



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING
Via Webex
February 02, 2022
9:30 A.M.

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Penny was present via Webex and called the meeting to order at 9:31 A.M. Commissioners Michael Ajello, Shannon Bergquist and Greg Piecuch were present via Webex. Agency staff was also present and present via Webex.

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 19, 2022

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piecuch to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 19, 2022. So voted by a vote of 3-0-1 with Commissioner Ajello abstaining.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 26, 2022

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piecuch to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 26, 2022. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

III. Administrative Reports

Director Brandi advised that Legislative session starts next week so we will be mindful of anything that appropriations is doing. Our budget is on target. We are closely monitoring the amounts that we have available because of vacancies right now. We have 3 retirements coming up and we have accruals to pay on those retirements. We will be talking to OPM further about those amounts being paid out and are being very cautious with expenditures across the board to make sure that we end the year on a positive balance.

Director Brandi updated that personnel wise, the Fiscal Administrative Officer has been filled. Catherine Santiago will be joining us at the end of next week. She is currently a Fiscal Administrative Assistant with the Department of Children & Families. The SEEC has the Office Assistant position with 565 names and applicants on there so we'll be moving forward to the next process of interviews. Charla our HR liaison has processed the request for the refill of the 2 staff attorney positions. Those will take another week or two to get full approval on and we also have

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permission to fill the IT analyst 3 position where Amjad is retiring. DAS did give us permission to start that process early because of the nature of the retirements that are coming, so the hope is that we can move the process forward to hire an IT analyst while Amjad is still with us and fill the position immediately so there won't be a vacancy in that position for very long if at all. We are monitoring all these items right now as we move toward CEP season.

Director Brandi reported that staff is now as of yesterday back to a 50% presence. now that the COVID spike has receded a little, we need to get people back in the office so there's more of a presence to handle walk-in's as well as just general daily work.

Director Brandi advised that CEP season is upon us. Just so the Commission is aware we will need to hold a Special Meeting next week as we have a grant application in and anticipate a second one coming in, in a day or so we do need to hold a special meeting.

Director Brandi updated that next Wednesday is the beginning of session, its' a short session and we have seen the schedule already. SEEC staff is not quite sure at this point as to when access is going to be opened up at the Capitol. SEEC staff is hearing is that at some point in March they will be opening up the Capitol for more public hearings and Committee meetings. As it stands at least through February committee meetings to be done via ZOOM as they did last year. Our Legislative list of bills may not get through as these are years where the Legislature is looking at budget issues, adjustments to budget issues. The nature of it being a statewide election year, SEEC staff expects that there will be fewer Campaign Finance bills, but we will be moving forward with at least the priorities we talked about previously with the Foreign Spending & Referendum and those technical bills, the Muni Pilot Program and Consultant Language.

Director Brandi reported that the SEEC also has as part of our reports, today Shannon Kief will talk about the regulation related to the ChildCare Allowance under the CEP.

Shannon Kief reviewed the proposed regulation in response to Public Act 21-49 regarding Child Care. We have posted proposed language and opened it for a 30 day comment. We received a single comment and are now required to post a response to that comment. Draft language of a response has been provided to you. once the response is decided on, we will post that and then we are required to send the language that the commission is proposing along with the comment and the response to the Attorney General for review. We've provided you with a chart of the process after that. So now would be a good time also for the Commission to vote on accepting the language and forwarding it if they would like to otherwise direct us to redraft either the proposed response or the language.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piecuch to accept the proposed response and move to the next step of the approval process for the proposed regulation. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Recommendation of Counsel: Discussion of Proposed Regulations pursuant to Public Act 2021-49

IV. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In the Matter of a Complaint by Alida B. Cella, Wallingford
File No. 2020-084

Findings & Conclusions

Attorney:

James M. Talbert-Slagle

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney James M. Talbert-Slagle summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2020-084. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piecuch to adopt the Findings & Conclusions as to a dismissal in File No. 2020-084. So voted by a vote of 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 Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piecuch at 9:50 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 by a vote of 5-0-0.

Commissioners Stephen Penny, Michael Ajello, Shannon Bergquist and Greg Piecuch were present via Webex. Staff members present via Webex were Michael J. Brandi, James Talbert-Slagle, Kevin Ahern, William B. Smith, Joshua Foley, Lindsey Leung, Stephanie Fish, Ronald Perry, Scott Branfuhr, Paul Brady, Lisa Drew, Linda Waterman, Shannon Kief, and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

The Commission returned to public session at 11:31 A.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 Kevin M. Ahern summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated February 2, 2022, and requested that three (3) matters be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Picuch to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to three (3) complaints File Nos. 2022-002, 2022-003 and 2022-004. So approved by the Commission, 4-0-0. So voted.

2. In the Matter of a Complaint by Linda Szykowitz, et al, Middletown File Nos. 2021-047 & 2021-050
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: Kevin M. Ahern
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

The matter is continued.

3. In the Matter of a Complaint by Stacey Gravino, East Haven File No. 2019-120
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and in File No. 2019-120. He recommended referral to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney.

The following motion was read into the record: Pursuant to its authority under General Statutes § 9-7b, the Commission authorizes counsel to refer to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney evidence of possible criminal violations related to an election, primary, or referendum discovered in the investigation of matter 2019-120.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Picuch to approve the referral to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney in File No. 2019-120. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Linda Szykowitz, Middletown File Nos. 2021-076, 2021-082 and 2021-087
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney: William B. Smith

Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Ryan Condon, Monroe
File No. 2021-125
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: James Talbert-Slagle
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

**VI. *Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-231 and 1-200(6)(A) and 1-210(b)(2)
(Discussion of Personnel Matters)***

Consideration of Personnel Matter

Executive session has been marked off and was not convened.

VII. *Consideration of Matters Discussed in Executive Session*

VIII. *Adjournment*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Piccuch at 11:35 A.M. to adjourn the meeting. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. Unless otherwise noted, all votes of the Commission are unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by,



Sheri-Lyn Lagueux
Clerk of the State Elections Enforcement Commission

March 2, 2022
Date approved
(By the State Elections Enforcement Commission)

The next regular scheduled meeting is February 16, 2022 at 9:30 A.M. via Webex.