

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

CASE NUMBER

c 2025-073

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: Skylar Carver

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: Citizen

RESPONDENT: Jessie Bunning

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: City Council

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).

Please see attached for Potential S.C. Code § 8-13-765(A) and S.C. Code § 8-13-1346 (A) Violations of Jessie Bunning using uniformed officers and Public resources as campaign material on a candidate Facebook Page. August 13, 25; Just a few days after the Post in question, she announced backing the blue.

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 Oconee

Personally appeared before me Skylar Carver 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
19th day of Aug, 2025

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 5/7/2035



Complainant Signature

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

C102form

Skylar A. Carver



August 12, 2025

South Carolina State Ethics Commission

201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210

Subject: Complaint Regarding Coordinated Campaign Ethics Violation by City of Walhalla
Official – Jessie Bunning

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this formal complaint to the South Carolina State Ethics Commission concerning what I believe to be a violation of South Carolina's ethics and campaign laws by certain elected officials of the City of Walhalla, South Carolina.

Nature of the Violation

In the days immediately preceding the municipal election, multiple current city officials—some of whom are candidates for re-election—participated in a coordinated photo shoot with members of the Walhalla Police Department in uniform and on city premises. These images were subsequently posted on public social media pages and shared among the candidates' networks, with captions or context that conveyed campaign-related messaging.

This activity appears to violate S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-1346 and related provisions, which prohibit the use of public resources, personnel, or property to influence the outcome of an election.

Coordinated Political Context

The timing of this photo shoot was not incidental. It occurred only moments after a separate, coordinated political narrative emerged that a certain candidate wanted to "defund the police." That narrative stemmed from a single council member—who was notably excluded from the photo shoot—raising a budgetary discussion point that, in light of city staff layoffs, perhaps the city should consider transitioning to a county-operated police force.

By staging and promoting these official police photo session(s) immediately following those comments, the officials involved effectively used public resources to produce and disseminate a campaign counter-message. This was not neutral civic communication; it

was a targeted political act intended to influence voters and discredit another elected official's policy discussion.

Why This is Concerning

Such conduct undermines the public's trust in both elected leadership and law enforcement by blurring the line between official duties and campaign activities. Citizens deserve the assurance that municipal resources and the image of the police department will not be weaponized for partisan advantage or to distort legitimate policy debates.

Requested Action

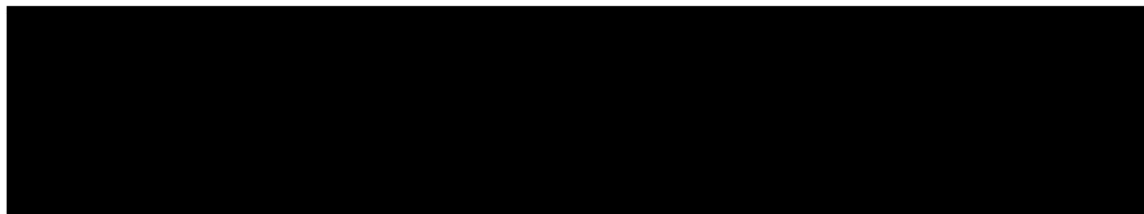
I respectfully request that the Commission:

1. Investigate the officials' conduct and the coordination surrounding the timing and messaging of the photo shoot.
2. Determine whether the use of official police imagery, property, and personnel constituted a violation of South Carolina ethics and campaign statutes.
3. Issue findings and, where appropriate, penalties or directives to prevent such misuse in the future.

I can provide photographic evidence, timestamps of postings, and supporting documentation regarding the sequence of events and public statements. Please advise me on the best method to submit this evidence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your work in safeguarding the integrity of South Carolina's public institutions.

Respectfully,



Skylar Carver



Skylar Azariah Carver

17h · 🌐

...

You can't say "thank you" one minute and missue officers the next.

This is about stewarding and honoring public trust. Backing the blue means protecting jobs, funding equipment and training, and if the city truly cannot afford positions, working with other agencies to help officers find roles where they can continue to serve.

From what I have been told, keep in mind it is second hand knowledge, some council members did not know certain police employees were leaving until after the fact. The administrative clerk reportedly did not resign voluntarily; that decision was made by the chief to free up funds for more officers. The lieutenant being relieved had declined to work night shifts.

