

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

CASE NUMBER

c 2025-085

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: Casey Hill

RESPONDENT: Richard Chaz Miller

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: Town Clerk

TITLE: Council Member

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).

This complaint is filed pursuant to the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 8-13-100 et seq.) against Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller for:

- Willful misuse of public office
- Failure to recuse from matters in which he holds a personal financial interest
- Dereliction of official duties as an elected official
- Attempts to misappropriate federal funds
- Public defamation and unethical conduct
- False or misleading statements about military status under S.C. law

Please see the attached supplemental sheets

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 Orangeburg

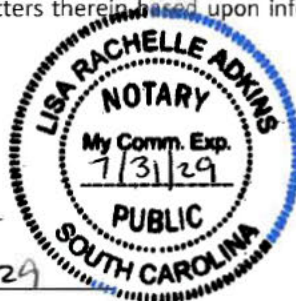
Personally appeared before me Casey Hill who, first being duly sworn, says that he/she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of his/her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those he/she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 12th day of Sept., 2025

[REDACTED]

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires 7/31/2029



[REDACTED]

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

Casey Hill

Town Clerk, Town of Eutawville

P.O. Box 372

Eutawville, SC 29048

Phone: 803-837-1214

Email: municipalclerk@eutawvillesc.org

Date: September 12, 2025

To:

South Carolina State Ethics Commission

201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150

Columbia, SC 29210

Re: Formal Complaint Against Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller – Town of Eutawville, SC

1. Parties

- **Complainant:** Casey Hill, Town Clerk, Town of Eutawville, SC
- **Respondent:** Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller, Elected Official, Town of Eutawville, SC

2. Overview and Summary of Complaint

This complaint is filed pursuant to the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 8-13-100 et seq.) against Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller for:

- Willful misuse of public office
- Failure to recuse from matters in which he holds a personal financial interest
- Dereliction of official duties as an elected official
- Attempts to misappropriate federal funds
- Public defamation and unethical conduct
- False or misleading statements about military status under S.C. law

3. Alleged Ethical and Legal Violations**A. Conflict of Interest and Failure to Recuse (§ 8-13-700(B))**

Mr. Miller failed to recuse himself from discussion and a vote at the May 13, 2025 Town Council meeting concerning legal action related to a property dispute involving **his own residence**. He instead:

- Participated in discussion to influence the vote
- Insisted the town hire a surveyor to conduct an official survey, when his property had been surveyed in recent years and could have been used to avoid the town using taxpayer money for an additional survey.
- Made defamatory and retaliatory accusations about other officials during the public meeting

This behavior constitutes a direct conflict of interest and a violation of § 8-13-700(B), which mandates that a public official with an economic interest in a matter before the body must:

- Prepare a written statement describing the matter and the nature of the potential conflict
- Furnish the statement to the presiding officer
- Refrain from participation in any discussions or votes

B. Dereliction of Duty (§ 5-7-210, § 8-13-700(A))

Mr. Miller has repeatedly failed to fulfill the basic responsibilities of an elected official:

- Attending council meetings only sporadically for over a year
- Intentionally refusing to vote on numerous items before Council (as recorded in minutes)
- **Ceasing all attendance** of Town meetings after May 13, 2025

Under S.C. Code § 5-7-210, council members have a statutory duty to perform the responsibilities of office. A continued failure to attend meetings and vote on matters affecting Town business constitutes a willful abandonment of duties and a violation of the public trust.

C. Misrepresentation of Military Status & Employment

Mr. Miller has claimed absences from Town duties were due to “military obligations” with the **South Carolina Army National Guard**. However:

- No documentation has ever been provided supporting this claim
- Mr. Miller is employed with **Booz Allen Hamilton**, a federal contractor, and his responsibilities with this employer do **not qualify** as military service under S.C. law

Under **S.C. Code § 25-1-2340**, it is unlawful to falsely represent one’s military status or service for the purpose of personal gain or exemption from civic responsibilities. Using such status to justify absence from elected duties is a misrepresentation.

