



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

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**DRAFT MINUTES  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING**

**Via Webex  
April 7, 2021  
9:30 A.M.**

***I. Call to Order***

Commissioner Stephen Penny was present via Webex and called the meeting to order at 9:34 A.M. Commissioners Michael Ajello, Salvatore Bramante, Shannon Bergquist and Andrew Cascudo were present via Webex. Agency staff was also present.

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

*Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 17, 2021*

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of March 17, 2021. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

*Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 26, 2021*

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of March 17, 2021. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

***III. Administrative Reports***

Michael Brandi reported that we are entering into the final quarter of the fiscal year. Right now we are looking at the last quarter to which we are making sure that we have supplies and equipment necessary to remote work. We just purchased additional laptops and software. Budget wise we are in good shape for the balance of the year. There's no anticipated shortfalls and we should be able to finish by June 30<sup>th</sup> with a positive balance.

Michael Brandi updated that regarding personnel – Ron Perry has joined the SEEC as legal investigator, Paul Brady has joined us as a new Elections Officer and an additional Elections Officer will be joining us on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. That will leave 3 vacancies left in the agency, we have a Fiscal Administrative officer position which we are in the process of filling with interviews starting next week, so we hope to fill that one rather quickly. We are working right now Accounts Examiner position which has been vacant since November of last year and hope to fill that by the end of this fiscal year.

We will be back up to a compliment of 34 out of 35 positions at the end of the hiring process.

We have a legislative report we are in the midst of what seems to be an active legislative session. The GAE committee has completed their meetings reported all of their bills to the floor. There are multiple bills heading to the floor including the childcare bill, which was the Governor's proposal. The bills regarding disqualified contributions and deregulation of internet sites did not get voted out of committee.

When the house and the senate are in session SEEC will actively keep our eyes on those bills to make sure that there are no surprises later in the session.

Other bills we will be watching are related to absentee ballots and more elections administration, nothing that directly impacts our jurisdiction, other than the enforcement side. SEEC will continue to monitor the floor, it is not uncommon for things to suddenly appear in other bills, so we will continue to monitor these bills.

Michael Brandi advised that the current Governor's executive orders as it governs these meetings, will expire on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The SEEC will be looking to return to live meetings beginning with the first meeting in June. We don't think that they will be extending those executive orders related to virtual meetings beyond that date. So commissioners should just be prepared for coming to the new office.

Commissioner Bergquist asked about what types of items go into the budget. Specifically, where do disqualified contributions get deposited. Do those go into the SEEC budget or the Citizens' Election Fund? Director Brandi clarified that the SEEC budget is an operating budget comes solely from the general fund. The issue of disqualified contributions or buffers or any monies that come in in relation to the CEP program those monies go into the Citizens' Election Fund and the only thing that comes out of the fund are grants. The idea that SEEC is able to take money out of the Fund to fund our operations is simply false. When the program was first founded, there were operating expenses that were taken from the Citizens' Election Fund to fund certain positions and operations. That ended by statute in 2009. Since 2009 no funding for the agency operations comes from anything but the General Fund.

Commissioner Bramante asked about the agency surplus expected by the end of the fiscal year, does that go back to the general fund? Yes, that is correct. SEEC has to close out the books by June 30<sup>th</sup>. The agency has a single line budget, which means the agency is free to use this money for personnel and operating costs. At the end of the fiscal year, all monies in every agency that have a surplus are returned to the general fund.

Director Brandi advised of two amendments to the agenda: Item #1 in public session will be moved to executive session. Adding to executive session File No. 2020-052 as item #7.

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

**1. "Corey Paris for CT," Corey P. Paris**

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for "Corey Paris for CT," Corey P. Paris. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

**V. Pending Complaints and Investigations**

**A. Public Session**

**1. In the matter of a Complaint by Shawn Styfco, Beacon Falls**

File No. 2020-030

Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-030. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-030. So voted by a vote 5-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

**2. In the matter of a Complaint by Stephen Kalkowski, Southington**

File No. 2020-055

Proposed Consent Order & Agreement

Respondents:

Jack Perry & Ralph Holyst

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-055. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-055 upon receipt in 10 days. So voted by a vote 5-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

3. In the matter of a Complaint by Robert Brady, Riverside  
File No. 2021-046

Proposed Findings & Conclusions

Respondents:

Joseph R. Romano, Warner  
C. Pyne, Ryan Fazio, Joseph  
L. Romano

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2021-046. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2021-046 as amended in paragraph 4. So voted by a vote 5-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

**VI. *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 Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 10:05 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 Penny, Bramante, Bergquist, Ajello and Cascudo were present via Webex. Staff members present via teleconference were, William B. Smith, James Talbert-Slagle, Ryan M. Burns, Alyssa Torres, Joshua Foley, Lindsey Leung, Stephanie Fish, Ronald Perry, Scott Branfuhr, Stephanie Fish, Lisa Drew, Renata Rydzewski, Linda Waterman, Shannon Kief, Michael J. Brandi and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

The Commission returned to public session at 12:03 P.M.

Returning to public session the Commission took the following action:

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

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated April 1, 2021 and requested that eight (8) matter be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to eight (8) complaint File Nos.: 2021-047, 2021-048, 2021-050, 2021-051, 2021-052, 2021-053, 2021-054 and 2021-055. So approved by the Commission, 5-0-0. So voted.

2. In the Matter of a Complaint by Brian P. Boyd, Madison

File No. 2020-077

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

3. In the Matter of a Complaint by Perry Rowthorn (Self-report), West Hartford

File No. 2021-055

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Investigator:

William B. Smith

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2021-055. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2021-055. So voted by a vote 5-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

4. In the matter of a Complaint by Patrick O’Sullivan, Orange

File No. 2021-048

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Taras Rudko, Colchester

File No. 2020-031

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Kevin M. Ahern

Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

6. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State  
File No. 2021-049

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Kevin M. Ahern

Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney James Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2021-049. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Findings & Conclusions to dismiss in File No. 2021-049. So voted by a vote 5-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

7. In the Matter of a Referral by the Cheshire Registrar of Voters  
File No. 2020-052

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Ryan M. Burns

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

8. Consideration of Draft Audit Reports

1. "Ritter 2018," Matt Ritter  
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
2. "Friends of A-Z," Joseph Aresimowicz  
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado
3. "Govert for 34," Theresa Govert  
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
4. "Turco for Newington," Gary Turco  
Accounts Examiner: Nicole Petit
5. "Mike France 2018," Mike France  
Accounts Examiner: Nicole Petit
6. "Friends of Emmett Riley," Emmett Riley  
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado

Linda Waterman summarized the above referenced Draft Audit Reports and recommended the draft reports become final.

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt as final 6 audit reports as listed above. So voted by a vote 5-0-0.

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

***VIII. Adjournment***

It was moved by Commissioner Bramante and Seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 12:13 PM to adjourn the meeting. Unless otherwise noted, all votes of the Commission are unanimous.

***The next regular scheduled meeting is April 21, 2021 at 9:30 A.M. via Webex.***