

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
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FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2024 -058

COMPLAINT FORM

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

RESPONDENT: Johnathan P. Ammons
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Town of Whitnire Councilman

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 2023 and 2024 Statement of Economic Interests. Respondent was sent an email reminder thirty days prior to each deadline.

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 October 14, 2020 and October 19, 2020.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirements by a certified letter dated May 11, 2023 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure, 2023 Statement of Economic Interests, and 2024 Statement of Economic Interests have not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1140, 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 Walker Dayson 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
5th day of July, 2024

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson, 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 C2024-050)	
)	
State Ethics Commission)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.)	
)	
Johnathan P. Ammons, Sr.)	
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, June 19, 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 FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Johnathan P. Ammons, candidate for Whitmire Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR), in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

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

That Johnathan P. Ammons, candidate for Whitmire Town Council, did in Richland

County, fail to file a 2023 Statement of Economic Interests (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 Johnathan P. Ammons, candidate for Whitmire Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2024 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 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 Johnathan P. Ammons, Sr., 25992 SC Highway 121, Whitmire, SC 29178 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

State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
 COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
)
 IN THE MATTER OF:)
 COMPLAINT C2024-050)
)
 State Ethics Commission,)
 Complainant,)
)
 Johnathan P. Ammons, Sr.)
 Respondent.)
 _____)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on July 5, 2024. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Johnathan P. Ammons, Sr., (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 the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent has served on Whitmire Town Council since his election on November 3, 2020.
2. Respondent failed to file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) prior to the November 3, 2020 election.
3. Respondent failed to file a 2023 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) prior to March 30, 2023.
4. In a May 11, 2023 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR and a 2023 SEI.
5. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS), the certified letter was “Delivered, Left with Individual” on May 13, 2023 at 9:57 a.m.
6. Respondent failed to file a 2024 SEI prior to March 30, 2024.
7. On June 10, 2024, a Commission staff member attempted to contact Respondent via telephone but did not receive a response.
8. On July 24, 2024, the Commission filed the Complaint and attempted to notify Respondent of the

Complaint via certified mail. The letter was unclaimed and returned to the Commission.

9. On August 12, 2024, a Commission investigator contacted Respondent via telephone. Respondent gave the investigator his correct mailing address and confirmed that he had not received any correspondence from the Commission. The Commission re-mailed the Complaint the same day.
10. On August 22, 2024, Respondent confirmed receipt of the Commission's Complaint and filed all missing reports with the help of Commission staff. He 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) and a "public official" pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1308(A) provides, in relevant part:

Upon the receipt or expenditure of campaign contributions or the making of independent expenditures totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more, a candidate or committee required to file a statement of organization pursuant to Section 8-13-1304(A) must file an initial certified campaign report within ten days of these initial receipts or expenditures. However, 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 8-13-1140 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 . . .

4. 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 . . .

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with one (1) count of violating

Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to file a 2020 Pre-Election (CDR) and two (2) counts of violating Section 8-13-1140 for failing to timely file a 2023 SEI and a 2024 SEI. Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits he violated the Ethics Act as outlined herein.¹ In mitigation, Respondent states that he did not receive the Commission's May 11, 2023 penalty letter. He further states that his son, who has the same name, resided with him when the Commission sent the letter and could have intercepted it. Nevertheless, Respondent asserts that the signature on the letter does not belong to him or his son. Further, Respondent asserts that he changed his telephone number since running for office and does not recall being contacted by Commission staff in June 2024. Additionally, Respondent asserts that 2020 was his first run for office and that he was confused by the filing requirements, namely regarding the annual SEI requirement. Finally, the Commission acknowledges that Respondent's only contributions related to his 2020 election were two (2) personal contributions totaling \$150.00, that the Commission sent its initial correspondence to an outdated address for Respondent, that Respondent received his first confirmed notice of his failures to file on August 15, 2024, and that Respondent came into compliance on August 22, 2024 after speaking with Commission staff.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of Section 8-13-1308(A) and two (2) counts of Section 8-13-1140.
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

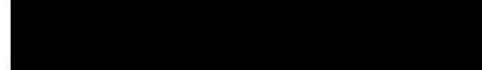
THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this Public Reprimand to Respondent and orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within twelve (12) months from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$300.00 (\$100.00 per report) and an administrative fee of \$150.00, for a total of \$450.00.

¹ Respondent also failed to timely file a 2021 SEI. However, the late-filing penalty with regard to the 2021 SEI is being handled by the Commission's standard noncompliance process and therefore not addressed herein or affected by this Consent Order.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to a violation of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$450.00 in the event he 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 \$450.00 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS ____ DAY OF _____ 2025.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION



NEAL D. TRUSLOW, VICE-CHAIR

Signed by:
Johnathan P. Ammons, Sr.

JOHNATHAN P. AMMONS, SR.
RESPONDENT