D. Attempted Misappropriation of Federal Funds (§ 8-13-700(A); Federal Oversight)

In a proposal for Mayor and Council, Mr. Miller proposed using **appropriated federal funds** obtained by the Town Clerk through Sen. Lindsey Graham’s office for the purpose of purchasing **Flock Safety surveillance cameras**. These funds were designated specifically for police vehicles.

Mr. Miller’s attempt to reallocate these funds without following federal grant procedures or approval processes reflects:

- A reckless disregard for grant compliance
- An intent to misappropriate funds in violation of ethical standards and potential federal grant conditions

E. Public Defamation and Unethical Conduct (S.C. Code § 8-13-320(9))

Mr. Miller has continuously engaged in **public defamation and slander** of Town officials and staff via social media, specifically targeting:

- Myself, Casey Hill, Town Clerk
- Mayor Brandon Weatherford
- Councilman James Nutt

Rather than address concerns through formal channels or executive session, Mr. Miller regularly airs internal Town matters on public forums in an inflammatory and misleading manner. These posts have significantly harmed public trust, employee morale, and the Town's reputation.

In his absence, **Mr. Miller's wife** frequently attends meetings, recording them and later posting selectively edited footage to a Facebook page titled "**Eutawville Uncovered**", which she undoubtedly administers. This page is used to **consistently defame Town officials, employees, and council actions**, fostering a hostile environment and undermining lawful governance. This behavior—whether done directly by Mr. Miller or coordinated through a proxy—amounts to unethical and retaliatory conduct that conflicts with his duties under S.C. Code § 8-13-700(A) and § 8-13-320(9).

4. Documentation Available Upon Request

- Certified Survey (July 3, 2025) confirming Mr. Miller's encroachment onto public property
- Council Meeting Minutes (2021-2025) showing failure to vote and pattern of disruption
- Copies of social media posts made by Mr. Miller targeting Town staff and officials
- Proposal showing Mr. Miller's request to divert federal police vehicle funds
- No military orders or leave notices provided by Mr. Miller

5. Request for Action

Casey Hill, through this complaint, formally requests that the South Carolina Ethics Commission:

1. Initiate a formal investigation of Mr. Miller's conduct under S.C. Code §§ 8-13-700 and related statutes
2. Determine whether any violations warrant civil penalties or a formal public reprimand
3. Refer any potential violations of federal grant laws to appropriate authorities
4. Require Mr. Miller to complete conflict of interest and ethics training before resuming any official duties
5. Provide guidance to myself as Town Clerk and to the Town of Eutawville on handling repeated absences and obstruction of Council function by an elected official

6. Affirmation

I affirm that the statements in this complaint are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and request formal review and investigation.

Respectfully submitted,



Casey Hill

Town Clerk, Town of Eutawville

Candidate Listing

[← Change Election \(Select Election\)](#)

ELECTION

11/4/2025 Town of Eutawville General Election

For a list of all candidates, click search without selecting any search options. You can narrow your search by making selections below. If you have questions concerning your search results, please contact your County Voter Registration office.

Not what you're looking for? You may also [Search Referendums \(/Candidate/ReferendumSearch?electionId=22341\)](#) for this election.

Office <input type="text" value="All"/>	Candidate First Name <input type="text"/>	Political Party <input type="text" value="All"/>
Associated Counties <input type="text" value="Select options"/>	Candidate Last Name <input type="text"/>	Location Of Filing <input type="text" value="All"/>
Candidate Status <input type="text" value="All"/>		
<input type="button" value="Search"/>	<input type="button" value="Reset"/>	

Choose the **Print** option to download a formatted PDF file containing the filing location, office, associated counties, name on the ballot, running mate, political party, and the current status of the candidates below.

Choose the **Export** option to download a .csv file containing information included in the printed report, as well as filing fee amounts, and contact information included on candidate filing forms.

