

# STATE OF TENNESSEE



## BUREAU OF ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE TENNESSEE ETHICS COMMISSION

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BOARD MEMBERS  
Charles Traughber, Chair  
Tammy S. White, Secretary  
Stacey Floyd-Thomas  
Duane Gilbert  
Lynn Richardson  
Martin G. McCain

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Bill Young

### TENNESSEE ETHICS COMMISSION Public Meeting Minutes December 3, 2024

The Tennessee Ethics Commission met on Thursday, December 3, 2024, for its regularly scheduled meeting. The meeting began shortly after 9:00 AM and was held at the W.R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower at 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., Nashville, TN, in the Multimedia Room. Chairman Charles Traughber presided over the meeting. Commissioners Tammy White, Martin G. McCain, and Stacey Floyd-Thomas also attended the meeting. Commissioners Duane Gilbert and Lynn Richardson participated electronically.

Executive Director Bill Young, Assistant Director Lance Frizzell, General Counsel Lauren Topping, Chief of Staff Janet Williams and Ethics Compliance Officer Emily Alexander were also in attendance. The Commission's meeting was recorded for the public, and the video recording will be available on the Commission's website.

(Due to weather and traffic conditions, Commissioner Floyd-Thomas was late arriving at the meeting; therefore, the meeting began with Item 2 on the agenda and no voting was conducted until a physical quorum was attained. However, these minutes will present the minutes according to the published agenda.)

- 1. Approval of August 29, 2024 minutes.** Commissioner Richardson moved to approve the meeting minutes as written. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote (6-0).
- 2. Recognition of Charles Traughber.** In honor of Chairman Traughber's years of public service and in anticipation of his upcoming retirement from the Ethics Commission, the Bureau presented a Senate Joint Resolution to Chairman Traughber. Charles Traughber, Commissioner Traughber's nephew, paid tribute to his uncle's years of public service by addressing the Commission. Additional statements of recognition for Chairman Traughber were made by former Mayor Bill Purcell, former Ethics Commissioner Jim Stranch, Attorney and Lobbyist James Dunn, and Leadership TN President & CEO Alfred Degrafinreid, Executive Director Bill Young, and Commissioner Tammy White.
- 3. Request by Governor Lee for Advisory Opinion.** Director Young presented a short summary of the procedural history and facts of the request for an advisory opinion submitted to the Commission by Governor Lee's Office. After a discussion among the members, Commissioner Floyd-Thomas

moved to revise the draft advisory opinion prepared by the Commission's staff to affirm and commend the Governor's commitment to transparency and ethics and to adopt the substantive language presented in the draft advisory opinion. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. The advisory opinion has been so revised and posted online for public viewing.

- 4. Reconsiderations.** After a short summary of these matters by Director Young, Commissioner White moved to take all of the matters below as a group. Commissioner Floyd-Thomas seconded the motion. Commissioner Richardson moved to rescind and waive the penalties previously assessed in each matter. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Natisha Brooks – 2024-006  
Gerard Bullock – 2024-157  
Josh Cain – 2024-162  
Sherry Davis – 2024-176  
Teri Dockery – 2024-035  
Chris Dowell – 2024-179  
Edwin Fickle – 2024-185  
Teresa Fuson – 2024-191  
Michael Herron – 2024-387

Craig Kitch – 2024-218  
Dennie Marshall – 2024-229  
Danielle Mackenzie – 2024-359  
Patricia Ross – 2024-254  
Jerry Simons – 2022-170  
Bennie Smith – 2024-266  
Britney Thornton – 2024-272  
Kimberly Turner – 2024-069  
Gwen Watson – 2024-071

\*Mr. Jerry Simons personally appeared and addressed the Commission.

**5. Informal civil penalty assessment proceedings – Local Candidates**

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner White moved to consider the following matters as a group and to take no action on these matters, as all outstanding Statement of Interest Disclosures had now been filed in each case. Commissioner Richardson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Palmer, James– 2024-422  
Weaver, Jason– 2024-423  
Staggs, Mark– 2024-424  
Hansen, Racheal– 2024-425  
Todd, Jeff– 2024-436

Walker, Pamela– 2024-438  
Keenan, Robert– 2024-439  
Lamb, Dusty– 2024-426  
Hopper, Jerald – 2024-388

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner Floyd-Thomas moved to consider the following matters, in which the outstanding Statement of Interest Disclosures had not been filed, as a group and to assess a civil penalty of \$1000 in each case. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Fairbanks, Shawn – 2024-043  
Nipper, David – 2024-427

Jolley, Robert Daniel– 2024-428  
Williamson, Cameron– 2024-429

**6. Informal civil penalty assessment proceedings – Local Officials**

**Christian Detje, Case No. 2024-431:** After a short discussion, Commissioner Richardson moved to take no action in this matter. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner McCain moved to consider the following matters as a group and to assess a civil penalty of \$1000 in each case. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mantooth, Lake– 2024-228

Potts, Jerry– 2024-430

#### **7. Informal civil penalty assessment proceedings – Lobbyists**

After a short discussion, Commissioner Richardson moved to take no action in the following matters. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Nolan, William– 2024-417

