

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER

C 2024-043

COMPLAINT FORM

1. **COMPLAINANT:** James Carpenter
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Attorney

RESPONDENT: Ian Brett Sanders
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER:
TITLE: Anderson Co. Council, Dist. 4

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).

Upon information and belief, Mr. Sanders failed to disclose his ownership in the following companies on his current SEI Report submitted March 26, 2024, or for any year prior:

- Green Sand, LLC
- Hembree Creek, LLC
- Hurricane Creek, LLC
- SeaSand, LLC
- Welpine Properties, LLC

He did, however, amend his report on May 30, 2024. He has provided no public reason why he failed to disclose these 5 companies until just recently and failed to disclose them when he ran for County Council in 2018.

He seems to have named at least 2 of his LLCs the same name as Anderson County sewer projects.

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 Greenville

Personally appeared before me James Carpenter 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
24th day of June, 2024

[REDACTED]

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires _____



[REDACTED]

Complainant Signature

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
))
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2024-043)
))
James G. Carpenter,) **DECISION AND ORDER**
Complainant.)
))
Ian Brett Sanders,)
Respondent.)
_____)

This matter came before the South Carolina Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on June 27, 2024. The Commission’s Executive Director reviewed the Complaint, determined it contained facts sufficient to warrant an investigation, and ordered an investigation. On November 21, 2024, the Commission reviewed the Complaint and investigative findings to determine whether probable cause existed to charge Ian Brett Sanders (Respondent) with violating the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act). For the reasons stated herein, the Commission finds probable cause exists, but waives further proceedings on the matter.¹

STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Respondent has served on the Anderson County Council since 2018. Respondent timely filed his Statements of Economic Interests (SEIs) in 2021, 2022, and 2023.
2. On June 27, 2024, the Commission received a Complaint alleging Respondent failed to disclose his ownership interests in multiple businesses on his 2024 SEI, filed on March 26, 2024. Respondent amended his 2024 SEI on May 30, 2024 to disclose his ownership interests, but he did not similarly amend prior SEIs.

¹ The Commission is bound by the four-year statute of limitations found in Section 8-13-320(9)(d) of the Ethics Act. Therefore, allegations referenced in the Complaint occurring prior to June 27, 2020 are not considered herein.

3. Following the filing of the Complaint, the Commission's investigation revealed, in relevant part, that Respondent held ownership interests in multiple businesses in 2020, 2021, and 2022. The investigation further revealed that Respondent reported the businesses' residual income on his income taxes.
4. On October 22, 2024, after receiving guidance from the Commission, Respondent amended his 2021-2023 SEIs to disclose private income received from his businesses.

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 and 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). If the Commission determines probable cause exists, it may order a hearing on the merits or, if the Respondent has taken action to remedy or correct the alleged violation, it may waive further proceedings. Section 8-13-320(10)(i). The decision to waive further proceedings lies within the sound discretion of the Commission.

Section 8-13-1120 of the Ethics Act requires public officials to disclose private sources of income on their SEIs.²

DECISION

Based on evidence presented, the Commission hereby determines there is probable cause to believe that Respondent violated Section 8-13-1120 of the Ethics Act by failing to report sources

² Following the filing of the Complaint, Complainant mailed a letter to the Commission on July 10, 2024 alleging that Respondent failed to report an in-kind expenditure that he received from Heli-plane Aviation on June 22, 2024 on his Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR). The Commission's investigation revealed that the owner of Heli-plane Aviation, Scott Dunn, independently advertised Respondent's candidacy without Respondent's knowledge or coordination. Accordingly, Respondent was not required to report the expenditure on his CDR.

of income on his 2021-2023 SEIs. However, Respondent has since properly amended his 2021-2023 SEIs to disclose said income. Therefore, based on the totality of the circumstances, the Commission hereby waives further proceedings pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the Ethics Act.

THEREFORE, pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, the Commission hereby waives further proceedings.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 11th DAY OF January, 2024.

SOUTH CAROLINA ETHICS COMMISSION


SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR

Columbia, South Carolina