[Print \(/Candidate/PrintSearchResults\)](#) [Export \(/Candidate/ExportSearchResults\)](#)

entries per page Search:

Office	Associated Counties	Name on Ballot	Running Mate	Party	Location of Filing	Candidate Status
Mayor, Eutawville	ORANGEBURG	James L Nutt (CandidateDetail/?candidateId=22587&electionId=22341&searchType=Default)		Nonpartisan	ORANGEBURG	Active
Town Council, Eutawville	ORANGEBURG	Janet Bragg (CandidateDetail/?candidateId=22633&electionId=22341&searchType=Default)		Nonpartisan	ORANGEBURG	Active

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

« ‹ 1 › »

Casey Hill

Town Clerk, Town of Eutawville
P.O. Box 372
Eutawville, SC 29048
Phone: 803-837-1214
Email: municipalclerk@eutawvillesc.org

Date: September 24, 2025

To:

South Carolina State Ethics Commission
201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210

Re: Resubmission of Ethics Complaint Against Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller

To Whom It May Concern:

I am formally resubmitting my ethics complaint against Councilman Richard "Chaz" Miller of the Town of Eutawville. Although his current term on Town Council is set to expire in less than 50 days, Mr. Miller **did not file** for re-election with the South Carolina Election Commission.

I am including a copy of the official list of candidates for the upcoming municipal election as published by the South Carolina Election Commission, which confirms that Mr. Miller chose not to seek re-election.

It is my belief that his decision not to run should not preclude the review of this complaint. I respectfully request that the Ethics Commission proceed with reviewing the matter accordingly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Casey Hill

Town Clerk
Town of Eutawville

RESPONSE TO ETHICS COMPLAINT

Date: 16 OCT 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I respectfully request dismissal of this baseless, retaliatory complaint, submitted with intent to sway the 2025 election and defame mine and my household's character. Despite not meeting the deadline for filing to have mine or my wifes name listed on the 2025 election ballot, we still reserve the right as a "write in candidate". The Town Clerk knowing of such, chose to omit these details, identifying me as not a candidate protected under the provisions, in order to file allegations against me, that she knows to be untrue:

Allegation #1 - Conflict of Interest (May 13, 2025):

1. I publicly disclosed my conflict at the meeting (timestamp 04:59)
2. I undoubtedly abstained from voting (timestamp 17:53)
3. The official minutes were falsified to show I voted "no" when I abstained
4. I complied through public disclosure and by abstaining from the vote, achieving the statute's core purpose.

Allegations #2-5:

- **Dereliction of Duty:** All absences were legitimate and documented (military duty, federal work, medical disability acknowledged in writing or verbally to the Clerk and or other Town officials).
- **Misrepresentation of Military Status:** I accurately identified all obligations caused by which absences; I am both a National Guard member AND a federal DoD Contractor.
- **Attempted Misappropriation:** I suggested funding sources during public discussions such as having a representative conduct an informative presentation during a town meeting to increase public safety through police aids (flock safety); no funds were misappropriated.
- **Public Defamation:** All posts are documented facts and protected First Amendment speech

This is retaliation for ethics complaints I filed against the Mayor, Town Clerk, and Mayor Protem in March 2025. Clearly timed to interfere with the upcoming November 5, 2025, election.

VERBOSE RESPONSE:

Allegation #1 - Conflict of Interest

Response

I acknowledge not filing a formal written statement. However, this was not "knowing" violation:

- It was my first conflict situation as councilmember
- The town provided no prior guidance
- Matter arose during meeting without advance notice
 - Presented in the emailed meeting agenda as sent 09 MAY 2025 "Update on Continued Legal Action for the Removal of Unauthorized Solar Panels and Fence from Town-Owned Property"
 - Changed to "Vote and Discussion on the Update on Continued Legal Action for the Removal of Unauthorized Solar Panels and Fence from Town-Owned Property" on the day of the 13 May 2025 Town Council Meeting.
- In good faith belief, I orally disclosed the property to be my own, answered questions from other Councilmembers on the topic, at the mayors request and abstained from voting on the motion.

I did, however, do what I thought to be appropriate based on my personal beliefs and understanding of ethical behavior.

A. I immediately disclosed my personal interests before any discussion:

- Councilman Richard Chaz Miller (04:59): “the address in question is my address.”

