DRAFT MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 21, 2026
9:30 AM

I. Call to Order

Chairman Ajello was present via Teams and called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM Commissioners Sonia Worrell Asare, Shannon Bergquist, Cornelius McCarthy and Greg Piecuch were present via Teams. Agency staff were also present and present via Teams.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to add to the agenda as item VI.08 a Recommendation of Counsel regarding a SEEC Initiated Investigation. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. *Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 7, 2026*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of *October 7, 2026*. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

2. *Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 15, 2026*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of *October 15, 2026*. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

III. Administrative Reports

1. *Report of Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns*

Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns reported that we will be bringing in on Emily Hurlock as an administrative assistant on October 30th. That will bring the staff to full staffing.

Executive Director Burns advised that the agency remains on budget for 2026 despite heavy overtime during the CEP season. There were some budgeting issues between OPM and DAS that have been resolved including union wage agreement impacts, legislative reporting of SEEC budget adjustments, and cost

sharing for IT infrastructure. Those issues have been resolved to everyone's satisfaction. We also acknowledge the collaboration with Office of State Ethics and the Freedom of Information Commission, who partnered with the SEEC in those conversations.

Executive Director Burns advised that there are two issues arising in Fiscal Years 2028 and 2029 that will need to be addressed legislatively. One is the rate of increase in the grants—particularly at the gubernatorial level—which has outpaced the deposits into the Citizens' Election Fund. Staff have concerns that the fund may not be able to support two participating gubernatorial candidates in 2030 and want to ensure that this issue is raised with the legislature in time to plan for the necessary deposits.

Executive Director Burns reported that the SEEC also remains significantly understaffed. Every Executive Director since 2011 has expressed the same concern, and the agency will be making requests to the legislature to fully staff the Commission in the coming year. A broader legislative package will be provided to the Commission prior to the start of the legislative session in January.

Executive Director Burns noted that as staff have been winding down work related to the CEP, they have also been actively engaged in Election Day preparations with partner agencies, particularly DESPP, the Office of the Chief State's Attorney, and the Office of the Attorney General. While the SEEC has limited direct responsibility for election administration, the agency does run the Election Day hotline, which is being led by Senior Counsel Joshua Foley. The SEEC has been providing substantial expertise and administrative support to these partner agencies.

Executive Director Burns advised that the only active agency litigation, *Ricci v. SEEC*, was resolved on October 13, 2026. The Office of the Attorney General had filed a Motion to Dismiss, and before the Plaintiff filed a responsive brief, they withdrew the action.

Executive Director Burns reported updated statistics for the CEP now that all grants have been issued. The agency issued 302 CEP grants, the third-highest total in the program's history. Seventy-seven percent of applicants were approved on their first submission. For applicants who were continued, as majority of approvals were issued within one week of the continuance, with a median additional processing time of six business days.

Executive Director Burns advised that the Enforcement Docket contains 178 total cases. Of these, 50 are non-filers, 37 are on hold with partner agencies, 11 are in collections, and 96 are active complaints, referrals, or Commission-initiated matters. Of the 96 active cases, only 21 predate January 2026.

IV. Freedom of Information Act Orientation

1. Freedom of Information Act Orientation by Joshua Foley

Senior Counsel Joshua Foley provided an overview of the Freedom of Information Act to the Commission.

V. Executive Session per General Statutes §§ 1-200(6)(B),(E), and 1-210(b)(1), (3),(4),(10) and General Statutes §9-7a

(Preliminary draft and agency consideration of enforcement action and exempt records relative thereto)

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 9:47 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 Ajello, Asare, Bergquist, McCarthy and Piecuch were present via Teams. Staff members present via Teams were: Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns, Senior Counsel, Joshua Foley, Legal Program Director Shannon Clark Kief, Director of Audit & Disclosure Salman Munir, Enforcement Director William B. Smith, Staff Attorneys Mario Borelli, Johnny Ross, III, Zak Jazlowiecki, Maryam Bitar, Aaron Charney, Patricia Mwilwa, Legal Investigators Scott Branfuhr, Stephaie Fish, Ronald Perry, Elections Officers Kaitlin Flynn, Ashley Socquet, Accounts Examiners, Saadah Junood, Ergys Guni, Nicole Duffany, Kujtim Dede, Kyla Huband, Fiscal Administrative Supervisor, Shauna Khang, Fiscal Administrative Officers Megan Jakubowski, Kendra Hill, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Nathan Diaz-Rolon, Richard Bramande, Renata Rydzewski and Commission Clerks Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

VI. Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session

At 10:10 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

   Attorney William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated October 14, 2026 and requested that five (5) matters be moved to be investigated.

