



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
August 19, 2026
9:30 AM

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Ajello was present via Teams and called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM Commissioners Stephen Penny, Sonia Worell Asare, Cornelius McCarthy and Greg Piecuch were present via Teams. Agency staff were also present and present via Teams.

II. Administrative Reports

1. Report of Executive Director and General Counsel Ryan Burns

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns reported of some major events at the commission this week. Not the least of which is we have a new commissioner with us today. Burns welcomed Commissioner Cornelius McCarthy.

Commissioner McCarthy is an experienced trial and appellate litigator, graduate of Dartmouth College and Yale Law School. Commissioner McCarthy brings a wealth of private practice, government, and academic experience with him to the commission and we look forward to working with him.

Commissioner McCarthy addressed the commission by thanking them and advised that he looks forward to working with them.

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns thanked Chairman Penny for his longtime work. Commissioner Penny joined the commission in August of 2013 and has served as its chair since late 2019. In his time as chair, Commissioner Penny led the commission through a global pandemic, seven CEP grant cycles, major litigation and enforcement matters, and an extended executive leadership transition. Throughout his service, Commissioner Penny has upheld the highest ideals of the agency and public service with grace and compassion.

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns advised that staff will have a more formal event later in the fall to recognize Commissioner Penny. He opened the floor now for anyone that to like to say a few words.

Commissioner Ajello reported that he served with Commissioner Penny about the same duration of time, since they were both appointed, at the same time. Commissioner Ajello said that it has been a privilege to serve with Commissioner

Penny on this commission recalling that he was the leader that this commission needed and did an excellent job.

Commissioner Piecuch made a motion to that the commission adopt a resolution offering its sincere gratitude to Chairman Penny for his service to the commission over these many years. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Asare. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0

Commissioner Asare thanked Commissioner Penny for his tremendous leadership and making the commission it amicable at all times. Commissioner Asare praised Commissioner Penny for being charitable in his time and efforts to ensure that the commission run appropriately and making her feel welcome

Commissioner Penny thanked the Commission and staff for all of their hard work and making it a pleasure to be a part of it. Commissioner Penny parted with kind words for the newly appointed Commissioner Neil McCarthy and wished everyone the best.

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns provided brief update on litigation. In the Santanella v Jerz matter, a new primary has been scheduled for September 1st. Compliance and CEP teams have been working together on communicating out the implications of this new primary.

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns reported that the enforcement docket is currently 167 cases, which is significantly down and that's due in large part to the strong work of both enforcement attorneys and legal investigators. There are 37 of those cases are on hold due to collaboration with our law enforcement partners. Thirty-six are non-filer matters and 99 are active complaints, referrals or other seek initiated matters.

Executive Director and General Counsel Burns advised that on the CEP side, 198 grants have been awarded to date. 21 applications are on the agenda for today and there's 19 applications pending. This is the busiest week of the whole four-year cycle right now as August 24th is the deadline by which all applications must be in or receive a reduced grant. Over the next two weeks, expect the commission meetings to include a larger than normal number of grants for consideration by the commission. This is going to be a very heavy workload for our elections officers, compliance attorneys, and our audit staff in addition to the kind of triple down trickle down effect on the IT and fiscal teams.

Executive Director Burns shared his appreciation for staff with all the hard work and the teamwork that they've shown so far.

III. *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 Piccuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 9:45 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 Ajello, Asare, McCarthy and Piccuch 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 Disclosure & Audit Salman Munir, Enforcement Director William B. Smith, Staff Attorneys Mario Borelli, Johnny Ross, III, Zak Jazlowiecki, Maryam Bitar, Aaron Charney, Legal Investigators Stephaie Fish, Scott Branfuhr, Elections Officer Kaitlin Flynn, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Nathan Diaz-Rolon, and Commission Clerks Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

IV. *Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session*

At 9:53 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: Discussion of Candidate Committee Validation Memoranda

No action was taken.

