

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Referral by the Registrars of Voters, Montville

File No. 2025-007

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This complaint was brought pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b. The complainants, Registrars of Voters (“ROVs”) for the Town of Montville, allege in their complaint that the Respondent, Mayor Leonard Bunnell (“Bunnell”), is proposing to relocate the ROV office, and with it the polling location for Early Voting and Same Day Registration (“SDR”), in violation of Connecticut election laws under Title 9. After an investigation of the complaint, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

Complaint

1. On or about March 21, 2025, the Commission received the above-captioned complaint and on April 2, 2025, the Commission voted it necessary to investigate the complaint.

2. The complainant alleges that Respondent Bunnell, in an effort to make his office more accessible to the public, proposed a relocation of the ROV office from the Town Hall to the “Old VNA” building situated on the same grounds. The proposal includes the intention to move the polling location for Early Voting and SDR to this new location.

Facts Found After Investigation

3. Upon investigation the Commission determines that Respondent Bunnell proposed to relocate the ROV office and sought cooperation from the ROVs in this process. In response to general objections from the ROVs to the proposal and questions pertaining to Early Voting and SDR, Respondent Bunnell confirmed that it is his intention to have Early Voting and SDR at the new location; however, he acknowledged there would be notification requirements to the Secretary of the State (“SOTS”) as well as a submission of a proposed floor plan.

4. Complainants allege that Respondent’s proposal would violate various election laws under Title 9, including the following: that the Mayor does not have legal authority to dictate polling locations; that the proposed facility lacks sufficient handicapped parking, that the Mayor has no authority to alter Emergency Contingency Plans for elections; and that the new facility is too small,

has insufficient climate control and does not have adequate overhead shelter outside.¹

5. Upon investigation it was found that, as of May 9, 2025, no further actions regarding the proposal have yet occurred. A floor plan has not been submitted to SOTS, a polling location has not been changed, and the ROV office has not yet been relocated.

Analysis & Conclusions of Law

6. It is clear, based upon the investigation, there is disagreement between the ROVs and the Mayor regarding his proposal. The ROVs correctly point out in their Complaint, and in their correspondence with the Mayor, that pursuant to General Statutes §§9-168 and 9-169, barring an exception, it is the Registrars of Voters that “shall provide a suitable polling place in each [voting] district.”²

7. While it is clear its the intention of the Mayor to change polling locations for Early Voting and SDR, that plan at this instant is only a proposal. Whether this actually occurs, and if so by what process, is merely speculative. Any violation of Title 9 of the General Statutes is similarly speculative in nature.

8. Pursuant to General Statutes §9-7b, the State Elections Enforcement Commission (“SEEC”) has the authority to investigate alleged violations of any provision of the General Statutes relating to any election, and has the authority to enforce civil penalties against any person the commission finds to be in violation of numerous provisions within Title 9.³ Violations that are anticipatory or are merely speculative; however, are not within SEEC’s statutory authority, and would also be precluded by the ripeness doctrine.⁴ While SEEC also has the authority to issue a cease-and-desist order pursuant to General Statutes §9-7b(3)(F), it too requires an actual violation.⁵

9. The Commission finds that based on its investigation, the Respondent has, at this time, not violated any election law.

10. The Commission therefore, under the narrow and specific circumstances detailed herein, dismisses this matter as the allegations were not supported by the facts or the law after investigation.

¹ See, *General Statutes* §9-168, §9-169, §9-168e, §9-174a.

² See, *General Statutes* §9-169

³ See, *General Statutes* §§9-7b(a) (1) and (2)

⁴ See, *Chapman Lumber, Inc. v. Tager*, 288 Conn. 69, 86-87 (2008); *Texas v. United States*, 523 U.S. 296, 300 (1998) (A case is not ripe when it rests upon contingent future events that may not occur as anticipated, or indeed may not occur at all).

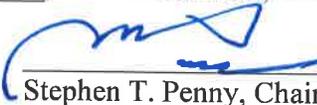
⁵ See, *General Statutes* §9-7b(3)(F)

ORDER

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

That the Commission dismisses this matter.

Adopted this 21st day of May, 2025 at Hartford, Connecticut.



Stephen T. Penny, Chairman