B. I abstained from voting on the matter (17:53):

- Mayor Brandon Weatherford - all in favor?
- James Nutt, Rodger Adkins and Mayor Weatherford raised their hands to vote in favor of the action/ announced favor for action.
- Mr. Brown and I said nothing and made no physical motion.
 - The evidence is unambiguous: I did not vote.
 - I did not raise hand
 - I did not speak
 - I made no gesture
 - I completely abstained

Result: Vote was 3-0 (Weatherford, Nutt, Adkins in favor; while Mr. Brown and I abstained from the vote)

C. Participate in Deliberations

I did NOT deliberate. I provided **factual information** in response to direct allegations:

- Timeline of installations (2021-2022)
- Mayor's approval and participation in fence installation
- Communications with town attorney
- Request for survey before taking action
- Property marker locations
- Willingness to comply if survey shows encroachment

THE FALSIFIED MINUTES

Critical Issue: Despite the Clerk maintaining recording of the meeting, and having been physically present during the meeting, with recordings of the meeting being publicly available. The Clerk chose to deny clear evidence that I abstained from voting, the announcement of my personal interests during the public meeting and then chose to omit details from the meeting minutes, falsely state I voted "no" on the matter, and still chose retaliate by filing an Ethical Violation claims based on her own falsified sworn testimony.

RETALIATION FOR PROTECTED ACTIVITY

Timeline proves retaliation:

Date	Event
Feb-March 2025	I file ethics complaints against Mayor, Clerk, Mayor Protem
May 13, 2025	I properly disclose and abstain at meeting
May 13, 2025	Clerk falsifies minutes, claims I voted "no"
May 14-Aug 2025 (09:24)	Starting with his wife flipping my wife off during the May council Meeting (9:24). The mayor and his wife engaged in a documented pattern of harassment and stalking of me, my wife, and my minor children. The Clerk aided the mayor in these ongoing acts of harassment by using an official position to take action against me and my wife.
July 11, 2025	Mayor confronts Police Chief about potential investigation of himself
Aug 18, 2025	Mayor, Clerk and Jame Nutt terminate Police Chief for “Misconduct”

Sept 2025

Clerk files retaliatory ethics complaints after I decided to share factual evidence about the Towns publicly broadcasted claims.

INSTALLATIONS WERE AUTHORIZED

The legal action voted on during the meeting were based on the predicate of "unauthorized" installations. The reality is that the fence and solar were both knowingly installed and completely authorized by both the county and township permits included with the firsthand knowledge, approval and assistance of the Clerk and Mayor. Yet they chose to start a campaign of public hearings on the topic of "Update on Continued Legal Action for the Removal of Unauthorized Solar Panels and Fence from Town-Owned Property". These public meetings continued for months until I hired an attorney who asserted that the fence was approved and offered to work with the town through resolution of the Solar Installation. To date, the Town has not provided any response to my attorney's request. Additionally, after the fact, it was realized that the mayor also provided written approval for the final installation of the Solar panels.

Fence (October 2021):

- Mayor personally helped install with his tractor
- Mayor assured me placement was appropriate
- Mayor, Mrs. Weatherford, and Town Clerk Hill attended our Halloween party days later with fence visible

Solar Panels (February 2022):

- Clerk prepared and Mayor signed official written approval: "The Town of Eutawville does hereby approve the amended request for solar panel installation"
- Orangeburg County issued Building Permit
- County inspection PASSED (January 4, 2022)

All three respondents knew installations were authorized for 3+ years before claiming otherwise.

Despite repeated requests from me and my attorney (July 29, Sept 15, 2025), the town refuses to provide the July 3, 2025, survey supposedly showing encroachment. How can I respond to claims without seeing the evidence? This violates due process.

RESPONSE TO ADDITIONAL ALLEGATIONS

Allegation 2: Dereliction of Duty

Claim: Sporadic attendance, refused to vote on numerous items, ceased attendance after May 13, 2025.

Response:

A. Attendance Record: All absences were properly documented; any unexcused absence is due to the Mayor and Clerk choosing to excuse absence or accommodate remote participation. "Ceased Attendance After May 13"

Demonstrably false:

- **Military duty:** SC Army National Guard Deployment
- **DoD Contractor:** Booz Allen Hamilton assignments supporting DoD
 - April 2025 – Work related travel Houston, TX
 - June 2025 – Work related travel to NCR – no meeting due to limited participation, text to Councilman Brown
 - August 2025 - Work related travel to NCR – Email sent to Clerk
 - September 2025 – Work related travel to NCR – Email sent to Clerk
- **Medical disability:** TBI from June 12, 2025, car accident (Town Clerk acknowledged in writing July 7, 2025) thru 21 July
 - July 2025 – Medical Excuse
- **Deployment:** Africa, June 2023-April 2024 - the 2024 attendance log from the December 10, 2024 Council Meeting Agenda show the Clerk/town chose to mark me absent during my deployment.