If accurate, these are internal staffing decisions, not an effort to defund the department.

South Carolina law (SC Code § 8-13-1346) makes it illegal to use public property, such as on-duty officers, uniforms, and city vehicles, to influence an election. Posting official police photos on campaign pages crosses that line.

Our officers are not campaign props. They are public servants who deserve resources, respect, job security, and protection from political misuse.

Serve them, because these servants deserve it.

To the officers, I'm sorry for how you are being treated. What can the community do to truly serve you, rather than make you a campaign pawn?

#backtheblue #humanizethebadge #LawEnforcement #SouthCarolina #servewithintegrity



Tim Hall, Mayor of Walhalla SC

1K followers · 77 following

Thankful to the citizens of Walhalla for electing me as their Mayor.

Following

Message

...

Posts About Photos More

Like Comment Retweet Share



Tim Hall, Mayor of Walhalla SC updated their profile picture.



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council

67 likes · 274 followers

Like

Message

Posts About Photos More

Like Comment Retweet Share



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council

A big thank you to the Walhalla Police Department for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to keeping our community safe every day!



Posts About Photos More

Like Comment Retweet Share



Page - Political Candidate

100% (1 Review)

See Sara Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC's posts

Sara Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC's posts

Sara Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC

Tim Hall, Mayor of Walhalla SC

Skylar's Post



Thankful to the citizens of Walhalla for electing me as their Mayor.

Following

Message



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council

67 likes · 274 comments

Like

Message

Posts About Photos More

Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council

A big thank you to the Walhalla Police Department for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to keeping our community safe every day!



Posts About Photos More

Page · Political Candidate

Not yet rated (1 Review)

See Sarah Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC's posts

Sarah Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC's posts

Sarah Melendez, City Council of Walhalla, SC

Tim Mott, Mayor of Walhalla SC

Sharie Kaslasi, Hayden Laye and 12 others

80 comments · 3 shares

Like

Comment

Share

All comments



Cliff Powell

I think it became an issue as soon as a group of candidates announced they were running to defund the police and these politicians were saying they would not support that.

17h Like Reply



Skylar Azariah Carver

I do not have first hand knowledge of any candidate stating they are "defunding the police"; if you have first hand knowledge please provide the source? Even if a candidate did state they wanted to "defund the police" this does not change the fact that this is an ethics violation.

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver <https://youtu.be/OvELaZ1-nEA?si=XgvQUPyOMcHPq-Qx>



YOUTUBE.COM

The Solution to Walhalla's Mess!

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver didn't that same candidate go to city property (the water plant) and talked with a city employee with fox Carolina a few weeks ago? Wouldn't that be a violation under the same code?



Comment as Skylar Azariah Carver



Skylar's Post



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver didn't that same candidate go to city property (the water plant) and talked with a city employee with fox Carolina a few weeks ago? Wouldn't that be a violation under the same code?

...

16h Like Reply



Skylar Azariah Carver

Cliff Powell I did watch this video, and didn't see this being explicitly defunding the police, but will give it a rewatch to be safe.

...

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver 17:55 is where it starts

...

16h Like Reply



Skylar Azariah Carver

Cliff Powell I am not a lawyer and this isn't legal advice; but I do not believe so; because this employee was whistleblowing, and seeking the support of a councilman in there fiduciary and elected responsibility to the public.

...

The words of the various councils post are not bad; it's the photos. That is a no-no.

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver I'm not a lawyer either and I would be curious for the difference between photos and video when it comes to this code - John Aguilar do you think Nathan or Tj could weigh in on this?

...

16h Like Reply



Skylar Azariah Carver

Cliff Powell I got to be honest, I didn't hear one time where Grant Keehn said to "defund the police".

He actually said "it's a bummer" to not be able to afford police due to the budgetary issues of the city.

...

Do you hear it? I genuinely want to hear your thoughts on this matter!! I hope you hear my heart here.



Comment as Skylar Azariah Carver



Skylar's Post



Skylar Azariah Carver

Cliff Powell I am not a lawyer and this isn't legal advice; but I do not believe so; because this employee was whistleblowing, and seeking the support of a councilman in there fiduciary and elected responsibility to the public.

...

The words of the various councils post are not bad; it's the photos. That is a no-no.

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver I'm not a lawyer either and I would be curious for the difference between photos and video when it comes to this code - John Aguilar do you think Nathan or Tj could weigh in on this?

