



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING
Via Webex
July 17, 2024
9:30 A.M.

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Penny was present via Webex and called the meeting to order at 9:36 AM. Commissioners Asare, Bergquist, and Picuch were present via Webex. Agency staff was also present via Webex.

Commissioner Penny made a motion to add to the Agenda to Section V. two (2) Continuation of Prior Applications to Section B as follows:

6. “*Abigail Figueroa 2024*,” Abigail Figueroa
7. “*Menapace for CT 2024*,” Nick J. Menapace

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to add these items to the Agenda. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Commissioner Penny made a motion to remove #7 from Section VII. Executive Session of the Agenda.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to remove this item from the Agenda. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of July 3, 2024

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of July 3, 2024, as amended. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of July 11, 2024

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of July 3, 2024 as amended. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

III. Administrative Reports

Executive Director and General Counsel Michael Brandi provide the following administrative update to the Commission. We are now in Fiscal Year 2025 for the CEP budget. With this fiscal year change over the CoreCT system was shut down for a period of 3 or 4 days. The CoreCT system is now back up and the agency's fiscal team continues to work on sending out CEP grants to approved applicants. The fiscal team is working incredibly hard and Director Brandi thanks their continued efforts.

Executive Director Brandi reported that there are currently 75 pending applications and 94 applications have been previously approved. The agency is roughly halfway through this CEP season, with another 6-8 weeks to go.

Executive Director Brandi reported that the agency is currently in a "black-out" section of the CEP season. In this period all CEP applications for Primary candidates are prioritized. All Primary candidate CEP applications must be approved by the Commission by July 26, 2024. The deadline for Primary candidate CEP applications is July 19, 2024. The agency expects to receive approximately five (5) additional Primary candidate applications before the July 19, 2024 deadline.

Executive Director Brandi reminded all Commissioners and staff of July 17, 2024's Commission Meeting scheduled for 3:30 P.M. The topic of this scheduled meeting will be CEP applications.

Executive Director Brandi explains to the Commission that during this CEP season, with the increase to \$320 contribution limits, the agency has had issues regarding new candidates and new treasurers seemingly having difficulties in applying for CEP grants with a 10-15% buffer in their contributions. Candidates tend to apply with a 10-15% financial buffer in case contributions are disqualified. The agency is seeing much tighter margins in recent applications. The lack of financial buffer has resulted in applications requiring fixes and this is the reason for such a high volume of continuances in this year's CEP season. Executive Director Brandi states that the agency will continue to advocate that candidates come into their CEP applications with adequate buffers. Executive Director Brandi additionally informs the Commission that there are still applicants who arrive with adequate buffers. He continued that the change of applicant deadline to August from September has also contributed to this possible issue.

Kudos to Salman Munir, Krystie, our Audit Staff and Elections Officers. Kudos to everyone in the agency who has been pulling together during this CEP season.

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)

1. Recommendation of Counsel: Discussion of Candidate Committee Validation Memoranda

No action was taken.

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

A. New Applications

1. *"Kevin Brown for Vernon," Kevin Brown*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *"Kevin Brown for Vernon," Kevin Brown*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. *"Nuccio for CT," Tammy Nuccio*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *"Nuccio for CT," Tammy Nuccio*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. *"Kim Becker for CT," Kimberly Becker*

Director of Disclosure & Audit, Salman Munir provided an overview of the pending grant applications and recommended that the Commission continue without prejudice grant numbers 3 through 10 as follows.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to continue without prejudice the grant applications for *"Rachel for Danbury," Rachel Chaleski*; *"Collette4Ridgefield," Colette Kabasakalian*; *"Martinez for the 124th," Eneida Martinez – Primary Candidate*; *"McGorty 2024," Ben McGorty*; *"Sanchez 2024," Bobby Sanchez*; *"Sujata for CT," Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox – Primary Candidate*; *"Lopes 2024," Rick Lopes*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *"Rachel for Danbury," Rachel Chaleski*
5. *"Collette4Ridgefield," Colette Kabasakalian*
6. *"Martinez for the 124th," Eneida Martinez – Primary Candidate*
7. *"McGorty 2024," Ben McGorty*
8. *"Sanchez 2024," Bobby Sanchez*