Council Meeting Attendance Log

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mayor Brandon Weatherford	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Call	P	
Councilman James Nutt	Call	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Councilman Harry Brown	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	
Councilman Richard Miller	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	Call	
Council Roger Adkins	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	

Workshop Attendance Log

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mayor Brandon Weatherford	X	P	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Councilman James Nutt	X	P	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Councilman Harry Brown	X	P	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Councilman Richard Miller	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Councilman Roger Adkins	X	P	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	

C. Excused - Medical leave (documented, acknowledged by Clerk)

- August 12, 2025: Notified Clerk - Federal government business in DC (documented)
- September 09, 2025: Notified Clerk - "I will not be present for tonight's meeting. I have govt sponsored meetings to attend."
- Town continues to mark "absent" instead of "excused" despite receiving notifications and no longer accommodates remote attendance.

D. ADA Violations Despite documented TBI, the town:

- Conducted legal proceedings during my medical incapacity
- Imposed 30-day deadline while I was medically unable to respond

Dereliction requires willful abandonment. I meet none of the elements. all absences had legitimate, documented reasons.

Allegation 3: Misrepresentation of Military Status

Claim: Falsely claimed absences were for "military obligations" when actually employed by Booz Allen Hamilton.

Response:

A. I Have Two Separate Obligations

1. **SC Army National Guard** - Active member, deployed to Africa June 2023-April 2024, recognized as SC Warrant Officer of the Year (2025)
2. **Booz Allen Hamilton** - Federal contractor supporting DoD operations

B. No Misrepresentation, I accurately specified which obligation caused which absence: I never claimed contractor work was military service. Both are legitimate reasons requiring absences. Both are conditions accepted at the beginning of my term as Council. It changed after my military deployment. The Clerk never sought clarification because there was no misrepresentation. This violates USERRA protections and is politically motivated.

Allegation 4: Attempted Misappropriation of Federal Funds

Claim: Attempted to reallocate Sen. Graham for grant funds without following federal procedures.

Response: What Actually Happened During public discussion about Flock Safety cameras, I suggested: We might be able to use unused police salary funds or the grant monies from Sen. Lindsey Graham's office. Suggesting that we explore funding options is not an attempted misappropriation.

This was:

- A suggestion during open discussion
- Exploring funding options for public safety
- Not a formal proposal or motion
- Subject to proper vetting and federal approval

Allegation 5: Public Defamation and Unethical Conduct

Claim: Engaged in public defamation via social media; wife posted edited meeting footage.

Response:

A. First Amendment Protection My posts address government corruption speech entitled to maximum constitutional protection.

- True and documented
- Based on public records
- Protected speech on matters of public concern

B. Wife's Recordings Are Unedited

- Public meetings may be recorded under SC law
- My wife posts complete, unedited recordings for transparency
- She does this because the town STOPPED publishing full recordings
- I am not liable for my wife's protected speech (per legal analysis) as is her right

This is an attempt to silence us before the election and violate our first amendment of rights.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
))
IN THE MATTER OF:))
))
Complaint C2025-085))
))
Casey Hill,) **NOTICE OF HEARING**
Complainant.))
))
Richard “Chaz” Miller,))
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 18, 2026 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
**USE OF OFFICIAL POSITION FOR FINANCIAL GAIN; DISCLOSURE OF
POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
SECTION 8-13-700(B), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Richard “Chaz” Miller, member of the Eutawville Town Council, participated in a May 13, 2025, Town Council debate with the intent to influence a governmental action in which he had an economic interest, in violation of Section 8-13-700(B).

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO SUBMIT WRITTEN RECUSAL
SECTION 8-13-700(B), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Richard “Chaz” Miller, member of the Eutawville Town Council, on May 13, 2025,

failed to submit a written recusal from a matter in which he had an economic, in violation of Section 8-13-700(B).

