



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

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**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**May 20, 2020**  
**9:30 A.M.**

***I. Call to Order***

Commissioner Castagno was present via teleconference and called the meeting to order at 9:33 A.M. Commissioners Stephen Penny, Salvatore Bramante and Andrew Cascudo were present via teleconference. Agency staff was also present.

***II. Approval of the Minutes***

*Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 4, 2020*

It was moved by Commissioner Penny and seconded by Commissioner Bramante to approve the March 4, 2020 minutes by a 4-0-0 vote. So voted.

***III. Administrative Reports***

We welcome staff back after an interesting couple of months. Staff mostly has been working remotely. The hardest hit unit has been the enforcement unit as the information is confidential.

The building is still closed to the public due to the pandemic. We are making every effort to allow the public to participate via teleconference with us.

The enforcement attorneys are working remotely. The EO's are working on rotating shifts, auditors have been working on PAR's over the past few weeks.

In order to maintain social distancing we are having the auditors work in shifts with 3 to 4 per shift.

For the CEP season right now, we have emailed out and posted on the website, the process for applications. There is no public access up to the offices, so we are utilizing a drop box system. We are accepting everything in a paper format in addition to bringing in a stick (thumb drive).

The EO's print off the information from the stick and then scan into our system in order to have an electronic copy of everything. We are very cognoscente of viruses and cybersecurity issues.

Over 300 committees have formed. Today is the first day that committee's can file their grant applications. We don't expect too many applications for this meeting as conventions are just starting.

Our budget is fine right now. We were in the process of hiring the compliance attorney when we shut down. We have however been able to hire James Augustyn as our new legal investigator who is here with us today. We still have a few more positions to fill.

#### ***IV. Pending Complaints and Investigations***

##### *A. Public Session*

1. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2019-013  
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Thomas Janik &  
Robert Sherman

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

The matter is marked off.

2. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2019-016  
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Linda Grzeika &  
Dorothy Mrowka

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

The matter is marked off.

3. In the Matter of a Referral by the West Hartford Registrar of Voters  
File No. 2019-090  
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Robert Margolis

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-090. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-090. So

voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

4. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2019-019

Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Wendy O'Connor &  
Melody Savino

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan M. Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-019. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-019. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

5. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2019-021

Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Phylis Bernard and  
Danese Perron

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

Attorney James M. Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-021. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Penny to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2019-021. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint John Santarella, Enfield  
File No. 2019-169

Proposed Findings & Conclusions

Respondent:

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

Attorney James M. Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-169. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions with changes to paragraph six.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Penny to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-169. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

***V. 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 Cascudo and seconded by Commissioner Bramante at 10:17 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.

Commissioners Castagno, Bramante Penny and Cascudo were present via teleconference. Staff members present via teleconference was Douglas Frost. Staff members present were Michael Brandi, Kevin Ahern, James Augustyn, Ryan Burns, Joshua Foley, James Talbert-Slagle, Shannon Kief, Sheri-Lyn Lagueux and Subrina Persaud.

The Commission returned to public session at 11:25 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 Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated August 1, 2020 and requested that ten (10) matters be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Penny and seconded by Commissioner Bramante to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to ten (10) complaints File No.: 2020-028, 2020-029, 2020-030, 2020-031, 2020-032, 2020-033MNF, 2020-034MNF, 2020-035, 2020-036 and 2020-037. So approved by the Commission, 4-0-0. So voted.

2. In the Matter of a Complaint by James M. Capra, Shelton  
File No. 2019-112  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: William B. Smith  
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is continued.

3. In the Matter of a Complaint by Darrin Q. McGuire, Ridgefield  
File No. 2019-114  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: William B. Smith  
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is continued.

4. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State, Hartford  
File Nos. 2018-121 & 2019-012  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: William B. Smith  
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is continued.

5. In the Matter of a Referral by Nancy Ahern, New Haven  
File No. 2018-011B  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: Kevin M. Ahern  
Lead Legal Investigator: Gilberto Oyola

Attorney Kevin M. Ahern summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-011B. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Cascudo to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-011B. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint by Thomas Santecroce, Groton  
File No. 2019-039  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: Kevin M. Ahern  
Legal Investigators: Alfonso Vazquez and Gilberto Oyola

Attorney Kevin M. Ahern summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-039. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Cascudo and seconded by Commissioner Penny to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-039. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Eric Johnson, Bridgeport  
File No. 2019-043  
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: Kevin M. Ahern  
Legal Investigators: Alfonso Vazquez and  
Gilberto Oyola

Attorney Kevin M. Ahern summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed a Referral to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney for Further Investigation in File No. 2019-043.

It was moved by Commissioner Penny and seconded by Commissioner Bramante to Refer to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney for Further Investigation File No. 2019-043. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

8. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2018-082  
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: Ryan M. Burns  
Lead Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Ryan Burns summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-082. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Penny to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-082 upon receipt in 30 days. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available, upon receipt, on our website under Commission Decisions.

9. In the Matter of a Complaint by Elisabeth Kines, Hartford, SEEC File No.  
2019-037  
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: James M. Talbert-Slagle  
Legal Investigators: Scott Branfuhr &  
Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

10. *In re. Audit of Saavedra 2016*, SEEC File No. 2017-090

Proposed Consent Order

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney James M. Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2017-090. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Cascudo and seconded by Commissioner Bramante to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2017-090. So voted by a vote 4-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

11. Draft Audit Reports

1. "Friends of Altobello," Emil "Buddy A. Altobello  
Examiner: Karen Walauskas
2. "Alexandra Bergstein," Alexandra Bergstein  
Examiner: Nicole Petit
3. "Hartley 18," Joan V. Hartley  
Examiner: Dinorah Collado
4. "Honig 18," Paul S. Honig  
Examiner: Ergys Guni
5. "Jesse 2018," Jesse D. MacLachlan  
Examiner: Dinorah Collado
6. "John Pelkey for South Windsor," John P. Pelkey  
Examiner: Karen Walauskas
7. "Santiago for State Representative," Hilda E. Santiago  
Examiner: Krysta Palozie
8. "Rebekah for Newtown," Rebekah Harriman-Stites  
Examiner: Dinorah Collado
9. "Baird for 38," Baird L. Welch-Collins  
Examiner: Dinorah Collado
10. "Margolis 2019," Robert H. Margolis  
Examiner: Karen Walauskas

Michael Brandi provided an overview of the audits and recommended that the Commission make audit numbers 1 thru 10 final. So moved by Commissioner Penny and seconded by Commissioner Bramante. So voted by a vote 4-0-0.

***VI. Consideration of Matters Discussed in Executive Session***

***VII. Adjournment***

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 AM. Unless otherwise indicated, all votes of the Commission were unanimous.

***The next regular scheduled meeting is May 28, 2020 at 3:30 P.M. in the 5th Floor Conference room.***