...

16h Like Reply



Skylar Azariah Carver

Cliff Powell I got to be honest, I didn't hear one time where Grant Keehn said to "defund the police".

...

He actually said "it's a bummer" to not be able to afford police due to the budgetary issues of the city.

Do you hear it? I genuinely want to hear your thoughts on this matter!! I hope you hear my heart here.



The Solution to Walhalla's Mess!

487 views · 4 days ago · ...more



Grant Keehn

Subscribe

16h Like Reply



Cliff Powell

Skylar Azariah Carver "for far less than we can have a police department we can contract with the sheriff department" 1:31 I believe on your clip

...

16h Like Reply



Comment as Skylar Azariah Carver



15:18



< Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Cou... 🔍

Posts About Photos More ▼

👍 Like 💬 Comment ✉️ Send ➦ Share



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council ...

3d · 🌐

A big thank you to the Walhalla Police Department for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to keeping our community safe every day!



👍❤️ 34

2 comments 1 share

👍 Like 💬 Comment ✉️ Send ➦ Share



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council ...

3d · 🌐

Thrilled to see construction begin! Careful planning



Home



Friends



Reels



Marketplace



Notifications



Menu



Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council



67 likes • 274 followers

 Liked

 Message



Posts

About

Photos

More ▼

Details



Page · Political Organization



Not yet rated (0 Reviews)



See Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council's About Info

Jessie Bunning - Walhalla City Council's posts



Home



Friends



Reels



Marketplace



Notifications



Menu

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
Complaint C2025-073)
Skylar Carver,)
Complainant.)
Jessie Bunning,)
Respondent.)
_____)

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, 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, February 18, 2027, 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 DISCLOSE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS
SECTION 8-13-1308(F)(1)(2), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to report campaign contribution(s) at or below \$100.00 on her Quarter 1 2025/Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR), in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F)(1)(2).

COUNT TWO

**FAILURE TO DISCLOSE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS
SECTION 8-13-1308(F)(1)(2), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to report a \$200.00

campaign contribution from John D. Lyle, deposited on April 17, 2025, on her Quarter 2 2025 CDR, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F)(1)(2).

COUNT THREE
FAILURE TO REPORT CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES
SECTION 8-13-1308(F)(3)(4), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to report on her Quarter 2 2025 CDR, a campaign expenditure of \$275.00 made payable to Jessie Bunning on May 6, 2025, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F)(3)(4).

COUNT FOUR
FAILURE TO REPORT CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES
SECTION 8-13-1308(F)(3)(4), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to report on her Quarter 2 2025 CDR, a campaign expenditure of \$20.00 made payable to Jessie Bunning on July 8, 2025, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(F)(3)(4).

COUNT FIVE
FAILURE TO USE CAMPAIGN BANK ACCOUNT
SECTION 8-13-1312, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to deposit \$750.00 in campaign contributions into her campaign bank account and failed to pay \$547.67 in campaign expenditures through her campaign bank account, in violation of Section 8-13-1312.

COUNT SIX
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(D)(1), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to timely file a Quarter 1 2025/Pre-Election CDR for the April 7, 2025 Special Election, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(D)(1).

COUNT SEVEN
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(D)(1), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Jessie Bunning, candidate for City of Walhalla Council, failed to timely file a Quarter 3 2025/Pre-Election CDR for the November 4, 2025 General Election, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(D)(1).

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

That Jessie Bunning, Councilwoman for the City of Walhalla, failed to timely file a Quarter 2 2025 CDR on or before July 10, 2025, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That Jessie Bunning, Councilman for the City of Walhalla, failed to timely file a Quarter 1 2026 CDR on or before April 10, 2026, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That Jessie Bunning, Councilwoman for the City of Walhalla, failed to timely file a Quarter 2 2026 CDR on or before July 10, 2026, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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

That Jessie Bunning, Councilwoman for the City of Walhalla, failed to timely file a 2026 Statement of Economic Interests on or before March 30, 2026, 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.

Dated this 17th day,
of September 2026


Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on RESPONDENT Jessie Bunning, PO Box 1099, Walhalla, SC 29691 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 11 day of September 2026, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.


Maquita S. Kessler, Paralegal
State Ethics Commission

Columbia, South Carolina

(803) 253-4192