9. *“Sujata for CT,” Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox – Primary Candidate*
10. *“Lopes 2024,” Rick Lopes*

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

1. *“Re-Elect State Rep Baker,” Andre Baker – Primary Candidate*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Re-Elect State Rep Baker,” Andre Baker – Primary Candidate*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. *“Friends of Bob Duff,” Bob Duff*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Friends of Bob Duff,” Bob Duff*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. *“Foster Forward,” Jaime S. Foster*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Foster Forward,” Jaime S. Foster*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *“Jeff Gordon for State Senate,” Jeffrey A. Gordon*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Jeff Gordon for State Senate,” Jeffrey A. Gordon*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. *“Sweet for State,” Laurie Sweet – Primary Candidate*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Sweet for State,” Laurie Sweet – Primary Candidate*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

6. *“Abigail Figueroa 2024,” Abigail Figueroa*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Abigail Figueroa 2024,” Abigail Figueroa*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

7. *“Menapace for CT 2024,” Nick J. Menapace*

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for *“Menapace for CT 2024,” Nick J. Menapace*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

VI. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In the Matter of a Complaint by Anthony McDonald, New Haven
File No. 2024-049
Proposed Consent Order and Agreement
Attorney:

William B. Smith

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order in File No. 2024-049. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order.

It was moved by Commissioner Piccuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Consent Order in File No. 2024.049. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. The Consent Order will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

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)

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 July 12, 2024, and requested that three (3) matters be moved to investigate and one (1) matter be dismissed.

It was moved by Commissioner Piccuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to three (3) matters, File No. 2024-055; File No. 2024-057; and File No. 2024-058.

Additionally, the Commission determines that it is not necessary to investigate one (1) complaint, File No. 2024-056. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. In the Matter of a Complaint by Lauren Blaha, Killingworth
File No. 2023-084
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

William B. Smith
Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-084. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-084. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

3. In the Matter of a Complaint by Christine Bartlett-Josie, New Haven
File No. 2023-051
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-051. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-051. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Kim E. McLaughlin, Bridgeport
File No. 2023-069
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint in File No. 2023-069. He recommended to administratively close the file.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to administratively close File No. 2023-069. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. A Notice of Case Closure will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Kim E. McLaughlin, Bridgeport
File No. 2023-074
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: William B. Smith
Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint in File No. 2023-074. He recommended the matter be referred to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve and adopt the following motion: Pursuant to its authority under General Statutes § 9-7b (a) (8), the Commission authorizes counsel to refer this matter for consultation to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney any evidence of possible criminal violations related to potential elections law violations discovered in the course of the Commission's investigation into the matter docketed as File No. 2023-074. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

6. In the Matter of a Complaint by Maria Pires, Bridgeport
File No. 2023-081
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

William B. Smith
Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-081. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-081. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Erin Cowles, Southington
File No. 2023-014
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Johnny Ross, III
Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

Pursuant to Commissioner Penny's motion, moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist, this Matter was removed from the Agenda. No further action was taken.

8. In the Matter of a Complaint by Darrell Stancuna, Wallingford
File No. 2023-046
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Johnny Ross, III
Stephanie Fish

This matter was continued.

Commissioner Picuch left the meeting at 11:30 A.M.

9. In the Matter of a Referral by SEEC Election Officers
File No. 2021-139, File No. 2021-210, File No. 2022-010, File No. 2022-032,
File No. 2022-078

Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint in File No. 2021-139, File No. 2021-210, File No. 2022-010, File No. 2022-032, and File No. 2022-078. He recommended a subpoena be served to obtain further evidence in the matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to serve subpoena: Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b and Section 9-7b-35, et. seq., of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. So voted by a vote of 3-0-1.

Commissioner Picuch entered the meeting at 11:33 A.M.

VIII. Consideration of Matters Discussed in Executive Session

IX. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 11:33 A.M. to adjourn the meeting. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

The next regular scheduled meeting is July 24, 2024 at 3:30 P.M.