

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**

In the Matter of a Complaint by Maribeth Marchi,  
North Canaan

File No. 2025-001

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Complainant alleged that the Town of North Canaan paid a bill for a notice of caucus for the North Canaan Republican Town Committee in violation of campaign finance laws. After investigating the allegations raised in the complaint the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. Complainant alleged that the Town of North Canaan paid a bill totaling \$36.16 to the *Republican American* newspaper for an advertisement for a legal notice of caucus for the North Canaan Republican Town Committee ("NCRTC") to be held on January 26, 2024.
2. A copy of the bill, approval by North Canaan First Selectman Brian Ohler for the purchase, and a copy of the advertisement was provided with the complaint.
3. General Statutes § 9-622 (5) prohibits contributing towards defraying the costs of a committee to anyone other than a treasurer. General Statutes § 9-622 (10) prohibits the receipt of a prohibited contribution by a committee.
4. Based on the allegations, First Selectman Bill Ohler and NCRTC Treasurer Minacci were identified as Respondents by the Commission.

*Applicable Law*

5. General Statutes § 9-622, provides in part that the following persons shall be guilty of illegal practices:
  - (5) Any person who, directly or indirectly, pays, gives, contributes or promises any money or other valuable thing to defray or towards defraying the cost or expenses of any campaign, primary, referendum or election to any person, committee, company, club, organization or association, other than to a treasurer, except that this subdivision shall not apply to any expenses for postage, telegrams, telephoning, stationery, express charges, traveling, meals, lodging or photocopying incurred by any candidate for office or for nomination to office, so far as may be permitted under the provisions of this chapter;
  - ...
  - (10) Any person who solicits, makes or receives a contribution that is otherwise prohibited by any provision of this chapter;

*Facts After Investigation*

6. At all times relevant, Respondent Minacci was the treasurer of North Canaan and the Chairman of the NCRTC. There is no dispute that North Canaan paid for the NCRTC advertisement for the notice of caucus as alleged.
7. Upon investigation, Respondent Minacci indicated that both North Canaan and the NCRTC received invoices from the *Waterbury Republican* for the same advertisement of the January 26, 2024 notice of caucus. As treasurer of the town she paid the invoice. During this same time period she issued the notice of caucus for the NCRTC as its Chairman. The town and the town committee paid the invoices directly to the newspaper from their own accounts.
8. Upon realizing the error, Respondent Minacci arranged and received a credit to the account of North Canaan from the *Republican American* as town treasurer. Further, the NCRTC campaign finance statement of April 10, 2024 reflects the transaction for the purchase of advertising for the January 26, 2024 legal notice. Respondent, as Chairman of the NCRTC, was responsible for providing legal notice of the caucus pursuant General Statutes § 9-390.
9. Respondent Minacci provided detailed financial records regarding this transaction on behalf of both North Canaan and NCRTC. Invoices, cancelled checks and other records indicate that the NCRTC made an expenditure on February 14, 2024, and North Canaan paid an invoice, approved by Respondent Ohler on February 15, 2024, in the amount of \$36.16 for the same advertisement in the *Republican American*.
10. Finally, while Respondent Minacci admitted her error, she indicated that it was typical to handle invoices from newspaper for legal notices as treasurer for the town and that it was an “honest mistake.” Further, at the same time she was issuing notice of caucus as Chairman of the NCRTC, she understood that the town committee had paid the bill and properly disclosed it on campaign finance statements. There was no attempt in her mind for the town to pay for costs of advertising on behalf of the town committee. Records confirm that the NCRTC disclosed the expenditure as indicated on its April 10, 2024 campaign finance statement.
11. Considering NCRTC financial and campaign finance records, as well as records from North Canaan, and given the timing and payment of the advertisement by each on consecutive days, the Commission finds Respondent Minacci’s explanation for the town’s paying for the advertisement in question as a “mistake” to be credible and reasonable.

*Commission Conclusions*

12. The facts after investigation indicate that North Canaan did make a payment for a newspaper advertisement for the January 26, 2024 NCRTC notice of caucus. The Commission determines that this payment by the town was done in error, based on each entity being billed for the same advertisement, and Respondent Minacci simultaneously handling invoices for North Canaan as town treasurer and issuing legal notices as Chairman of the NCRTC.
13. Based on testimony and records it appears that the payment by both North Canaan and the NRTC was due to error resulting from the double billing of a single advertisement by the newspaper. The party committee paid the \$36.16 advertising bill February 14, 2024 and the town paid for the same advertisement February 15, 2024. The Commission was provided invoices, receipts and cancelled checks for each transaction.
14. Respondent, as treasurer of North Canaan, paid the invoice for the town prior to realizing it was for the NCRTC January 26, 2024 notice of caucus. Upon realization of the error, steps were taken to rectify the situation with the town receiving credit for the expenditure from the newspaper. Moreover, Respondent as NCRTC Chairman issued this notice of caucus on behalf of the town committee, which disclosed this transaction on its April 10, 2024 campaign finance statement.
15. The Commission cautions that municipalities should avoid the use of funds or equipment to defray costs to a committee pursuant to General Statutes § 9-622 (5); and that town committees should avoid receiving such prohibited contributions pursuant to § 9-622 (10). *See generally, Complaint by Linda F. Czaplinski, Oxford, File No. 2022-005.* The Commission deems the named Respondents in this matter on notice of the relevant campaign finance statutes treated in this disposition.
16. The Commission determines, under the specific and narrow circumstances detailed herein, that this matter should be dismissed, with no further action.

**ORDER**

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

The complaint is dismissed, with no further action.

Adopted this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025, at Hartford, Connecticut.



Stephen T. Penny, Chairman  
By Order of the Commission