
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
05/02/24	0978	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00

Vendor: A&H100	A & H SOLUTIONS, LLC	Check #: 32715	05/16/24
Date	Invoice	Description/Detail	Amount
05/02/24	0978	WATER PLANT FIRE ANT 2 OF 6	350.00

Total: 350.00



A & H Solutions, LLC
Contact: Tex Allen Taylor II
PO Box 1471
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-439-0700

DATE: 5/2/24		TIME: OUT	
☐ REG. ☐ 1-TIME ☐ RES. ☐ COMM.		☐ INDOOR ☐ OUTDOOR	
NAME: City of Bennettsville		PHONE:	
ADDRESS:		APPLICATION METHOD:	
CITY, STATE, ZIP: Bennettsville		TARGET PEST (S):	
SERVICES PERFORMED:		EPA NUMBER:	
☐ INSPECTION		AMOUNT: %:	
☐ TREATMENT		AMOUNT:	
CHEMICALS USED:		AMOUNT:	
DESCRIPTION / REMARKS:		AMOUNT:	
Seasonal Line out (2 of 6) WP		TOTAL: 350	
SERVICED BY: Tex Allen Taylor II		TMC NO.:	
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE: W. Allen		To Reorder call 800-378-5881 www.ahsolutions.com	

SERVICE REPORT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND	)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
	)	
IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
COMPLAINT C2024-041	)	
	)	
Wyvetta Douglas	)	
Complainant,	)	ORDER OF DISMISSAL
	)	
Tex Allen Taylor, II,	)	
Respondent.	)	
	)	

This matter came before the South Carolina Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on June 24, 2024. The Commission's Executive Director reviewed the Complaint, determined it contained facts sufficient to warrant an investigation, and ordered an investigation. On July 17, 2025, the Commission reviewed the Complaint and investigative findings to determine whether probable cause existed to charge Tex Allen Taylor, II (Respondent) with violations of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act). For the reasons stated herein, the Commission dismisses the Complaint for lack of probable cause.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Respondent has served on Bennettsville City Council since 2018.
2. In 2013, Respondent's spouse formed A&H Solutions, LLC (A&H), a pest control business. According to documents filed with the Secretary of State, Respondent has served as a manager of A&H since its inception.
3. Respondent's father, Tex Allen Taylor, Sr. (Taylor, Sr.) operated an independent pest control business from approximately 1990 until 2022, when he sold the business to Terminix. For most of that time, Taylor, Sr. maintained a contract with the City for pest control services.
4. In 2022 and 2023, A&H provided fire ant treatment service to the City on thirteen (13) dates for a total of \$4,690.00. A&H did not have a contract with the City. Rather, it provided these services on an as-needed basis.

JX #1

5. Respondent voted in favor of the City's budgets for FY22-23, FY23-24, and voted against FY24-25, all of which contained funding for Taylor Sr. and/or A&H.
6. The Complaint alleged that Respondent improperly voted on the aforementioned budgets because they contained funding related to Taylor, Sr. and/or A&H.¹
7. Following the filing of the Complaint, a Commission investigation ensued and revealed, in relevant part, the following:
 - a. According to City Administrator William Simon, service contracts are included in the City's annual budget and reviewed during budget preparation by the Finance Committee. However, Respondent did not sit on the Finance Committee. Upon completion of the Finance Committee's review, the Administrator presents the budget to Council, who votes on the overall budget via City ordinance.
 - b. According to Tasha Townsend, the City's procurement agent, A&H did not have a written contract for pest control services with the City. Townsend advised that A&H may have provided a specialty service to treat fire ants if there was a need. In such an instance, the head of the affected City department could obtain the service, then provide an invoice to the accounting department. Townsend advised that each department has funds budgeted for such scenarios.
 - c. According to Christy Overstreet, the City's Finance Director, A&H provided treatment for a severe fire ant problem at the City's water department. Overstreet advised that the water department supervisor obtained these services directly from A&H. Overstreet further advised that the company's name would not have appeared anywhere in the budget as a line item regardless of whether a written contract existed.

