

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION  
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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:  
CASE NUMBER  
C 2025-076

COMPLAINT FORM

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

RESPONDENT: Jimmy Chinnes  
ADDRESS: P.O. Box 37  
Hemingway, SC 29554  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: ( [REDACTED] )  
TITLE: Town of Hemingway Councilman

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 an accumulated aggregate of \$500.00 or more; 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 June 22, 2022 and June 27, 2022.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by a certified letter dated July 12, 2024 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure has not been received. All in violation of 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 27<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025

[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  
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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
COUNTY OF RICHLAND ) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION  
) )  
IN THE MATTER OF: )  
COMPLAINT C2025-076 )  
) )  
State Ethics Commission, ) **DECISION AND ORDER**  
Complainant. )  
) )  
Jimmy Chinnes, )  
Respondent. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

This matter came before the South Carolina Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on August 27, 2025. The Commission’s Executive Director reviewed the Complaint, determined it contained facts sufficient to warrant an investigation, and ordered an investigation. On September 18, 2025, the Commission reviewed the Complaint and investigative findings to determine whether probable cause existed to charge Jimmy Chinnes (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.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

1. Respondent was a candidate for Hemingway Town Council in a July 12, 2022 election.
2. Respondent failed to file a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Respondent (CDR) prior to his July 12, 2022, election.
3. In a July 12, 2024 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR.
4. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS), the Commission’s certified letter was delivered to Respondent’s address of record on July 15, 2024 at 3:06 p.m. The USPS return receipt was illegible.

*JX #1*

5. During the Commission's investigation, Respondent advised that he was unaware of the requirement to file a Pre-Election CDR. Respondent further advised, and the Commission confirmed, that he did not receive any campaign contributions or make any campaign expenditures during the 2022 election cycle. Additionally, Respondent stated that he had undergone several health issues in recent years; most notably, several falls that resulted in his breaking both hands simultaneously in one instance and sustaining a head injury in another instance. Finally, Respondent stated that he suffered from failing eyesight and had recently undergone testing for early-onset dementia.
6. On September 5, 2025, Respondent filed a 2022 Pre-Election CDR with the assistance of Commission staff.

### 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. S.C. Code Ann. § 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 acted to remedy or correct the alleged violation, it may waive further proceedings. S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-320(10)(i). The decision to waive further proceedings lies within the sound discretion of the Commission.

Section 8-13-1308(A) requires candidates who do not raise or spend an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to file a Pre-Election CDR fifteen (15) days before an election.

JK #2

**DECISION**

Based on evidence presented, the Commission hereby determines there is probable cause to believe that Respondent violated Section 8-13-1308(A) of the Ethics Act by failing to file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR fifteen (15) days prior to his July 12, 2022 election. However, given that Respondent has corrected this error, and in light of the facts listed herein, the Commission hereby waives further proceedings with regard to this Complaint.

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 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF November, 2025.

SOUTH CAROLINA ETHICS COMMISSION

  
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F. XAVIER STARKES, CHAIR

Columbia, South Carolina