V. *Oath of New Commissioner*

Attorney Aaron Charney administered the Oath of New Commissioner to Cornelius McCarthy.

VI. *Approval of the Minutes*

1. *Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 5, 2026*

It was moved by Commissioner Piccuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of *August 5, 2026*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-1 with Commissioner McCarthy abstaining.

2. *Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 12, 2026*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of *August 12, 2026*. So voted by a vote of 3-0-1 with Commissioner McCarthy abstaining.

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

A. *New Applications*

1. *"Demicco 2026," Michael V. Demicco*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Demicco 2026," Michael V. Demicco*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. *"Knickerbocker '26," Matthew Knickerbocker*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Knickerbocker '26," Matthew Knickerbocker*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. *"Bobforthe48th," Robert C. Fernandez*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to continue without prejudice the grant application for *"Bobforthe48th," Robert C. Fernandez*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *"Bryan Lizotte for Shelton," Bryan Lizotte*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Bryan Lizotte for Shelton," Bryan Lizotte*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. *"Guckerforct," Kenneth M. Gucker*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Guckerforct," Kenneth M. Gucker*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

6. *"Joe for the 78th 2026," Joe Hoxha*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Joe for the 78th 2026," Joe Hoxha*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

7. *"Osborne 2026," Melissa E. Osborne*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Osborne 2026," Melissa E. Osborne*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

8. *"Re-elect Greg Howard 2026," Gregory S. Howard*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Re-elect Greg Howard 2026," Gregory S. Howard*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

9. *"AimeeBG2026," Aimee Berger-Girvalo*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"AimeeBG2026," Aimee Berger-Girvalo*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

10. *"Biggins 2026," Patrick R. Biggins*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Biggins 2026," Patrick R. Biggins*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

11. *"Caitlin for 63rd," Caitlin R. Hall*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Caitlin for 63rd," Caitlin R. Hall*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

12. *"Cheryl Hilton for the 80th," Cheryl D. Hilton*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *Cheryl Hilton for the 80th," Cheryl D. Hilton*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

13. *"Lott2026," Terence Lott*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Lott2026," Terence Lott*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to initiate an investigation Pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b (a), the Commission moves, on its own initiative, to initiate an investigation into possible violations of Chapter 155, including but not limited to, § 9-622 (7) and (10), and the requirements of Chapter 157 of the General Statutes concerning the conflicting

contributor certification information submitted on behalf of Lott2026,” in its grant application to participate in the Citizens’ Election Program. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

14. *“Friends of John-Michael,” John M. Parker*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to continue without prejudice the grant application for *“Friends of John-Michael,” John M. Parker*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

15. *“Gifford For Connecticut,” William R. Gifford*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *“Gifford For Connecticut,” William R. Gifford*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

16. *“Lisa Miro for the133rd,” Lisa Miro*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *“Lisa Miro for the133rd,” Lisa Miro*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

17. *“Sanchez for 2026,” James B. Sanchez*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *“Sanchez for 2026,” James B. Sanchez*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

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

1. *“Rojas 2026,” Jason Rojas*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *“Rojas 2026,” Jason Rojas*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. *“Corey for Torrington,” Edward Corey*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *“Corey for Torrington,” Edward Corey*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. *"ANKERMAN FOR STATE REP," Chantelle D. Ankerman*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"ANKERMAN FOR STATE REP," Chantelle D. Ankerman*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

4. *"Godfrey 26," Bob Godfrey*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Godfrey 26," Bob Godfrey*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. *"Linda Pierce for District 30," Linda M. Pierce*

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to approve the grant application for *"Linda Pierce for District 30," Linda M. Pierce*. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

