

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint Edward Boughton, North Branford
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File No. 2018-087B
File No. 2018-092B
File No. 2018-109B

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Complainant filed this complaint with the Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b. The Complainant alleged that Respondents accepted cash contributions from the North Branford Democratic Town Committee and did not report them.¹ The following are the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law:

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant hereto the North Branford Democratic Town Committee (the "North Branford DTC") was a party committee as defined by General Statutes § 9-601 (2).
2. At all times relevant hereto, Elisabeth Caplan was the treasurer of the North Branford DTC.
3. On or about May 29, 2018, Respondent Vincent Mase registered the Committee to Elect Vince Mase Representative 86th District with the Commission to finance his campaign for State Representative.
4. At all times during Committee to Elect Vince Mase Representative 86th District's existence, Respondent Lewis Paternoster was the treasurer of such committee.
5. On or about June 5, 2019, Respondent Daniel Armin named as the deputy treasurer of the Committee to Elect Vince Mase Representative 86th District via a filing of an amended registration with the Commission.
6. On or about January 10, 2019, Respondent Armin filed a termination report with the Commission concerning the Committee to Elect Vince Mase Representative 86th District.
7. At all times relevant hereto the North Branford Democratic Town Committee (the "North Branford DTC") was a party committee as defined by General Statutes § 9-601 (2).
8. The North Branford Potato & Corn Festival (the "NBPCF") is an annual event held the first weekend of August.

¹ Allegations concerning the conduct of Respondent Caplan shall be addressed in a separate document.

9. During the NBPCF, food vendors may contact the festival's staff and reserve a booth to sell food during the festival.
10. Prior to the NBPCF, the North Branford DTC circulated a flyer advertising their booth and included the statement "Sponsored by the North Branford DTC."
11. The 2018 NBPCF was held on or about August 5, 2018 through August 8, 2018.
12. Prior to August 5, 2018, the North Branford DTC reserved a booth to sell food at the 2018 NBPCF.
13. On or about October 9, 2018, Respondent Caplan filed a financial disclosure statement with the Commission for the North Branford DTC covering the period July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 (the "Original October 10th Report"). The filing did not contain any transactions relating to the NBPCF.
14. On or about October 30, 2018, Respondent Caplan filed an amended financial disclosure statement with the Commission for the North Branford DTC covering the period July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 (the "Amended October 10th Report"). The filing disclosed receipts of \$1,807.61.
15. Evidence suggests that Vincent Mase attended the NBPCF and visited the North Branford DTC's booth at that event.

DISCUSSION


16. The alleged conduct is serious. If the Respondents had participated in diverting cash contributions that had been made to a town committee and then spent them to benefit a candidate without reporting them, such conduct would be in violation of numerous campaign finance laws, including, but not limited to, General Statutes §§ 9-606, 9-607, and 9-608.
17. In this case, however, there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations. Rather, Commission investigators discovered that the accounting and reporting issues noted by the Complainant had nothing to do with the Mase campaign, but rather were caused by issues internal to the North Branford DTC. The complete narrative concerning this conduct is detailed in Commission matter *In the Matter of a Complaint Edward Boughton, North Branford*, File No. 2018-087A et al.
18. Accordingly, this matter should be dismissed.

ORDER

The following Order is recommended on the basis of the aforementioned findings:

That this matter be dismissed.

Adopted this 2nd day of October, 2019 at Hartford, Connecticut.



Anthony J. Castagna
By Order of the Commission