



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

DRAFT MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING

Via Webex

Additional Methods to Attend This Meeting Include:

For public access please click: Stream on Youtube (<https://youtube.com/@ctseec>)

February 4, 2026

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 Shannon Bergquist, Michael Ajello and Greg Piecuch were present via Webex. Agency staff were also present and present via Webex.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to amend the agenda and add an Executive Session to consider a pending grant application and a vote on the pending grant application under the Citizens' Election Program. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Chairperson Penny noted for the record that Commissioner Asare will not be attending today's meeting.

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 21, 2026

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 21, 2026. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 28, 2026

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 28, 2026. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

III. Administrative Reports

1. Report of Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns

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Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns reported several updates to the Commission. On the human resources front, we welcome Zak Jazlowiecki back from leave. We have completed the application process for our final vacancy, the Accounts Examiner position, and we look forward to beginning interviews shortly.

Director Burns discussed the enforcement docket, which currently includes 182 total cases. This caseload encompasses non-filer matters, cases in collection, and those otherwise pending. Of these, 45 are non-filer matters, and 108 are active investigations or prosecutions. On the Citizens' Election Program (CEP) grant application side, there is only one pending matter, which will be addressed later in today's meeting.

Director Burns stated that our IT team has been working closely with the audit and compliance teams to develop new tracking mechanisms that will ensure applications move through the process in a timely manner. They are also implementing automation for certain grant receipt processes to improve efficiency and consistency across the board.

Director Burns stated we continue to prioritize the review of older audits. Our goal remains to have all audits completed prior to the 2026 grant season.

Director Burns said that he held a productive meeting with representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut and the Chief State's Attorney. These relationships remain strong, and we are working on strategies to ensure compliance with election laws. We are also planning a meeting with the Election Security Task Force, which includes federal and state law enforcement as well as civil participants in the election process.

IV. Pending Complaints, Investigations and Audits

A. Public Session

1. In the Matter of a complaint by Alberta Vitale, East Haven
File No. 2024-133
Proposed Consent Order & Agreement
Respondent:
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Mario Borelli
Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Mario Borelli summarized the above referenced complaint and Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2024-133. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2024-133. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. Audit Reports

2022

1. *“Bob For State Representative”* Robert Hebert
Accounts Examiner: Rhonda Salvatore
2. *“Peter Sherr for CT House,”* Peter Sherr
Accounts Examiner: Krysta Palozie
3. *“Timbro for Wethersfield”* Brianna Timbro
Accounts Examiner: Rhonda Salvatore

2024

4. *“PaulChic2024”* Paul C Cicarella
Accounts Examiner: Kyla Huband
5. *“Dan Garrett For CT”* Daniel Garrett
Accounts Examiner: Saadah Junood
6. *“Jan for State Senate 2024”* Jan F Hochadel
Accounts Examiner: Saadah Junood
7. *“NKD24”* Nicole Klarides-Ditria
Accounts Examiner: Rhonda Salvatore
8. *“Kara for Ansonia & Derby”* Kara Rochelle
Accounts Examiner: Ergys Guni
9. *“Sanchez 2024: Bobby Sanchez”*
Accounts Examiner: Saadah Junood
10. *“Vollano2024”* Joseph Vollano, Sr
Accounts Examiner: Nicole Duffany
11. *“Zimmer for CT”* Aaron W Zimmer
Accounts Examiner: Saadah Junood

Director of Campaign Disclosure and Audit Salman Munir provided an overview of the draft audit reports and recommended that the Commission make final items numbers 1 through 11. Acceptance of the audit results was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

V. Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B),(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 Bergquist at 9:43 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, Ajello, Bergquist, and Piecuch were present via Webex. Staff members present via Webex were: Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns, Legal Program Director Shannon Clark Kief, Director of Disclosure and Audit Salman Munir, Associate Account Examiner Kysta Palozie, Enforcement Director William Smith, Staff Attorneys, Johnny Ross, III, Zak Jazlowiecki; Joshua Foley, Aaron Charney, Patricia Mwlwa, Maryam Bitar, Legal Investigators Ron Perry, Stephanie Fish, Elections Officers, Kaitlin Flynn, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Jonathan Ortiz, Nathan Diaz-Rolan, and Commission Clerks Sheri-Lyn Lagueux, Stephen Palmer, and Cynthia Ortiz.

VI. Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session

At 1017 A.M., the Commissioners came out of Executive Session and noted that no matters were decided and no vote was taken during Executive Session. The Commissioners then considered the following matters discussed in Executive Session.

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 29, 2026, and requested that two (2) matters be moved to be investigated.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to one complaint, File No. 2026-002. So voted by a vote of 3-0-1, with Commissioner Ajello Abstaining.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to one complaint, File No. 2026-003. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. In the Matter of a Commission Initiated Investigation Into Certain Contributions to “Friends of Cathy Osten”

Re: File No. 2024-059

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

William B. Smith

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

The matter is continued.

3. In the Matter of a Commission Initiated Investigation “Bush2020CT”

File No. 2023-130

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Mario Borelli

Legal Investigator:

Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

The matter is continued.

4. In the Matter of a Referral of the Campaign Disclosure and Audit Unit of the State Election Enforcement Commission

File No. 2022-066

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Attorney Johnny Ross III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2022-066. He recommended adoption of the Notice of Case Closure in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Notice of Case Closure in File No. 2022-066. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. In the Matter of a Referral by an Election Officer of State Election Enforcement Commission

File No. 2023-039

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Attorney Johnny Ross summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2023-039. He recommended adoption of the Notice of Case Closure in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to adopt the Notice of Case Closure in File No. 2023-039. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

6. Recommendation of Counsel Proposed Draft Regulations for Post Election Audit

Attorney:

Maryam Bitar

Attorney Maryam Bitar summarized the Proposed Regulations for Post Election Audit. She recommended the Commission approve initiation of the regulation review process as revised and proposed.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve initiation of the regulation review process as revised and proposed. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

VII. Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B),(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 Bergquist at 10:27 A.M. to proceed back into Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B) and (E), and 1-210(b)(1), (3),(4),(10) to discuss and vote on the grant application for “Fazio for Connecticut, Inc.” Ryan Fazio. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Commissioners Penny, Ajello, Bergquist, and Picuch were present via Webex. Staff members present via Webex were: Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns, Legal Program Director Shannon Clark Kief, Director of Disclosure and Audit Salman Munir, Associate Account Examiner Kysta Palozie, Enforcement Director William Smith, Staff Attorneys, Johnny Ross, III, Zak Jazlowiecki; Joshua Foley, Aaron Charney, Patricia Mwlwa, Maryam Bitar, Legal Investigators Ron Perry, Stephanie Fish, Elections Officers, Kaitlin Flynn, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Jonathan Ortiz, Nathan Diaz-Rolan, and Commission Clerks Sheri-Lyn Lagueux, Stephen Palmer and Cynthia Ortiz.

VIII. Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session

At 10:36 A.M., the Commissioners came out of Executive Session and noted that no matters were decided and no votes were taken during Executive Session. The Commissioners then considered the following matters discussed in Executive Session.

1. “Fazio for Connecticut, Inc.” Ryan Fazio

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist to approve the grant application for “Fazio for Connecticut, Inc.”. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

IX. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Bergquist at 10:38 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.

The next regular scheduled meeting is February 18, 2026 at 9:30 A.M.