

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

CASE NUMBER

C 2023-135

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: William D. Drew

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 843-283-1436

TITLE: Citizen

RESPONDENT: Barbara J. Blain Bellamy

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: Mayor Conway, SC

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).

On 7/18/2023 there is a contribution listed for \$3500 from John Cassidy at 2408 N Main Street, Conway, SC 29526 Phone 843-248-2574. This contribution is over the limit and Mr. Cassidy denies making this contribution and will testify under oath to this fact. Where did this money come from?

There is also another contribution from Ralph Wilson in the amount of \$ 2,000 which is also over the limit.

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.

Please see attached article.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF Horry

Personally appeared before me William D. Drew 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 1st day of November, 2023

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

Complainant Signature

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]
Notary Public for ~~South Carolina~~ North Carolina
My Commission expires 8/29/2027

MISTY HODGE
NOTARY PUBLIC
Columbus County
North Carolina
My Commission Expires 8/29/2027

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)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
)	
Complaint C2023-135)	
)	
William D. Drew)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.)	
)	
Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy)	
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, April 17, 2025 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 DISCLOSE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION
SECTION 8-13-1308(F), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy, City of Conway Mayor, did in Richland County, fail to report campaign contributions from: (1) Robert Bellamy in the amount of \$350.00; (2) three (3) personal contributions totaling \$2,900.00; (3) Priscilla Fuller in the amount of \$250.00; (4) George Brown in the amount of \$150.00; and (5) Caroline Winds Realty in the amount of \$250.00, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F).

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO DISCLOSE CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE
SECTION 8-13-1308(F), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy, City of Conway Mayor, did in Richland County, fail to report campaign expenditures to: (1) Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in the amount of \$250.00; (2) four (4) contributions totaling \$3,781.88 to Duplicates Ink Print; (3) Lucky Dog Productions in the amount of \$1,000.00; (4) Erica Kendell in the amount of \$75.00; and (5) Travis Marshall in the amount of \$500.00, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F).

COUNT THREE
FAILURE TO DEPOSIT CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS
SECTION 8-13-1312, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy, City of Conway Mayor, did in Richland County, fail to deposit four (4) campaign contributions totaling \$450.00 into her campaign bank account, in violation of Section 8-13-1312.

COUNT FOUR
FAILURE TO FILE CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(B), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy, City of Conway Mayor, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2023 Quarter 4 Campaign Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).


COUNT FIVE
ACCEPTANCE OF CASH EXCEEDING CASH CONTRIBUTION LIMIT
SECTION 8-13-1314(A)(2), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Barbara J. Blain-Bellamy, City of Conway Mayor, did in Richland County, accept three (3) cash contributions over \$25.00, in violation of Section 8-13-1314(A)(2).

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 25th day,
of November 2024.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Barbara J. Blain Bellamy, 1119 Naomi Ave., Conway, SC 29526 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 9th day of December 2024, 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 C2023-135)
)
 William D. Drew,)
 Complainant,)
)
 Barbara Blain-Bellamy)
 Respondent.)
 _____)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on November 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 Barbara Blain-Bellamy (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing. Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to entry of the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent was an incumbent candidate for Mayor of the City of Conway in a November 7, 2023 general election.
2. The complaint was filed on November 3, 2023 alleging Respondent received contributions that exceeded the statutory maximum of \$1,000.00. More specifically, the complaint alleged that Respondent received a \$3,500.00 contribution from John Cassidy and a \$2,000.00 contribution from Ralph Wilson.¹

¹ As to the \$3,500.00 contribution from John Cassidy, the Commission’s investigation revealed that Respondent inadvertently listed this entry as a contribution rather than an expenditure to Cassidy’s printing business. As to the \$2,000.00 contribution from Ralph Wilson, the Commission’s investigation revealed Ralph Wilson, Sr. and Ralph Wilson, Jr. each contributed \$1,000.00, as is permitted by Section 8-13-1314. Respondent has since corrected these errors and the Commission did not find probable cause to believe Respondent accepted excessive contributions.

