



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING
5th Floor Conference Room
September 16, 2020
9:30 A.M.

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Castagno was present via Webex and called the meeting to order at 9:32 A.M. Commissioner Salvatore Bramante was present. Commissioners Michael Ajello and Andrew Cascudo were present via Webex. Agency staff was also present.

Commissioner Castagno advised that matters 1 and 4 in Public Session are being moved into Executive Session and matters 2 and 3 in Public Session are being marked "off".

II. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 5, 2020

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of August 5, 2020. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 26, 2020

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of August 26, 2020. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of September 2, 2020

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of September 2, 2020. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of September 10, 2020

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of September 10, 2020. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

III. *Administrative Reports*

Director Brandi advised that there is a piece of correspondence from Maria Periera in the meeting packet for the commissioner's review. This is related to a complaint she had filed with the agency which was resolved at a recent meeting.

Director Brandi reported that regarding hiring, there are several positions open that the SEEC is trying to fill. There are 2 elections officer positions, one legal investigator and one secretary. Regarding the Secretary 2 position, we have closed the application process, right now with Charla Vincent, our new HR specialist, we are reviewing approximately 350 applicants for the Secretary 2 position.

Director Brandi advised that the SEEC is mindful of all the costs and expenses especially now with COVID and additional costs related to IT. Going into the November elections, SEEC is increasing overtime cost with the grant process. Overtime is authorized for the grant process as staff is trying to make its way through grant applications. The SEEC has received 310 applications so far this grant season. There are 52 applications in Section B and 4 applications in Section A that were reviewed for today's agenda. The audit unit and the compliance unit have been working non-stop trying to handle the volume of applications that are in. Staff is doing everything possible to get these applications reviewed and to the commissioners.

Director Brandi reported that in terms of the CEF we have started to receive our yearly deposits into the fund. As of September 2, 2020 we had about \$20 million still in the Citizens' Elections Fund following a \$6 million deposit that was done at the end of August. For the remainder of this grant season, we have plenty funds to meet the need for the remaining grants that are in process.

Director Brandi advised that an uptick already has started on issues related to the November elections, notably the absentee ballots. There were some news reports about an incident in Enfield which may be coming our way with some absentee ballots that were found post-primary. Commission staff are mindful of those cases coming in the door. SEEC will prioritize those and make sure that anything related to absentee ballots are at the top of the agenda for the enforcement unit. We are trying to make sure that we maintain public confidence in the system for absentee ballots. SEEC does expect a massive increase in absentee ballots used this election cycle, but the agency is positioned and prepared to address any and all questions that may be coming its' way.

IV. *Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B) and (E), and 1-210(b)(1), (3),(4),(10) and General Statutes §9-7a, as amended by Public Act 11-48 §300 (Preliminary draft and agency consideration of enforcement action and exempt records relative thereto)*

Recommendation of Counsel: Discussion of Candidate Committee Validation Memoranda

Executive session was not convened.

V. Consideration of Application for Public Grants from the Citizens' Election Fund

A. New Applications

1. *"Rivers for CT 2020," Shamyra Rivers*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Rivers for CT 2020," Shamyra Rivers*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. *"Ulbrich for Wallingford" Weston Ulbrich*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Ulbrich for Wallingford" Weston Ulbrich*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. *"Now for Us," Eva Maldonado*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Now for Us," Eva Maldonado*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *"Reelect Baker," Andre Baker*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Reelect Baker," Andre Baker*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

B. Continuation of Prior Applications Awaiting Additional Information to Qualify for a Grant

1. *"Susan Chapman for State Senate," Susan Chapman*

2. *"Fortier for State Senate," Mary Fortier*

3. *"Espinosa for CT," Caleb Espinosa*

4. *"Jack Hennessy 2020," John "Jack" Hennessy*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Sanchez 2020," Robert (Bobby) Sanchez*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. *"Boyd 2020," Pat Boyd*

6. *"Ziogas 20," Christopher Ziogas*

7. *"Leslee Hill for the 17th District," Leslee Hill*

8. *"Mitch for Newtown," Mitch Bolinsky*

9. *"Southworth for Senate," Michael Southworth*
10. *"Sanchez 2020," Robert (Bobby) Sanchez*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Sanchez 2020," Robert (Bobby) Sanchez*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