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 19th day,
of March 2026.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on RESPONDENT Richard "Chaz" Miller, 141 Porcher Avenue, Eutawville, SC 29048 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 23 day of March 2026, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Erin Caughman
State Ethics Commission

Columbia, South Carolina

(803) 253-4192

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
 COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
)
 IN THE MATTER OF:)
 COMPLAINT C2025-085)
)
 Casey Hill,)
 Complainant,)
)
 Richard "Chaz" Miller,)
 Respondent.)
 _____)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the South Carolina State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a complaint filed on September 26, 2025. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Richard "Chaz" Miller (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 was elected to the Eutawville Town Council in a November 3, 2021 election and served until his term expired in 2025.
2. At all times relevant, Respondent resided at 141 Porcher Avenue in Eutawville. 141 Porcher Avenue adjoins the Eutawville Community Park, which is owned by the Town.
3. On September 8, 2021, Respondent engaged Efficient Home Services to install solar panels at his residence.
4. After obtaining approval from the County and the Town, the solar panels were installed at Respondent's residence.
5. Thereafter, a question arose as to whether Respondent's solar panels partially encroached upon Town property. In that regard, on September 12, 2023, the Town Clerk emailed the Town's attorney, in relevant part:

Mayor Weatherford asked me to reach out for some guidance. Our community park property that I highlighted in the attached GIS map

JKA #1

goes beyond a fence that we have on the property. The attached property was purchased by [Respondent] in 2020 . . . since then, [Respondent] has installed solar panels on the portion of the property owned by the Town. Mayor Weatherford would like to know what options the town has to ensure that [Respondent] can not make an imminent domain claim or similar in the future. Any guidance you have would be greatly appreciated.

6. On April 10, 2024, the Town Clerk again emailed the Town's attorney, in relevant part:

The Mayor and Council asked me to reach out concerning a property issue we have. The property owner next to our community park had solar panels installed that breached the property line and were placed on the town's property. The owner of that property, [Respondent], is now one of our council members . . . The town would like to offer to sell the portion of the property that contains the solar panels to [Respondent] for \$10,000.00.

7. On August 21, 2024, the Town's attorney responded with a list of possible resolutions to the property issue.

8. On August 30, 2024, the Mayor emailed the Town's attorney as follows:

This is a lot of information with many possible outcomes. After reading, it has become clear that the safest avenue to avoid future potential conflict and suits with the town is to simply have [Respondent] move his belongings from the town's property. This includes solar panels and structure, along with fencing in the front and rear of the property. We sent this to your office many months ago, if not nearly a year has passed. What needs to be done to get this situation rectified in the near future?

9. On October 22, 2024, the Town's attorney responded:

I did speak with [Respondent] awhile back and was able to get a little more information regarding the property at issue. If the Town wants to sell the land between the park and [Respondent] to him, then the Town needs to have a survey done so that we have a clear delineation of the property boundaries to be used for the purpose of the legal description. The current property records are unclear. It would also be helpful to obtain an appraisal for the purpose of setting a purchase price, but that is not necessary. The property survey is necessary, though. If the Town wants the solar panels moved, then that is likely something that needs to be taken up with the company that installed them, as it was their error. Again, a property survey would be ideal so that there is no question as to the property line. Because [Respondent] is a member of Town Council, further discussions/negotiations regarding the potential

JX #2

sale of the property with him need to occur during executive session. This obviates the appearance of a conflict of interest, as legal counsel for the Town, on my end. I am happy to attend executive session in person or by phone to facilitate this.

