

State of South Carolina

State Ethics Commission

F. XAVIER STARKES, CHAIRMAN
NEAL D. TRUSLOW, VICE
CHAIRMAN
BRYANT S. CALDWELL
HELEN MUNNERLYN



SARA PARRISH
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
MATTHEW N. TYLER

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150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN WALKER DAYSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

OPEN SESSION

November 20, 2025

The November 20, 2025 meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Chairman F. Xavier Starkes at the State Ethics Commission's Hearing Room located at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina. Chairman F. Xavier Starkes, Vice Chairman Neal D. Truslow, Commissioner Matthew N. Tyler, Commissioner Mary Hunter B. Tomlinson, and Commissioner Helen Munnerlyn were in attendance. Commissioner Sara Parrish appeared via Zoom. Commissioner Bryant Caldwell was not present.

Staff present: Meghan Walker Dayson, Ami Franklin, Courtney Laster, Kevin Hinson, Rynne Caldwell, Reggie Gaymon, W.B. White, Jr., Timothy J. Plunkett, Erin Caughman, Kristin Nabors, and Rachael O'Bryan, were in attendance.

Chairman Starkes declared a quorum present. Director Dayson noted for the record that the news media was duly notified.

APPEALS

C2022-102 State Ethics Commission vs. Bahaadur Abd'ul'Ahad

Attorney Laster presented a request from Respondent Abd'ul'Ahad to continue the appeal hearing. Attorney Laster stated that staff objected to the Respondent's request. After discussion as to whether the Respondent was aware he could attend virtually, Chairman Starkes granted the request and instructed staff to include in the notice of the new appellate hearing date that the Respondent had the option to attend virtually.

MOTIONS

C2024-087 Hannah Humphreys vs. Christa Williams

Attorney Laster presented a Motion to Dismiss Complaint C2024-087 against Christa Williams. Attorney Laster provided that the motion was filed because staff believed the Complaint was opened in error and that the Respondent had taken action to remedy any deficiencies in her filings. The Motion to Dismiss was granted by Chairman Starkes.

C2024-010 State Ethics Commission vs. Erica Cokley

Attorney Laster presented a Motion to Dismiss Complaint C2024-010 against Erica Cokley. Attorney Laster provided that the motion was filed after Commission Investigators discovered that the Respondent was without a permanent residence and has very limited resources. The Motion to Dismiss was granted by Chairman Starkes.

MINUTES

Chairman Starkes called for the approval of the September 18, 2025 minutes. Chairman Starkes asked for any discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Munnerlyn, seconded by Commissioner Truslow, to accept the minutes from the September 18, 2025 Commission meeting. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Dayson presented the Commissioners with a revised Commission Complaint form. Director Dayson stated that it was her hope that the amended form would help the public better understand what the Commission does and does not have jurisdiction over and provide potential complainants with an idea of what may be required of them when filing a complaint. A motion was made by Commissioner Munnerlyn, seconded by Commissioner Truslow, to adopt the revised Complaint form as written. The motion carried with a 6–0 vote.

Following the adoption of the form, there was discussion regarding the timeframe for discontinuing acceptance of the previous version. A motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Munnerlyn, that the Commission will accept complaints filed on the previous form that are postmarked on or before November 30, 2025. The motion carried with a 6–0 vote.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Director Dayson presented the Budget, Compliance reports, and Pending and Paid Orders report for information.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Starkes asked for further discussion or a motion to go into Executive Session to receive a human resources update, to receive an update on security plans, to receive legal advice regarding Section 52-713 of the S.C. Code of Regulations, and to hear probable cause matters. A motion was made by Commissioner Tyler, seconded by Commissioner Tomlinson, to go into Executive Session for the purposes stated. The motion carried with a 6–0 vote.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commissioners returned from Executive Session at 11:50 a.m. Chairman Starkes noted for the record that no votes, other than those allowed by statute, were taken in executive session.

ACTION ITEMS

After returning from Executive Session, Chairman Starkes asked whether there was any discussion or a motion regarding the AHSC AHPM form reviewed during Executive Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Munnerlyn, seconded by Commissioner Tyler, to accept the AHSC AHPM form as presented. The motion carried by a 6–0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Starkes asked for further discussion or a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Truslow asked Director Dayson about the oldest cases on the Complaint Docket and whether staff had any idea of the timeline for resolving them. Director Dayson provided that she could not speak on any particular case since none of the parties had been notified of potential discussion, but that staff is working diligently to resolve the oldest matters.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Truslow, seconded by Commissioner Munnerlyn, to adjourn at 11:55 a.m. The motion carried with a 6 – 0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachael O'Bryan

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