11. *"A Better Stamford," Juan Ospina*
12. *"Bush2020CT," Rick Bush*
13. *"Butler 2020, Larry Butler*
14. *"Cassano4Senate," Stephen Cassano*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Cassano4Senate," Stephen Cassano*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

15. *"Christine for State Representative," Christine Rosati Randall*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Christine for State Representative," Christine Rosati Randall*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

16. *"Committee to Re-Elect John A. Kissel, John Kissel*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Committee to Re-Elect John A. Kissel, John Kissel*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

17. *"Concepcion for Hartford 2020," Julio Concepcion*
18. *"Doug for CT," Doug Dubitsky*
19. *"Dr. Moffa 2020," Frederick Moffa*
20. *"Elect Mae Flexer," Mae Flexer*
21. *"ErinforCT," Erin Reilly*
22. *"Friends of ED," Edward Scinto*
23. *"Friends of Emmett Riley," Emmett Riley*
24. *"Friends of Mike DiMassa," Michael DiMassa*
25. *"Jerrell for State Representative," Jerrell Hargraves*
26. *"Joe De La Cruz 2020," Joseph De La Cruz*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for *"Joe De La Cruz 2020," Joseph De La Cruz*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

27. *"Lauren Gauthier for State Representative," Lauren Gauthier*
28. *"McCarty for State Rep 2020," Kathleen McCarty*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for "*McCarty for State Rep 2020*," *Kathleen McCarty*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

29. "*McCrory for Senate*," *Douglas McCrory*
30. "*Piotr Ceglarz for 26th*," *Piotr Ceglarz*
31. "*Post 2020*," *Gregory Post*
32. "*Q Phipps 2020*," *Quentin Phipps*
33. "*Romano-Csonka for the 133rd*," *Joanne Romano-Csonka*
34. "*Samela for Naugatuck*," *Stephen Samela*
35. "*Siegrist for Connecticut*," *Robert Siegrist*
36. "*Vargas 2020*," *Edwin Vargas*
37. "*Vote Steve Choi*," *Steve Choi*
38. "*Bell 2020*," *Robert Bell*
39. "*Dan Maymin Committee to Elect for CT 147th District State Rep*," *Dan Maymin*
40. "*Leone for Senate 2020*," *Carlo Leone*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for "*Leone for Senate 2020*," *Carlo Leone*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

41. "*Wink for 137*," *Ellen Wink*
42. "*Santiago for State Representative*," *Hilda Santiago*
43. "*Nolan4nl*," *Anthony Nolan*
44. "*Matthews for 72nd 2020*," *Vernon Matthews*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for "*Matthews for 72nd 2020*," *Vernon Matthews*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

45. "*JoAnn 2020*," *JoAnn Angelico-Stetson*
46. "*Walker 2020*," *Toni Walker*
47. "*Barry 2020*," *Jill Barry*
48. "*Fonfara 2020*," *John Fonfara*
49. "*Scalise for State Representative*," *Dagmara Scalise*
50. "*Julie Shilosky*," *Julianne Shilosky*
51. "*Hall 2020*," *Joshua Hall*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for "*Hall 2020*," *Joshua Hall*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

52. "*Dan Fox 2020*," *Daniel Fox*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to approve the grant application for "*Dan Fox 2020*," *Daniel Fox*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

VI. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In re. SEEC Initiated: *Mihaly for State Rep.* – Audit Findings
File No. 2018-037
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Respondent: William L. Jenkins
Attorney: James Talbert-Slagle

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-037. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-037. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

2. In re: Audit of *Theresa Davidson for the 128th*
File No. 2016-017A
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Attorney: James Talbert-Slagle
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is marked off.