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3. Following the filing of the complaint, Respondent's campaign bank account records were subpoenaed. A review of these records revealed Respondent failed to disclose five (5) contributions totaling \$3,900.00 and five (5) expenditures totaling \$5,531.88.
4. Additionally, during the investigation, Respondent acknowledged receiving three (3) cash contributions over \$25.00. One (1) cash contribution was in the amount of \$1,000.00 from Ralph Brown, Sr. Respondent was unable to identify the other two (2) contributors, each of whom had contributed \$100.00 in cash.
5. Finally, the Commission's investigation revealed that Respondent failed to file her 2023 Quarter 4 Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) by January 10, 2024, instead filing on January 23, 2024.
6. On April 11, 2024, Respondent amended her CDRs to properly disclose all campaign contributions and expenditures and is now in compliance.

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(B) provides:

Following the filing of an initial certified campaign report, additional certified campaign reports must be filed within ten days following the end of each calendar quarter in which contributions are received or expenditures are made, whether before or after an election until the campaign account undergoes final disbursement pursuant to the provisions of Section 8-13-1370.

3. Section 8-13-1308(F) provides:

Certified campaign reports detailing campaign contributions and expenditures and must contain: (1) the total of contributions accepted by the candidate or committee; (2) the name and address of each person making a contribution of more than one hundred dollars and

JXL #2

the amount and date of receipt of each contribution; (3) the total expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate or committee; (4) the name and address of each person to whom an expenditure is made from campaign funds, including the date, amount, purpose, and beneficiary of the expenditure.

4. Section 8-13-1314 provides, in relevant part:

(A) Within an election cycle, a candidate or anyone acting on his behalf shall not solicit or accept, and a person shall not give or offer to give to a candidate or person acting on the candidate's behalf:

...

(2) a cash contribution from an individual unless the cash contribution does not exceed twenty-five dollars and is accompanied by a record of the amount of the contribution and the name and address of the contributor;

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

... 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 ...

6. Section 8-13-320(10)(1) allows the Commission to issue a civil penalty of up to \$2,000.00 for each violation of the Ethics Act.

7. 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 two (2) counts of violating Section 8-13-1308(F) for failing to disclose the aforementioned contributions and expenditures, one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1308(B) for failing to timely file a 2023 Quarter 4 CDR, and one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1314(A)(2) for accepting three (3) cash contributions over \$25.00.² Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits she violated the

² In addition to the charges listed herein, the Commission found probable cause to believe Respondent violated Section 8-13-1312 by failing to deposit campaign contributions within ten (10) days of receipt. The Commission

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Ethics Act as outlined herein. In mitigation, Respondent states that she has served three (3) terms as Mayor of Conway and one (1) term on Conway City Council and that this is her first complaint matter. Respondent states she retained an individual to file her CDRs, but recognizes that the responsibility for her filings ultimately lies with her. Respondent states that she had no intention to violate the Ethics Act and that any error or omission was not purposeful.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of two (2) counts of Section 8-13-1308(F), one (1) count of Section 8-13-1308(B), and one (1) count of 8-13-1314(A)(2).
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within nine (9) months from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$100.00 for the 2023 Quarter 4 CDR,³ a civil penalty of \$300.00 for accepting cash contributions exceeding \$25.00, and an administrative fee of \$400.00, for a total of \$800.00. Given that Respondent has now disclosed all her campaign contributions and expenditures, the Commission declines to assess a civil penalty for the violations of Section 8-13-1308(F).

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that she is not only admitting to

thereafter waived further proceedings as to these charges and, accordingly, these charges are not discussed herein.

The Commission also found probable cause to believe Respondent violated Section 8-13-1312 for failing to deposit four (4) campaign contributions into her campaign bank account. This finding was based on a comparison of Respondent's CDRs to her campaign bank account records. However, upon further investigation, Commission staff is unable to determine that these contributions were paid to Respondent using checks with sufficient funds. Accordingly, the Commission declines to proceed on this charge.

³ Pursuant to Section 8-13-1510(A), Respondent's late-filing penalties are limited to \$100.00 for the 2023 Quarter 4 CDR because Respondent did not receive certified notice from the Commission of her failure to timely file.

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a violation of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$800.00 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 \$800.00 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 26th DAY OF March 2025.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


F. XAVIER STARKES, CHAIR

Signed by:

2001F72E10AF454
BARBARA BLAIN-BELLAMY
RESPONDENT