Cornett, Justin– 2024-419

Nolan, William– 2024-418

Nolan, William– 2024-420

**Matt Herriman, Case No. 2024-421:** After a short discussion, Commissioner Richardson moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in this matter. Commissioner Gilbert seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

#### **8. Informal civil penalty assessment proceedings – Employers of Lobbyists**

**Nobel Education, Case No. 2024-413:** Mr. Tom Lee personally appeared on behalf of Noble Education in this matter. After a short discussion, Commissioner White moved to take no action in this matter. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner Richardson moved to consider the following matters as a group and to take no action on these matters, as the required expenditure reports had been submitted. Chairman Traughber seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Tennessee Prospers – 2024-401

TN Mental Health Consumers Assn. – 2024-407

For All, Inc—2024-313

Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance – 2024-322

Wilson & Associates, Engineering Surveying, P.C – 2024-408

Thentia – 2024-323

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner White moved to consider the following matters as a group and to take no action on these matters, as the required corrected expenditure reports had been submitted. Commissioner Richardson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

TN College of Emergency Physicians – 2024-410

Memphis Botanic Garden Foundation Inc– 2024-411

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner Richardson moved to consider the following matters as a group and to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in each of these

matters, as the required expenditure reports had not been submitted. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

615GP LLC– 2024-402  
County Officials Association of TN– 2024-403  
E3 Costruction Services LLC– 2024-404  
Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee– 2024-405  
Liminex, Inc dba GoGuardian– 2024-406  
Youth Advocate Programs– 2024-409

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner Richardson moved to consider the following matters as a group and to take no action on these matters, as the required registrations had been submitted. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Glorianna– 2024-412  
High Tech Special Effects, Inc.– 2024-414

**ALS Association, Case No. 2024-415:** After a short discussion, Member White moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in this matter. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**Elvis Presley Enterprises, Case No. 2024-416:** After a short discussion, Chairman Traugher moved to take no action in this matter. Commissioner Richardson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner McCain moved to consider the following matters as a group and to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in each of these matters, as the required registration fees had not been submitted. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

34ed, LLC – 2024-432  
34ed, LLC – 2024-433  
34ed, LLC – 2024-434

After a short discussion of the facts and history of these matters, Commissioner Richardson moved to consider the following matters as a group and to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in each of these matters, as the required registration fees had not been submitted. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Thentia – 2024-332  
Thentia – 2024-333  
Thentia – 2024-334  
Thentia – 2024-335

**CCC Distribution, Case No. 2024-435:** After a short discussion, Commissioner Richardson moved to take no action in this matter. Chairman Traugher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**9. Rescind civil penalty assessments.**

Chief of Staff Williams provided a summary of each of the following cases, explaining that in each case, information had been obtained after the Commission assessed a civil penalty that each individual was not required to have filed the report for which they were penalized. Therefore, Staff has recommended that these penalties be rescinded. Commissioner White moved to rescind each of the following civil penalties. Commissioner Richardson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Andrew Atkins – 2024-145  
Porsha Goodman – 2024-386  
Will Green – 2023-110  
Tony Jones – 2024-052  
Jeff Knox – 2024-358  
Salvador Mejia – 2024-232  
Stephen North – 2024-058

Jennifer O’Connell – 2024-239  
Zachary Phillips – 2024-060  
John Reed – 2024-063  
Currisma Robinson – 2024-064  
Christopher Sexton – 2024-257  
Todd Wade – 2024-280

**10. Review and Discussion in the Matter of Arnold Weiner, Case No. 2023-055.** Director Young explained that representatives of Mr. Weiner had contacted our office regarding the penalties assessed against Mr. Weiner and explained that Mr. Weiner currently suffers from advanced dementia. After further discussion, Chairman Traugher moved to reconsider the penalties assessed in this matter. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Chairman Traugher then moved to rescind and waive the penalties previously assessed. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**11. Review and Discussion in the Matter of Smile Direct Club, Case No. 2024-321.** Director Young explained that the Office of the Attorney General had contacted Ethics Commission staff regarding the penalties assessed in this matter and advised that Smile Direct Club had filed for bankruptcy. Director Young then consulted with the Attorney General’s Office and determined that it was advisable to reconsider and waive the penalties assessed in this matter, as the penalties were unlikely to be collected and to be sure that no violation of the bankruptcy court orders occurred. Commissioner Richardson moved to reconsider the penalties assessed in this matter. Chairman Traugher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Commissioner White then moved to rescind and waive the penalties previously assessed. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**12. Set date of Ethics Commission’s next meeting.** The Commissioners discussed the need to set its meetings for the year 2025. After a short discussion, the Commissioners determined that it would hold these meetings on April 1, 2025, August 12, 2025, and December 2, 2025, subject to any necessary adjustments.

### **13. Other business.**

**Lee Booker, Case No. 2023-278:** Counsel for the Commission advised that Mr. Lee Booker had visited our offices earlier in the morning regarding this matter, for which he had received a summons from the Office of the Attorney General relating to collection efforts to enforce the penalty assessed in this matter. Mr. Booker explained that he had experienced a stroke in early 2023 and had been undergoing extensive rehabilitation therapy since that time. After a short discussion, Commissioner Richardson moved to reconsider and rescind the penalty assessed against Mr. Booker in this matter. Commissioner McCain seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

### **14. Executive Session.**