VIII. Pending Complaints and Investigations

A. Public Session

1. In the Matter of a Referral by the Campaign Audit & Disclosure Unit of SEEC
File No. 2021-138

Proposed Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Johnny Ross, III

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and issued a Demand Letter in File No. 2021-138. He recommended adoption of the following motion: As it relates to SEEC File No. 2021-138, pursuant to the terms of the Stipulated Settlement adopted by the Commission on July 15, 2026, the Commission moves to authorize Counsel to issue an letter demanding payment of the \$200 late filing fee for two late filings, payment of the \$400 civil penalty for the violation of General Statutes § 9-608, and payment of the additional \$600 civil penalty for Respondent Alan Shaw's failure to file all the delinquent filings for the Wilm 4 Rep candidate committee with the Commission on or before July 13, 2026, and said letter shall contain notice of the Commission's ability to take further action, such as referring this matter to the Office of the Attorney General pursuant to General Statutes §§ 9-7b (a)(7).

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the above motion and issue a Demand Letter in 2021-138. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

IX. 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 Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 10:25 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 Ajello, Asare, McCarthy and Picuch 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 Disclosure & Audit Salman Munir, Enforcement Director William B. Smith, Staff Attorneys Mario Borelli, Johnny Ross, III, Zak Jazlowiecki, Maryam Bitar, Aaron Charney, Legal Investigators Stephaie Fish, Scott Branfuhr, Elections Officer Kaitlin Flynn, Information Technology Manager Irene Jeremic, Information Technology Analyst Nathan Diaz-Rolon, and Commission Clerks Stephen Palmer and Sheri-Lyn Lagueux.

X. Consideration of Matters Discussed in the above Executive Session

At 11:04 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 August 13, 2026 and requested that three (3) matters be moved to be investigated.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is necessary to investigate violations relating to three (3) complaints, File Nos. 2026-087, 2026-088 and 2026-089. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

Attorney William B. Smith summarized the Recommendation of Counsel dated August 13, 2026 and requested that one (1) matter not be moved to be investigated.

It was moved by Commissioner Picuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to make a determination that it is necessary to not investigate violations relating to one (1) complaint, File No. 2026-090. So approved by the Commission. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

2. Recommendation of Counsel: Litigation update

No action was taken.

3. 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.

4. In the Matter of a Complaint by Angel M. Hubbard, New Haven

File No. 2025-108

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Zak Jazlowiecki

Legal Investigator:

Scott Branfuhr

Attorney Johnny Ross, III summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. File No. 2025-108. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in File No. File No. 2025-108. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

5. In the Matter of a Referral by Fred DeCaro and Mary Hegarty, Greenwich

File No. 2026-010

Recommendation of Counsel

Attorney:

Zak Jazlowiecki

Legal Investigator:

Ronald Perry

Attorney Zak Jazlowiecki summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2026-010. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Proposed Consent Order & Agreement in File No. 2026-010. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

6. In the Matter of a Referral by the Campaign Audit & Disclosure Unit of SEEC
File No. 2021-138
Proposed Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: Johnny Ross, III

This matter was moved to and taken up in public session.

7. In the Matter of a Complaint by Benjamin Shaiken, Mansfield Center
File Nos. 2025-062, 2026-034, 2026-039 & 2026-040
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: Johnny Ross, III
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

The matter is continued.

8. In the Matter of a Complaint by Rose Aletta, Portland
File No. 2026-027
Recommendation of Counsel
Attorney: Mario Borelli
Legal Investigator: Stephanie Fish

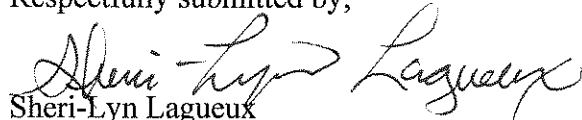
Attorney Mario Borelli summarized the above referenced complaint and Recommendation of Counsel in File No. 2026-027. He recommended adoption of the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in this matter.

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare to adopt the Proposed Notice of Dismissal in File No. 2026-027. So voted by a vote of 4-0-0.

XI. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Piecuch and seconded by Commissioner Asare at 11:11 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,



Sheri-Lyn Lagueux
Clerk of the State Elections Enforcement Commission

September 2, 2026

Date approved

(By the State Elections Enforcement Commission)