   It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to

complaints, File No. 2026-128; 2026-129; 2026-130; 2026-131 and 2026-132. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is not necessary to investigate violations relating to a complaint, File No. 2026-127. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

2. In the Matter of an SEEC Referral for Failure to File a Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for the April 10, 2022 Filing Period
   File Nos. 2022-031 & 2022-079
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: William B. Smith

   Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File Nos. 2022-031 and 2022-079. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Motion to Dismiss in this matter.

   It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Motion to Dismiss in File Nos. 2022-031 and 2022-079. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

3. In the Matter of a Referral of the Campaign Disclosure and Audit Unit of the State Elections Enforcement Commission
   File Nos. 2024-029A, 2024-158, 2025-033
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: Johnny Ross, III
   Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

   Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File Nos. 2024-029A, 2024-158, 2025-033. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Amended Consent Order in this matter. It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Amended Agreement Containing Consent Order in File Nos. 2024-029A, 2024-158, 2025-033. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Elizabeth DeMatteo, New Haven
   File No. 2025-133
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: Johnny Ross, III
   Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2025-133. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Agreement Containing a Consent Order in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Agreement Containing Consent Order in File No. 2025-133, upon receipt in ten (10) days. So voted by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Ajello abstaining.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Miguel Pittman, New Haven
   File No. 2026-006
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: Zak Jazlowiecki
   Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

   The matter is continued.

6. In the Matter of a Referral by Bridgeport Town Clerk, Charlie L. Stallworth
   File No. 2026-091
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: Zak Jazlowiecki
   Legal Investigator: Scott Branfuhr

   Attorney Zak Jazlowiecki summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2026-091. He recommended Referral to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney in this matter.

   It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the following motion: Pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b (a) (8), the Commission hereby refers to the Chief State's Attorney evidence bearing upon criminal violations of the general statutes pertaining to an election, primary, or referendum, including, but not limited to the provisions of chapters 145, in the matter docketed as 2026-091. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

7. In the Matter of a Self-Initiated Investigation by SEEC *"Bob for Governor"*
   File No. 2026-032
   Recommendation of Counsel
   Attorney: Mario Borelli
   Legal Investigator: Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

   The matter is continued.

8. Recommendation of Counsel – Commission Initiated Complaint Pursuant to General Statutes 9-7b (a) (1), Regarding the Wilms Committee ("Fred for Connecticut")
Attorney: William B. Smith

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel. He recommended the Commission initiate an investigation into the Wilms Committee ("Fred for Connecticut").

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the following motion: The Commission pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b (a) (1) initiates an investigation into the Fred for Connecticut committee for potential campaign finance violations in connection with the reporting and payment of expenses by the committee to a vendor, as required by General Statutes § 9-608; and in complying with expenditure limits as provided by General Statutes § 9-702. So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

VII. Recognition of former Chair Stephen T. Penny

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the following resolution:
Let it be known that the State Elections Enforcement Commission hereby offers its deepest appreciation and formally recognizes Stephen T. Penny for his exceptional and unwavering service to the people of Connecticut.

Whereas Stephen T. Penny was appointed to the State Elections Enforcement Commission by the Senate Majority Leader in August 2013 and from that moment forward carried out his duties with honor, diligence, and an abiding commitment to public trust; and

Whereas, Commissioner Penny was elected Chairman of the State Elections Enforcement Commission in December 2019, and I that capacity provided steadfast leadership, principled judgment, and thoughtful stewardship throughout is tenure, concluding in August 2026; and

Whereas, Commissioner Penny has devoted himself to the enduring mission of preserving and strengthening the integrity of Connecticut's electoral process, safeguarding the rights and voices of its citizens with vigilance, fairness, and integrity; and

Whereas the Commissioners and the staff of the Elections Enforcement Commission extend their profound gratitude for Commissioner Penny's guidance,

wisdom, and many contributions, each of which has left an indelible mark on the Commission's work and legacy; and

Now therefore be it resolved that Stephen T. Penny is commended for is dedicated service to the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

So voted by a vote of 5-0-0.

VIII. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 10:22 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.

The next regular scheduled meeting is November 4, 2026 at 9:30 A.M.