



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING
Via Webex
January 18, 2023
9:30 A.M.

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Penny was present via Webex and called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Commissioners 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 December 21, 2022

The minutes have been tabled.

III. Administrative Reports

- Director Brandi provided the commission with several updates. Budget wise – we are at the midpoint of the year. We are currently receiving monies into the CEF from surpluses as candidate committees terminate. Right now the fund is just shy of \$24 Million in it.
- There are a number of legislative proposals from various caucuses. This is the time of session where the bills start flooding in. The GAE committee held an introductory meeting last week. We are looking forward to working with them in the upcoming session.
- The state budget process will start in about 2 or 3 weeks. The Budgets for the agencies were submitted last October based on OPM deadlines. Reports this morning show that the state budget is in pretty good shape with a \$3 Billion surplus being projected this year.
- There will be 3 Special Elections. We had two state representatives who decided not to be sworn in as they are taking other positions and there was also the loss of Representative Quintin Williams in a tragic accident.
- SEEC staff are also working on a lot of IT issues. We are looking at a major upgrade to our servers. They are starting to get to the end of useful life on some of our equipment.
- The SEEC is also projecting out for 5 years, where we are going to be because DAS is looking to close out the Groton Data Center within that timeframe. Anticipated moves by DAS in terms of where we will be located – goes into the equation of how we spend the current budget monies for upgrading equipment, which may cause a bit of a delay.

- Staffing wise, SEEC staff is in the middle of recruitments. There is a final list for the Legal Investigator position and starting the interviewing this week. There is also an active posting for the IT manager position. We also have the reposting for the Staff Attorney positions. We should have a list within a few weeks for selection for the 2 enforcement attorney positions.
- With Salman’s promotion to the position of Director of Campaign Finance and Audit, the SEEC is also looking to back fill the Associates Accounts Examiner position shortly.

Commissioner Cascudo joined the meeting at 9:50 AM.

IV. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In re: Commission Initiated Investigation into “Larry Groh Jr. for 51st District File No. 2018-061
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Respondent: Lee Post
Staff Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-061. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2018-061. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. In the Matter of a Complaint by Evonne Klein (Self-Reported), Darien File No. 2020-050
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Respondent: Evonne Klein
Staff Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-050. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2020-050. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

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 Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 09:55 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 4-0-0.

Commissioners Penny, Bergquist, Cascudo, and Picuch were present via Webex. Staff members present via Webex were: Michael J. Brandi, Shannon Clark Kief, Geetha Natarajan, William Smith, Stephanie Fish, Scott Branfuhr, Ronald Perry, Lisa Drew, Joshua Foley, Paul Brady, Patricia Mwilwa, Aaron Charney, Renata Ryzdewski, Salman Munir, Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

The Commission returned to public session at 10:29 A.M.

Returning to public session after executive session in section VI, the Commission took the following action:

The record reflects that Commissioner Cascudo left the as it returned to public session at 12:01 PM.

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 January 11, 2023 and requested that five (5) matters be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to one (1) complaint Files No. 2022-071. So approved by the Commission, 2-0-1 with Commissioner Picuch abstaining. So voted.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to four (4) complaint Files No. 2022-074, 2022-075, 2022-076 and 2023-001. So approved by the Commission, 4-0-0. So voted.

2. In re: Commission Initiated Investigation: *Ganim for Governor*
File No. 2020-006
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith

Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

3. In re: Commission Initiated Investigation: *Josh 4 Bpt*
File No. 2019-175A
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-175A. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions with no further action in File No. 2019-175A. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

4. In re: Commission Initiated Investigation: *Josh 4 Bpt*
File No. 2019-175B
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-175B. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions with no further action in File No. 2019-175B. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

5. In re: Commission Initiated Investigation: *Josh 4 Bpt*
File No. 2019-175C
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2019-175C. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions of a dismissal in File No. 2019-175C. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint by Fernando Bettencourt (self-report) Harford
File No. 2023-001
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith

The matter is continued.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Robert Halstead, Bridgeport
File No. 2022-006
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

The matter is continued.

8. In the Matter of a Complaint by June Chiaia-Logie, Easton
File No. 2022-012
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2022-012. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Findings & Conclusions with no further action in File No. 2022-012. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

9. In the Matter of a Complaint by William E. Marsh, Windsor Locks
File No. 2022-014A
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

The matter is continued.

10. In the Matter of a Complaint by William E. Marsh, Windsor Locks
File No. 2022-014B
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

The matter is continued.

11. In the Matter of a Complaint by Randall Bowers, Avon

File No. 2021-197

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Ronald Perry

The matter is continued.

12. In the Matter of a Referral by Stonington Registrars of Voters Margaret S.

Cawley and Karen O. Linehan, Stonington

File No. 2017-010

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

The matter is continued.

13. Draft Audit Reports – 2020 Election Cycle

1. “Doug for CT,” Doug Dubitsky
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
2. “Dyer for House 2020,” Matthew Dyer
Accounts Examiner: Nicole Petit
3. “Alden 2020,” Alden Russell
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado
4. “Harold for CT,” Harold Harris
Accounts Examiner: Ergys Guni
5. “Ackert for the 8th,” Tim Ackert
Accounts Examiner: Ergys Guni
6. “Chip for Westport,” Ronald Stephens
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
7. “Arata 2020,” Lou Arata
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
8. “Carter 2020,” Dan Carter
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
9. “Elect Kathleen Stowe,” Kathleen Stowe
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado

Attorney Michel J. Brandi provided an overview of the 9 draft audit reports and recommended that the Commission make audits number 1 through 9 final, so moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist by a vote of 3-0-0.

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

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 10:29 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 4-0-0.

Commissioners Penny, Bergquist, Cascudo, and Piecuch were present via Webex.

The Commission returned to public session at 12:01 P.M.

Consideration of Personnel Matters

No action was taken.

VII. *Consideration of Matters Discussed in Executive Session*

VIII. *Adjournment*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adjourn the meeting at 12:12 PM. 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

February 1, 2023

Date approved
(By the State Elections Enforcement Commission)

The next regular scheduled meeting is February 1, 2023 at 9:30 A.M. via Webex.