

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
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FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2023 - 026

COMPLAINT FORM

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

RESPONDENT: Sharon Miles
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Former Council Member – Town of Sellers

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 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 Statement of Economic Interests.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirements by a certified letter dated October 14, 2022 as described in the attached. In addition, an email reminder was sent thirty days prior to the deadline. To date, a 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 Statement of Economic Interests have not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1140, SC 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
3rd day of March, 2023

[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

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
))
IN THE MATTER OF:)
))
Complaint C2023-026)
))
State Ethics Commission) **NOTICE OF HEARING**
Complainant.)
))
Sharon Miles)
Respondent.)
_____)

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, 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, August 15, 2024 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 A STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Sharon Miles, Former Town of Sellers Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2019 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

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

That Sharon Miles, Former Town of Sellers Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

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

That Sharon Miles, Former Town of Sellers Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2021 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

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

That Sharon Miles, Former Town of Sellers Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2022 SEI, 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.

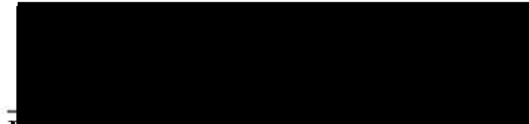


Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 16th day,
of November 2023.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Sharon Miles, P.O. Box 169, Sellers, SC 29592 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 2nd day of November 2023, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Columbia, South Carolina

Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant
State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
COMPLAINT C2023-026)	
)	
State Ethics Commission,)	CONSENT ORDER
Complainant,)	
)	
Sharon Miles,)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on March 3, 2023. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Sharon Miles (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing on three (3) counts of violating Section 8-13-1140 for failing to timely file Statements of Economic Interests (SEIs) for 2019, 2020, and 2021.¹ Prior to the hearing, Respondent agreed to the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent served as a councilmember for the Town of Sellers from February 2018 until February 2022.
2. Respondent did not file a SEI on or before March 30 in 2019, 2020, or 2021.
3. On October 14, 2022, the Commission mailed a certified letter to Respondent’s address of record regarding Respondent’s failure to timely file 2019, 2020, and 2021 SEIs.
4. According to the United States Postal Service, the certified letter was delivered to Respondent’s address of record on October 21, 2022 at 2:41 p.m. The return receipt appears to contain Respondent’s signature.
5. On October 31, 2022, penalties began to accrue at \$10.00 per day per SEI.

¹ The Commission also found probable cause to charge Respondent with violating Section 8-13-1140 for failing to file a 2022 SEI. However, Respondent was not in office on March 30, 2022 and therefore was not required to file a 2022 SEI pursuant to Commission Regulation 52-601. Accordingly, the Commission declines to proceed as to this count.

6. On November 10, 2022, penalties began to accrue at \$100.00 per day per SEI.
7. On September 8, 2023, following the filing of the Complaint, Commission staff telephoned Respondent. During the telephone conversation, Respondent confirmed her contact information and her receipt of the Complaint and Complaint cover letter.
8. On December 18, 2023, with assistance from Commission staff, Respondent filed the required SEIs.

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 “public official” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1140 provides, in relevant part:

A person required to file a [SEI] under this chapter annually shall file . . . an updated statement for the previous calendar year, no later than noon on March 30 . . .

3. Section 8-13-1510(A) provides:

Except as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter, 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 additional calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

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 three (3) counts of violating Section 8-13-1140 for failing to timely file her 2019, 2020, and 2021 SEIs. Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges she violated the Ethics Act when she failed to timely file the required SEIs. In mitigation,

Respondent states she was fighting for her child, who has special needs, to receive his necessary services for school during her entire time in office. She further states that tending to her child's school issues while being a schoolteacher shifted her focus away from her filing duties. Additionally, Respondent asserts that despite receiving the Commission's correspondence, she found it difficult to manage her time with her ongoing life stressors.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of three (3) counts of Section 8-13-1140.
2. The Commission hereby adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues a Public Reprimand and orders the Respondent to pay the Commission, within one (1) year from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$450.00 (\$150.00 for each SEI) and an administrative fee of \$450.00, for a total of \$900.00.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that she is not only admitting to violations of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$900.00 (less any money paid to the Commission) in the event she does not make full and timely payment as provided for in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the Clerk of Court's Office in the County of Respondent's last known residence. Upon said filing, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$900.00 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 8th DAY OF August 2024.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR


SHARON MILES
RESPONDENT