10. On May 13, 2025, Council considered the following in open session: "Discussion and Vote to Authorize Continued Legal Action for the Removal of Unauthorized Solar Panels and Fence from Town-Owned Property."
11. During the May 13, 2025 Council discussion, Respondent acknowledged that the property in question belonged to him. Respondent stated that the Town's attorney had contacted him about selling the disputed property and/or removing the solar panels. Respondent further stated that he advised the Town's attorney that a survey was necessary before any decisions could be made. Respondent stated no action had been taken since that time. Respondent advised that he would be willing to relocate the solar panels if a survey demonstrated that they encroached upon Town property.
12. Following the discussion, Council approved a motion to engage in legal action regarding Respondent and removal of the solar panels. Respondent did not participate in the vote, but did not submit a written recusal.
13. The Complaint alleged Respondent "failed to recuse himself from discussion and a vote at the May 13, 2025 Town Council meeting concerning legal action related to a property dispute involving his own residence" in violation of Section 8-13-700.¹

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Statements of Facts, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

¹ The Complaint also alleged Respondent engaged in the following conduct: "willful misuse of public office, dereliction of official duties as an elected official, attempts to misappropriate federal funds, public defamation and unethical conduct, [and] false or misleading statements about military status under S.C. law." To the extent any of these allegations fell within the Commission's jurisdiction, the Commission did not find probable cause to support the allegations.

JAL #3

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a public official, as defined by Section 8-13-100(27). The Commission therefore has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Respondent had an “economic interest” in the Town’s decision to pursue legal action against him regarding the solar panels according to the definition found in Section 8-13-100(11)(a):

. . . an interest distinct from that of the general public in a purchase, sale, lease, contract, option, or other transaction or arrangement involving property or services in which a [public official] may gain an economic benefit of fifty dollars or more.

3. Pursuant to Section 8-13-700(B), Respondent was prohibited from participating in the May 13, 2025 Council discussion regarding whether the Town should engage in legal action against him regarding the solar panels:

No [public official] may make, participate in making, or in any way attempt to use his [office] to influence a governmental decision in which he, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated has an economic interest.

4. In accordance with Section 8-13-700(B), Respondent was also required (but failed) to submit a written recusal from the May 13, 2025 vote:

A [public official] who, in the discharge of his official responsibilities, is required to take an action or make a decision which affects an economic interest of himself, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated shall:

- (1) prepare a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decisions and the nature of his potential conflict of interest with respect to the action or decision;

- (4) if he is a public official, other than a member of the General Assembly, he shall furnish a copy of the statement to the presiding officer of the governing body of an agency, commission, board, or of a county, municipality, or a political subdivision thereof, on which he serves, who shall cause the statement to be printed in the minutes and require that the member be excused from any votes, deliberations, and other actions on the matter on which the potential

JM #4

conflict of interest exists and shall cause the disqualification and the reasons for it to be noted in the minutes.

5. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation of any provision of the Ethics Act.”
6. Section 8-13-320(10)(l)(i) allows the Commission to require payment of a civil penalty of up to two thousand dollars for each violation of the Ethics Act.

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with one (1) count of Section 8-13-700(B) for participating in the May 13, 2025 Council discussion regarding his solar panels and one (1) count of Section 8-13-700(B) for failing to submit a written recusal statement from the subsequent vote on the matter. Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges that he violated the Ethics Act as described herein. In mitigation, Respondent states that this was his first conflict of interest as an elected official and that he was unaware of the requirement to reduce his recusal to writing: “I disclosed the conflict immediately and didn’t vote. I just didn’t know about the written form requirement. This was my first time in this type of situation and I wasn’t aware of the procedure.” In further mitigation, Respondent acknowledges participating in the discussion, but states that his comments were largely limited to identifying the subject property as belonging to him and answering questions posed to him by other Councilmembers.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of the Ethics Act as described herein.
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 issues this Written Warning to Respondent for violations of the Ethics Act and orders Respondent to pay (1) a reduced civil penalty of \$500.00 for

JH #5

participating in the May 13, 2025 Council discussion regarding his solar panels and (2) an administrative fee of \$500.00, for a total of \$1,000.00, within six (6) months from his receipt of this Order. The Commission declines to assess a civil penalty for Respondent's failure to submit a written statement of recusal in light of the aforementioned mitigation.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is confessing to a judgment of \$1,000.00 (less any money paid to the Commission) in the event he does not make full and timely payment as provided in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the County of Respondent's last known residence. Upon said filing, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$1,000.00 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS ORDERED THIS 18 DAY OF June, 2026.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION



Signature

F XAVIER STARKES, Chairman
Print Name and Title



CS/112E7530F400
RICHARD "CHAZ" MILLER
RESPONDENT