

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by Mildred Torres-Ferguson
Meriden

File No. 2021-188

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Complainant Mildred Torres-Ferguson of Meriden filed this complaint alleging that Joshua Broekstra, treasurer of a municipal candidate committee in Meriden, had failed properly to report expenditures made by the committee in connection with the 2021 municipal election. After investigating the allegations raised in the complaint the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. Complainant alleged that Broekstra, who was treasurer of the *Elain for Meriden* candidate committee, had not provided sufficient descriptions for expenditures that the committee made.

2. Specifically, complaint alleged:

In reviewing the filing, I noticed there were no descriptions for expenditures but instead the description field included document numbers. I requested the documents which were referred to in the filing as documents 1-11 from Joshua Broekstra who is the Treasurer for the Elaine for Meriden campaign as well as an employee in the City Clerk's office. I was told the document numbers included in the filing corresponded to receipts that he kept. I believe this violates CGS 9-608(c) by not providing the purpose of the expenditure. One entry in Section P lists the Payee as City of Meriden with an expenditure code of FDNR, the description is Document 9 and the Amount is \$0. Additional Payees include Tyco Print, UPrinting, Amazon, Donna B Designs and Walmart. All of these entries have an expenditure code of A-Other and descriptions are document numbers. SEEC's 2021 Guide for Municipal Candidates requires each expenditure be itemized to include amount, date, DESCRIPTION and method of payment. Joshua Broekstra also serves as treasurer for the Meriden Republican Town Committee but lists descriptions, not document numbers, on the town committee financial reports.

3. According to the committee's campaign finance disclosure reports, the *Elain for Meriden* candidate committee made expenditures for campaign-related items. As required by General Statutes § 9-603 (b)(3), Broekstra filed those municipal candidate

filings with the Meriden Town Clerk using the forms that were prepared by the Commission.¹

4. On the committee's reports, completed on the SEEC Form 20, Broekstra itemized expenditures made by the committee and identified them with the codes designated in the form instructions. For some of the coded expenditures, Broekstra did not provide a narrative description of the expenditure but simply referenced another document, such as "Document 1" or "Document 2," in the section captioned "Description."
5. General Statutes § 9-606 requires treasurers for committees organized under Connecticut's campaign finance statutes to report on behalf of the committee all contributions received as well as all expenditures made or incurred.² General Statutes § 9-608 requires treasurers to provide an itemized accounting of each contribution received as well as each expenditure made.³ Part of that reporting process is to provide "itemized accounting of each expenditure," which would include the appropriate code for the expenditures on the Commission-mandated forms.⁴
6. The instructions to SEEC Form 20 direct treasurers to complete the "Purpose of Expenditure" box by "using the Expenditure Code Addendum" at the back of the form instructions. The list of expenditure codes includes 41 different codes, covering many types of expenditures that a committee might make such as for advertising via different means, for rent, for reimbursement to committee workers and volunteers, or for wages.
7. The instructions for completing Section P of the Form 20 as well as the addendum that lists the expenditure codes state, in relevant part:

Purpose of Expenditure: Note the purpose of the expenditure using the Expenditure Code Addendum attached (pages 27-29).

Description: Provide a brief description of the expenditure. Certain expenditure codes **require** a description as set forth in the Expenditure Code Addendum attached (pages 27-29).

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¹ General Statutes § 9-624 requires the Commission to prepare and print forms used for campaign finance disclosure reporting under chapter 155.

² See General Statutes § 9-606.

³ See General Statutes § 9-608.

⁴ *Id.*

EXPENDITURE CODE ADDENDUM

For use with Sections P, Q, R, S & T of the SEEC Form 20
Asterisk * adjacent to the left of the Expenditure Code indicates
that Description Field is Mandatory

8. As the instructions to the Form 20 indicate and the addendum makes clear, there are eight expenditure codes for which descriptions are mandatory. Those codes are: ATT – expenses related attendance at events; EFV – equipment, furniture, and vehicles; FNDR – fundraiser expenditures; GIFT – purchase of gifts; PBA-ATT – expenses to attend events related to party-building activities; PBA-TRVL – travel expenses related to party-building activities; PBA-OTH – other expenses related to party-building activities; and MISC – miscellaneous expenses that do not fit into other categories.
9. The majority of the codes that Boekstra entered into the Form 20 for the *Elain for Meriden* candidate committee did not require entry of a description code. But the FNDR code, which was applied to two expenditures on the *Elain for Meriden* filing attached to the complaint, does require a description of the nature of the expenditure in the filing itself. Simply, referring to an external document that is not attached to the filing does not satisfy the requirements of the SEEC Form 20 instructions. In addition, even if a description is not required based on the expenditure code, any description, if supplied, should clarify the nature of the expenditure, not create more confusion.
10. The expenditure code FNDR requires a description on SEEC campaign finance disclosure forms. Simply referring to an external document as the description does not satisfy the requirements for proper completion of the forms. The commission instructs respondent to provide a more thorough and informative description in the future when describing expenditures made by any committee for which he serves as treasurer.
11. Given the time and resource constraints that the Commission faces in resolving this matter within the one-year timeframe imposed on it by General Statutes § 9-7a (g)(1), the Commission will take no further action on this matter at this time.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the Commission shall take no further action on this matter.

Adopted this 19th day of October 2022 at Hartford, Connecticut by vote of the Commission.



Commissioner STEPHEN T. MALONEY
By Order of the Commission