3. In re: Audit of *Theresa Davidson for the 128th*
File No. 2016-017B
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Attorney: James Talbert-Slagle
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is marked off.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Benjamin Wiles, Storrs
File No. 2016-092
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Respondent: William L. Jenkins
Attorney: James Talbert-Slagle
Legal Investigator: Gilberto Oyola

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2016-092. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2016-092. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Allen P. Grouse Ph.D. (Self-Report), Windsor
File No. 2020-037
Proposed Findings & Conclusions
Respondent: Allen P. Grouse Ph.D
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-037. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-037. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint by Linda Szykowitz, Middletown
File No. 2020-042
Proposed Findings & Conclusions
Respondents: Shannel Evans and
Marlene Napolitano
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator:

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-040. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-040. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

VII. *Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B) and (E), and 1-210(b)(1), (3),(4),(10) and General Statutes §9-7a, as amended by Public Act 11-48 §300 (Preliminary draft and agency consideration of enforcement action and exempt records relative thereto)*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo at 9:54 A.M. to proceed into Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes , , 1-200(6)(B) and (E), and 1-210(b)(1),(3),(4),(10) to discuss strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and exempt records. So voted.

Commissioner Bramante was present. Commissioners Castagno, Ajello and Cascudo were present via Webex. Staff members present via teleconference were Kevin Ahern, Ryan M. Burns, James Talbert-Slagle, William B. Smith, Stephanie Fish, Michael J. Brandi. Staff members present were Scott Branfuhr and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

The Commission returned to public session at 10:35 A.M.

The Commission took the following actions in public session:

1. Recommendation of Counsel: Necessary to Investigate Determination pursuant to General Statutes §9-7a, as amended by Public Act 11-48 §300

Attorney Michael J. Brandi summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated September 10, 2020 and requested that two (2) matters be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to two (2) complaints File No.: 2020-047 and 2020-048. So approved by the Commission, 5-0-0. So voted.

2. In re Commission Initiated Investigation into *"Steve Obsitnik for Connecticut" Committee and "FixCT, Inc." Committee*

File No. 2018-051

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorneys:

Ryan M. Burns &
William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced Recommendation of Counsel. He Recommends that the Commission find that there is a Reason to Believe in File No. 2018-051 and that the Chair appoint a hearing officer.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Proposed Request for Reason to Believe in File No. 2018-051. Commissioner Penny has been appointed hearing officer on this matter. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

3. In the Matter of a Complaint by Philip Berns, Stamford

File No. 2020-028

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Julie Learson, Milford
File No. 2019-100

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-100. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-100. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Karen Jackson, Bridgeport
File No. 2019-127

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-127. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-127. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint by Karen Jackson, Bridgeport
File No. 2019-129

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-129. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-129. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Lorelei O'Hagan, Cos Cob
File No. 2019-161

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

8. In the Matter of a Referral by the Danbury Town Clerk
File No. 2020-034
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-034. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-034. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

9. In the Matter of a Referral by the Groton Town Clerk
File No. 2019-141
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Kevin M. Ahern
Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

10. In the Matter of a Referral by Watertown Registrar of Voters Debbie Hughes
File No. 2018-113
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Kevin M. Ahern
Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Kevin M. Ahern summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2018-113. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2018-113. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

11. In the Matter of a Complaint by Ernestine Holloway, Meriden
File No. 2019-105
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Kevin M. Ahern
Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Kevin M. Ahern summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-105. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

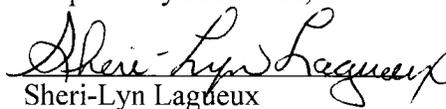
It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-105. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

VIII. Consideration of Matters Discussed in Executive Session

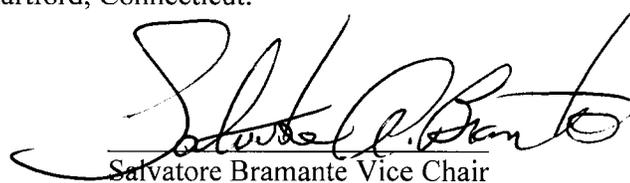
IX. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and Seconded by Commissioner Cascudo at 10:46 AM to adjourn the meeting. Unless otherwise noted, all votes of the Commission are unanimous

Respectfully submitted,


Sheri-Lyn Lagueux
Clerk of the Commission

Adopted this 7th day of October, 2020 at Hartford, Connecticut.


Salvatore Bramante Vice Chair
By Order of the Commission

The next regular scheduled meeting is September 23, 2020 at 3:30 P.M. in the 5th Floor Conference room.