



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
July 15, 2026
9:30 AM

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Penny was present via Teams and called the meeting to order at 9:32 A.M. Commissioners Michael Ajello and Shannon Bergquist were present via Teams. Agency staff were also present and present via Teams.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to move item #3 in Executive Session identified as File No. 2021-138 into public session. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of July 1, 2026

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of July 1, 2026. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of July 9, 2026

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of July 9, 2026. So voted by a vote of 2-0-1 with commissioner Bergquist abstaining.

III. Administrative Reports

1. Report of Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns

Executive Director Burns reported that the meeting for tomorrow July 16, 2026 is not necessary and can be cancelled.

Executive Director Burns advised that the agency received OPM approval to post the Administrative Assistant position and will likely have that posted for hiring early next week. This is an essential position for the agency.

Executive Director Burns stated that Enforcement docket currently has 179 cases; 34 on hold; 49 non-filers and 100 active complaints, referrals and SEEC initiated matters.

Executive Director Burns reported that the Commission has awarded 136 grants and there are 27 pending applications; 14 for consideration today and 13 new or continued applications.

***IV. 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)***

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. "Joe Kelly for Senate," Joseph Kelly

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for "Joe Kelly for Senate," Joseph Kelly. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

2. "Sam in 26," Smanatha Nestor

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to continue without prejudice the grant application for "Sam in 26," Smanatha Nestor. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

3. "Laroche4CT," Amybeth Laroche

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for "Laroche4CT," Amybeth Laroche. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

4. *"Cohen for Senate," Christine Cohen*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Cohen for Senate," Christine Cohen*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

5. *"Re-Elect Dave," David Yaccarino*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Re-Elect Dave," David Yaccarino*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

6. *"Anthony for Glastonbury," Antony DiLizia*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Anthony for Glastonbury," Antony DiLizia*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

7. *"Friends of James Maroney," James Maroney*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Friends of James Maroney," James Maroney*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

8. *"Friends of Sal Simsek," Sal Simsek*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Friends of Sal Simsek," Sal Simsek*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

9. *"Gray 2026," Ollie Gray*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Gray 2026," Ollie Gray*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

10. *"Protect Connecticut," Aaron Zimmer*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Protect Connecticut," Aaron Zimmer*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

11. *"Ritter 2026," Matthew Ritter*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Ritter 2026," Matthew Ritter*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

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

1. *"Faith 2026 for the 75th," Faithalee Gocłowski*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Faith 2026 for the 75th," Faithalee Gocłowski*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

2. *"Mandato for the 34th," Brandi Mandato*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Mandato for the 34th," Brandi Mandato*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

3. *"SamanthaForStateRep44," Samantha Derenthal*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"SamanthaForStateRep44," Samantha Derenthal*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-0.

Commissioner Asare joined the meeting at 9:50 A.M.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to add to the agenda *"Werstler26," Ethan R. Werstler* as item V.B.04 in Public Session. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *"Werstler26," Ethan R. Werstler*

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to approve the grant application for *"Werstler26," Ethan R. Werstler*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

VI. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In the Matter of a Referral by an Elections Officer of the SEEC
File No. 2021-138
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2021-138. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Stipulated Settlement Containing a Consent Order in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Asare and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to deny the respondent's Motion to Conform Compliance Date in File No. 2021-138. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Proposed Stipulated Settlement Containing a Consent Order in File No. 2021-138. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Ajello and seconded by Commissioner Asare to set down a date for consideration on August 19, 2026 where counsel will report back on the status of compliance with the Stipulated Settlement containing a Consent Order in File No. 2021-138. 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
(Preliminary draft and agency consideration of enforcement action and exempt records relative thereto)***

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello at 10:24 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, Asare and Bergquist were present via Teams. Staff members present via Teams were: Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns, 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 Stephanie Fish, Scott Branfuhr, Elections Officer Kaitlin Flynn, Temporary Office Assistant Everett Padro, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Nathan Diaz-Rolon, and Commission Clerks Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

VIII. Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session

At 11:00 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 July 8, 2026 and requested that 2 matters be moved to be investigated.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to complaints, File No. 2026-070 and 2026-073. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to make a determination that it is not necessary to investigate violations relating to complaints, File No. 2026-071 and 2026-072. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. Recommendation of Counsel: Regarding Complaints Received by the SEEC
Attorney: William B. Smith

No action was taken.

3. In the Matter of a Referral by an Elections Officer of the SEEC
File No. 2021-138
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: Johnny Ross, III

The matter was moved to and decided in public session.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Thomas Gecewicz, Bridgeport
File No. 2026-026
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: Johnny Ross, III
Legal Investigator: Ronald Perry

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2026-026. 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 Ajello to adopt the following motion: That the Commission, pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b (a) (8), refer to the Chief State's Attorney the evidence obtained in the investigation of SEEC File No. 2026-026 which bears upon potential criminal

violations of the general statutes pertaining to or relating to any election, primary, or referendum. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. In the Matter of a Complaint by Benjamin Barnes, Stratford

File No. 2025-081

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Legal Investigator:

Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

6. In the Matter of a Referral by the Secretary of the State, Hartford

File No. 2024-166

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Zak Jazlowiecki

Legal Investigator:

Ronald Perry

The matter is continued.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Kimberly D. Thompson, Old Lyme

File No. 2025-106

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. 2025-106. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to adopt the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in File No. 2025-106. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

8. In the Matter of a SEEC Initiated Investigation

File No. 2023-078A

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Mario Borelli

Legal Investigator:

Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

Attorney Mario Borelli summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2023-078A. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Reason to Believe in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to adopt the following motion: Commission moves that: the Commission has reason to believe that Respondent Jennifer Caldwell, in the matter of File No. 2023-78A, violated Connecticut General Statutes §§ 9-606 (a) 9-607 (f), and 9-608 (c), and §§ 9-607-1 and 9-706-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, by: (1) failing to obtain a written agreement with DNA Consultants which adequately described the scope of work to be performed; (2) failing to maintain adequate documentation of the identity of secondary payees; and (3) failing to maintain adequate contemporaneous documentation of the services of Stephanie Sponzo, including documentation sufficient to explain the discrepancy between the pre-performance contract and the ultimate payment. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Chairman Penny indicated that Commissioner Piecuch is appointed as hearing officer.

9. In the Matter of a Complaint by Michelle Krampitz, Glastonbury
File No. 2024-137
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney:
Legal Investigator:

Mario Borelli
Stephanie Fish

Attorney Mario Borelli summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2023-078A. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Reason to Believe in this matter.

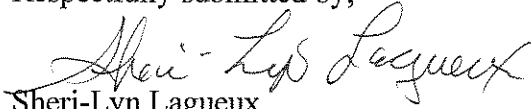
It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello to adopt the following motion: the Commission has reason to believe that Respondent Nicolas Damato, in the matter of File No. 2024-137, violated Connecticut General Statutes §§ 9-150c, 9-359, and 9-360, by obtaining an absentee ballot in the name of his mother, Diane Damato, failing to deliver said ballot to his mother, and voting said ballot himself in the November 5, 2024 election. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Commissioner Penny indicated that he would be appointed as hearing officer

IX. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Bergquist and seconded by Commissioner Ajello at 11:09 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.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sheri-Lyn Lagueux".

Sheri-Lyn Lagueux

Clerk of the State Elections Enforcement Commission

August 5, 2026

Date approved

(By the State Elections Enforcement Commission)