LAW

Pursuant to Section 8-13-320, the Commission is empowered to receive complaints and conduct investigations related to violations of the Ethics Act. Following the receipt of a Complaint

¹ The Complaint also alleged Respondent failed to disclose information related to (1) his father's contractual relationship with the City and (2) his relationship with A&H on his Statements of Economic Interests (SEI). As an initial matter, the Ethics Act does not require public officials to disclose a relative's contract with their governmental entity unless the relative is considered an "immediate family member," which Taylor, Sr. was not. See Section 8-13-1120(A); 8-13-100(18). Moreover, a review of Respondent's SEIs revealed he properly disclosed A&H as a source of private income for himself, as well as the specific amount received from the City, in accordance with Section 8-13-1120(A). Accordingly, the Commission finds probable cause does not exist to support these allegations.

JA #2

and the completion of a corresponding investigation, the Commission must determine whether there is probable cause to believe a violation of the Ethics Act occurred. Section 8-13-320(10)(i).

Section 8-13-700 provides as follows:

- (A) No public official, public member, or public employee may knowingly use his official office, membership, or employment to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. This prohibition does not extend to the incidental use of public materials, personnel, or equipment, subject to or available for a public official's, public member's or public employee's use that does not result in additional public expense.
- (B) No public official, public member, or public employee may make, participate in making, or in any way attempt to use his office, membership, or employment to influence a governmental decision in which he, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated has an economic interest. A public official, public member, or public employee who, in the discharge of his official responsibilities, is required to take an action or make a decision which affects an economic interest of himself, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated shall:
 - (1) prepare a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decisions and the nature of his potential conflict of interest with respect to the action or decision;
 - ...
 - (4) if he is a public official, other than a member of the General Assembly, he shall furnish a copy of the statement to the presiding officer of the governing body of an agency, commission, board, or of a county, municipality, or a political subdivision thereof, on which he serves, who shall cause the statement to be printed in the minutes and require that the member be excused from any votes, deliberations, and other actions on the matter on which the potential conflict of interest exists and shall cause the disqualification and the reasons for it to be noted in the minutes;

JX#3

Section 8-13-100(11) defines “economic interest,” in relevant part, as:

- (a) . . . an interest distinct from that of the general public in a purchase, sale, lease, contract, option, or other transaction or arrangement involving property or services in which a [public official] may gain an economic benefit of fifty dollars or more.
- (b) This definition does not prohibit a [public official] from participating in, voting on, or influencing or attempting to influence an official decision if the only economic interest or reasonably foreseeable benefit that may accrue to the [public official] is incidental to the [public official’s] position or which accrues to the [public official] as a member of a profession, occupation or large class to no greater extent than the economic interest or potential benefit could reasonably be foreseen to accrue to all other members of the profession, occupation, or large class.

Section 8-13-100(4) defines “business with which he is associated” as:

a business of which the person or a member of his immediate family is a director, an officer, owner, employee, a compensated agent, or holder of stock worth one hundred thousand dollars or more at fair market value and which constitutes five or more of the total outstanding stock of class.

Section 8-13-100(15) defines “family member” as:

an individual who is: (a) the spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild; (b) a member of the individual’s immediate family.

DISCUSSION

Section 8-13-700 requires a public official to recuse himself when he, a family member, a business with which he is associated, or an individual with whom he is associated has an economic interest. Here, Taylor, Sr. is a “family member” of Respondent and A&H is a “business with which [Respondent] is associated” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(4) and (15). Accordingly, Section 8-13-700 generally requires Respondent to recuse himself from any matters in which Taylor, Sr. and/or A&H have an economic interest. However, in SEC AO2020-002, the Commission found that recusal was not required when a public official was voting on a budget in its entirety, as long as he did not vote on

JX #4

specific line items or participate in work groups or budget committees:

a public servant is permitted to vote on budgets in their entirety (for instance, where final budget approval is by ordinance), but may not vote on specific line-items or participate in work groups or budget committees that specifically affects his own economic interests or the economic interests of his family members, individuals with whom he is associated, or business with which he is associated.

Here, although Respondent participated in votes on the entire budget via City ordinance during the years in question, there is no evidence that he voted on specific line items related to A&H and/or Taylor, Sr., nor is there any evidence he participated in Finance Committee meetings related to these businesses.

DECISION

Based on evidence presented, the Commission hereby determines there is not probable cause to believe that Respondent violated the Ethics Act. Therefore, pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, the Commission hereby dismisses Complaint C2024-041.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 31st DAY OF July, 2025.

SOUTH CAROLINA ETHICS COMMISSION


F. XAVIER STARKES, CHAIRMAN

Columbia, South Carolina