

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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STATE ETHICS
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COMPLAINT FORM

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2020-073

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

RESPONDENT: William H. Ragland
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Councilman – City of Pelzer

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.

Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 18, 2017 and October 23, 2017, and a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 16, 2019 and October 21, 2019. In addition, a Campaign Disclosure was due no later than October 10, 2016, January 10, 2017, April 10, 2017, July 10, 2017, January 10, 2018, April 10, 2018, July 10, 2018, October 10, 2018, January 10, 2019, April 10, 2019, July 10, 2019, January 10, 2020, April 10, 2020, and July 10, 2020. Respondent was sent an email reminder thirty days before each Campaign Disclosure deadline.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirements by a letter dated May 13, 2020 as described in the attached. To date, no properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure for the November 7, 2017 election, Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure for the November 5, 2019, October 10, 2016, January 10, 2017, April 10, 2017, July 10, 2017, January 10, 2018, April 10, 2018, July 10, 2018, October 10, 2018, January 10, 2019, April 10, 2019, July 10, 2019, January 10, 2020, April 10, 2020, or July 10, 2020 Campaign Disclosure has been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B), Section 8-13-1308(D)(1), and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

All investigations, inquiries, hearings, and accompanying documents must remain confidential unless respondent waives the right to confidentiality. 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. The willful release of confidential information is a misdemeanor, and any person releasing such confidential information, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned not more than one year. Section 8-13-320(10)(g).

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan L. Walker 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 1st day of October, 2020

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires August 11, 2025

SEC-7 (Revised 8/2019)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
FAXED COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
Complaint C2020-073)
William H. Ragland)
Respondent.)
State Ethics Commission)
Complainant.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING

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, to support the allegations made 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 21, 2022 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 QUARTERLY CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(B), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due January 10, 2016, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to

timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due April 10, 2016, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due July 10, 2016, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due October 10, 2016, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due January 10, 2017, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due April 10, 2017, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due July 10, 2017, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

COUNT EIGHT
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(E), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2017 pre-election campaign disclosure report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(E).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due January 10, 2018, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due April 10, 2018, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due July 10, 2018, in violation of Section 8-13-

1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due October 10, 2018, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due January 10, 2019, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due April 10, 2019, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due July 10, 2019, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

COUNT SIXTEEN
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(E), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2019 pre-election campaign disclosure report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(E).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due January 10, 2020, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to timely file a quarterly campaign disclosure report due April 10, 2020, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

COUNT NINETEEN
FAILURE TO FILE A STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1110, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That William Ragland, candidate for Pelzer Town Council, did in Richland County, fail to file a Statement of Economic Interests prior to taking the oath of office as a councilmember, in violation of Section 8-13-1110.

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 L. Walker, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 28th day,
of October 2021.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT William H. Ragland, 207 Leby St, Pelzer, SC 29669 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 28th day of October 2021, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Columbia, South Carolina

Richard A. Provencher, Administrative Assistant
State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

MAY 18 2022

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2020-073)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
William H. Ragland,)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on October 1, 2020. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against William H. Ragland (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing.¹ Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to entry of the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent was a candidate in a 2015 election for Pelzer Town Council (Council). In conjunction with his 2015 election, Respondent filed an Initial Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) with the Commission disclosing \$689.24 in on-hand contributions.
2. Respondent failed to file any additional CDRs.
3. Respondent was a candidate in a November 7, 2017 election for Council.
4. Respondent did not file a Pre-Election CDR prior to the November 7, 2017 election.
5. Respondent was a candidate in a November 5, 2019 election for Council.
6. Respondent did not file a Pre-Election CDR prior to the November 5, 2019 election.
7. On May 13, 2020, the Commission mailed a certified letter to Respondent's address of record

¹ The Notice of Hearing in this matter contained eighteen (18) counts of violating Section 8-13-1308(B) for failing to timely file quarterly Campaign Disclosure Reports (CDRs) from January 10, 2016 through April 10, 2020 and one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1110 for failing to file a Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) prior to taking the oath of office. Counts One (1), Two (2), Three (3) and Nineteen (19) are for filings Respondent has already been penalized for outside of this Complaint. The Commission therefore declines to proceed on these Counts.

advising him of his failure to file any additional CDRs. According to the United States Postal Service, the certified letter was delivered on May 16, 2020 at 9:27 a.m.

8. On May 26, 2020, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$10 per day, per CDR.
9. On June 5, 2020, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$100 per day, per CDR.
10. Respondent was a candidate in a July 14, 2020 special election for Mayor of Pelzer.
11. In conjunction with his July 14, 2020 special election, Respondent filed a Pre-Election CDR disclosing \$314.24 in on-hand contributions.
12. Following the filing of the Complaint, a Commission Investigator subpoenaed Respondent's campaign bank account records.
13. A review of Respondent's campaign bank account records revealed Respondent had maintained the same campaign bank account since the 2015 election. The records further revealed that Respondent maintained the following balance in his campaign bank account during the relevant time frame: (a) \$989.24 from October 2016 through October 2017; (b) \$34.55 from January 2018 through October 2019; (c) \$46.55 from October 2019 through January 2020; (d) \$359.71 in April 2020; (e) \$31.71 from July 2020 through April 2021.
14. On April 27, 2022, Respondent came into compliance by filing all the required CDRs.

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 and Section 8-13-1300(4).
Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1308 provides, in relevant part:
 - (A) Upon receipt or expenditure of campaign contributions or the making of independent expenditures totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more, a candidate . . . 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.

- (B) 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.

...

- (D)(1) At least fifteen days before an election, a certified campaign report must be filed showing contributions of more than one hundred dollars and expenditures to or by the candidate for the period ending twenty days before the election.

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

Except as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter, a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report or fails to file a required 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; and (2) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement or report has not been filed, a fine of ten dollars per calendar day for the first ten days after notice has been given, and one hundred dollars for each additional calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

4. 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 fifteen (15) counts of violating Section 8-13-1308 for failing to file fifteen (15) CDRs from October 10, 2016 through April 10, 2020. Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges he violated the Ethics Act when he failed to timely file the required CDRs. Respondent states that each time he ran for office he followed the instructions of the Town Clerk as to what documents should be filed. Respondent states he did not respond to the Commission’s May 2020 correspondence because of personal issues related to his

employment that were occurring at that time. Respondent states that these personal issues caused him to neglect many areas in his life, including, but not limited to, timely responding to the Commission's May 2020 correspondence.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of fifteen (15) counts of Section 8-13-1308.
2. The Commission hereby adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby orders the Respondent to pay the Commission, within one (1) year from receipt of this Order, a reduced late-filing penalty of \$2,000 pursuant to Section 8-13-1510(A)(1) and an administrative fee of \$500 pursuant to Section 8-13-130, for a total of \$2,500.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to violations of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$2,500 (less any money paid to the Commission) in the event he does not make full and timely payment as provided for in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the Clerk of Court's Office in the County of Respondent's last known residence. Upon said filing, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$2,500 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 16 DAY OF May 2022.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


AJ HOLLOWAY, CHAIR


WILLIAM H. RAGLAND
RESPONDENT