



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

---

MINUTES  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING  
Via Webex  
March 20, 2024  
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, Sonia Asare, Shannon Bergquist and Greg Picuch 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 February 21, 2024*

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Picuch to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of February 7, 2024. So voted by a vote of 3-0-2 with Commissioners Ajello and Asare abstaining.

**III. Administrative Reports**

Legal Program Manager Shannon Clark Kief gave the commission an update on the legislative session. The agency's proposals concerning municipal campaign finance filings and foreign political spending were recently approved by the Government Administration and Elections Committee. Staff continues to monitor other proposals as they move through the legislative process.

**IV. Public Session**

*1. Discussion of Agency Organization, Staff Roles and Internal Process*

*The matter is continued.*

**V. Pending Complaints and Investigations**

*A. Public Session*

**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 Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 9:36 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 Penny, Ajello, Asare, Bergquist, and Piecuch were present via Webex. Staff members present via Webex were: Shannon Clark Kief, Salman Munir, Krysta Palozie, Renata Rydzewski, William Smith, James Heffernan, Johnny Ross, III, Stephanie Fish, Scott Branfuhr, Ron Perry, Joshua Foley, Aaron Charney, Maryam Bitar, Ashley Socquet, Melissa Moore-Ward, Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

The Commission returned to public session at 10:29 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 William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated March 8, 2024 and requested that eight (8) matters be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to eight (8) complaints, File No. 2024-020, File No. 2024-021, File No. 2024-022, File No. 2024-023, File No. 2024-024, File No. 2024-025, File No. 2024-026 and File No. 2024-028. So approved by the Commission, 5-0-0. So voted.

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated February 8, 2024 and requested that two (2) matter not be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is not necessary to investigate violations relating to two (2) complaints, File No. 2024-12 and File No. 2024-019. So approved by the Commission, 5-0-0. So voted.

2. Recommendation of Counsel: Progress Report on Cases Handled by the SEEC Regarding the 2023 Bridgeport Primary

No formal action needed on progress report.

3. Recommendation of Counsel In re: SEEC Initiated – Referral by the Connecticut State Marshal Commission

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel and requested that matter be moved to investigate.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare That an investigation shall be initiated pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b (a) (1) into whether State Marshal Keith Niziankiewicz violated provisions of elections laws regarding registering as an elector and voting where he does not reside, and that the matter be entitled: *In re. Commission Initiated Investigation into the State of Connecticut State Marshal Commission's March 13, 2024 Referral.* So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

4. In the Matter of a Self-Report by Michael Pohl, Manchester  
File No. 2024-004  
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

The matter is continued.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Robert Natt, Easton  
File No. 2023-013  
Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

James B. Heffernan

Legal Investigator:

Ronald Perry

Attorney James B. Heffernan summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-013. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement upon receipt in ten (10) days.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2023-013 upon receipt in ten (10) days. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. The Consent Order & Agreement will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.



Attorney James B. Heffernan summarized the above referenced matter and Proposed Request for Reason to Believe. He recommended adoption of finding for the Proposed Request for Reason to Believe.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Worrell Asare to adopt the Request for Reason to Believe. So voted by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Ajello abstaining as he is the appointed hearing officer in this matter.

6. In re. Referral from the Audit and Disclosure Unit Connecticut Federation of College Republicans PAC  
File No. 2021-139, 2021-210, 2022-010, 2022-032, 2022-078  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: James B. Heffernan

Attorney James B. Heffernan summarized the above referenced matter and Proposed Request for Investigatory Subpoena. He recommended issuance of the Investigatory Subpoena.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to issue an investigatory subpoena as follows: Pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b and § 9-7b-28 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, a motion to authorize a subpoena to the Records Keeper at M & T Bank, 1013 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut, to appear and produce documents and records to the Commission office regarding the investigation of financial issues raised by the above-referenced referrals concerning financial transactions of the “Connecticut Federation of College Republicans PAC”, an ongoing political committee, which is the subject of the above referenced referrals, and under review by the Commission.

So voted by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Piecuch abstaining as he is the appointed Hearing Officer for this matter.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Gage E. Frank, New Haven  
File No. 2023-016  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney: James B. Heffernan  
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

Attorney James B. Heffernan summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-016. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Findings & Conclusions as to a dismissal in File No. 2023-016.

So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

8. In the Matter of a Complaint by Maria Pereria, Bridgeport  
File No. 2021-143  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney:  
Legal Investigator:

Johnny Ross, III  
Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Commission Decision in File No. 2021-143. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Commission Decision.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Commission Decision as to a dismissal in File No. 2021-143. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. The Commission will be available on our website.

The record reflects that the Commission has asked the Executive Director to report back relative to matters expiring within 1 year.

9. In the Matter of a Complaint by David Agosta, New Haven  
File No. 2023-033A  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney:  
Legal Investigator:

Johnny Ross, III  
Stephanie Fish

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-033A. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Findings & Conclusions as to a dismissal in File No. 2023-033A. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

10. In the Matter of a Complaint by David Agosta, New Haven  
File No. 2023-033B  
Recommendation of Counsel  
Attorney:  
Legal Investigator:

Johnny Ross, III  
Stephanie Fish

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Findings & Conclusions in File No. 2023-033B. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Findings & Conclusions.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Findings & Conclusions as to a dismissal in File No. 2023-033B. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. The Findings & Conclusions will be available on our website under Commission Decisions.

#### 11. Draft Audit Reports

1. "MikeforHamden," Michael D'Agostino  
Accounts Examiner: Nicole Duffany
2. "Kate Rotella 2020," Kate Rotella  
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado
3. "Groh 2020," Larry Groh  
Accounts Examiner: Dinorah Collado
4. "2022 DAC House 114," Daniel Cowan  
Attorney: William B. Smith
5. "Acri 2022," Anthony Acri  
Attorney: William B. Smith
6. "Coelho for Senate," Michelle Coelho  
Attorney: William B. Smith
7. "Committee to Re-Elect Senator John A. Kissel," John Kissel  
Attorney: William B. Smith
8. "Eric Berthel for Senate," Eric Berthel  
Attorney: William B. Smith
9. "Harding for Senate," Stephen Harding  
Attorney: William B. Smith
10. "Jim for the 56<sup>th</sup>," James Tedford  
Attorney: William B. Smith
11. "Kelly for Senate," Kevin Kelly  
Attorney: William B. Smith
12. "Perillo 2022," Jason Perillo  
Attorney: William B. Smith
13. "Reddington-Hughes for the 66<sup>th</sup>," Karen Reddington-Hughes  
Attorney: William B. Smith

14. "Somers for Senate," Heather Somers  
Attorney: William B. Smith
15. "Steve Weir for CT," Stephen Weir  
Attorney: William B. Smith
16. "TZ 2022," Tami Zawistowski  
Attorney: William B. Smith
17. "Vote Vail," Kurt Vail  
Attorney: William B. Smith

Director of Campaign Audit and Disclosure Salman Munir provided an overview of the recommended draft audit reports and recommended that the Commission make numbers 1, 2, and 3 final audit reports. So moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the draft audit reports numbers 4 through 17 inclusive and recommended that they be referred to the Law Enforcement Unit for further investigation.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to refer Draft Audits #4 through 17 inclusive to the Law Enforcement Unit for further investigation. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

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

***VIII. Adjournment***

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 11:39 A.M. to adjourn the meeting. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0. Unless otherwise noted, all votes of the Commission are unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by,



Sheri-Lyn Lagueux  
Clerk of the State Elections Enforcement Commission

**April 3, 2024**  
Date approved  
(By the State Elections Enforcement Commission)