

MARCH 25, 2025 MEETING MINUTES REGISTRY OF ELECTION FINANCE

The Registry of Election Finance (“the Registry” or “the Board”) of the Bureau of Ethics and Campaign Finance (“the Bureau”) met at 9:35 AM on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, in the Conference Room D of the WRS Tennessee Tower, 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., Nashville, TN 37243.

Chairman Tom Lawless presided over the meeting. Attending the meeting were Board Members Curtis Johnson, Henry Fincher, Paige Burcham-Dennis, Paz Haynes and David Golden. Executive Director Bill Young, Assistant Director Lance Frizzell, General Counsel Lauren Topping, Chief of Staff Janet Williams and Director of Audit Jay Moeck were also in attendance. The meeting was open to the public. This meeting was recorded via video and audio recording.

Director Young opened the meeting by noting that a physical quorum of the Registry members was present.

Member Haynes moved to take the items on the agenda out of order to address those matters for which an individual was physically present at the meeting first. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. *Although various matters were taken out of order, these minutes will reflect the order of the published agenda.*

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Golden moved to approve the meeting minutes of the Registry’s previous January 23, 2025, meeting as presented. Member Johnson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote (6-0).

Desk Review of Candidate Campaign Financial Reports Subject to Possible Issuance of Show Cause Notice

Yusuf Hakeem (Pre-Primary, 2nd Quarter): Member Fincher moved to continue further consideration of these matters to the Registry’s next scheduled meeting due to the current legislative session. Member Haynes seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved (6-0).

Member Fincher moved to issue show cause notices in each of the following matters. Member Johnson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved (6-0).

Rebecca Anderson (2nd Quarter, Pre-Primary, 3rd Quarter)
Kisha Cheeks
Rueben Dockery (2024 2nd Quarter, 2022 Obligations)
Bryan Goldberg (3rd Quarter, Pre-General)
Richard D. Parker
E.R. Smith
Russell Wayne Steele

Review and Discussion of Campaign Finance Account

JB Smiley, Jr.: Counsel for the Registry explained that Mr. Smiley's campaign filing account showed significant outstanding obligations but no funds remaining to satisfy these debts. In the past, such outstanding obligations would be converted to in-kind campaign contributions; however, to do so in this case would result in contributions that far exceed the applicable contribution limits and would necessitate registration by certain vendors as political campaign committees. Counsel informed the Registry that Counsel had previously requested that Mr. Smiley take steps to resolve this matter but had not received any contact from Mr. Smiley. Thus, the Registry's Staff was seeking direction from the Registry as to how to resolve these issues in order to close the filing account properly. After further discussion of the issues, Member Lawless moved to issue a show cause notice to Mr. Smiley to direct that Mr. Smiley show cause as to why these outstanding debts should not be converted to in-kind contributions.

Show Cause Hearing on Audit for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order

Judge Damita Dandridge: Director of Audit Jay Moeck described the findings presented in the audit report. After discussion between the Members and Staff, Member Haynes moved to reset this matter for the Registry's next scheduled hearing to allow Judge Dandridge an opportunity to participate in the show cause hearing and show why the Registry should not assess a civil penalty up to a maximum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). Member Dennis seconded the motion. After further discussion, the motion was amended to assess a civil penalty of \$10,000 each relating to both Findings 1 & 2 (\$20,000 total) and to issue a show cause notice directing Judge Dandridge to show why additional civil penalties of up to \$30,000 should not be assessed relative to Findings 3-5. This amended motion was approved (5-1, Member Fincher opposed).

Show Cause Hearings on Sworn Complaints for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order

Case No. C24-12, William W. Howell v. Green Lights for Nashville and Nashville Moves Action Fund: Mr. William W. Howell was present at the hearing and presented a statement to the Board outlining his complaint. Attorney Ben Gastel appeared on behalf of the Respondents and presented a statement to the Board defending his clients' actions. Mr. Howell also presented a short rebuttal to Counsel's arguments. After discussion between the Members, including questions presented to Staff and the parties, Member Dennis moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250 against Nashville Moves Action Fund. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved (6-0). No further action was taken on this complaint.

Case No. C24-14, Wes Duenkel v. Craig Garton, Jill Rathert, & Matt Campbell: Mr. Wes Duenkel was present at the hearing and presented a statement to the Board outlining his complaint. Respondents Craig Garton, Jill Rathert, and Matt Campbell were also present at the hearing and presented a statement to the Board defending their actions. Mr. Duenkel also presented a short rebuttal to the Respondent's arguments. After discussion between the Members, including questions presented to Staff and the parties, Member Fincher moved to take no action against the Respondents. Member Dennis seconded this motion, which was approved (5-1, Member Lawless opposed).

Update on Subpoenas Issued in Sworn Complaint Cases

Case No. C24-02, Ken Yager v. Robert Harshbarger, Diana Harshbarger, and East Tennessee Conservatives PAC and Case No. C24-11, Michele Reneau v. Citizen Engagement Forum: Counsel for the Registry advised that materials had been received from Attorneys representing Mr. Datwyler and Mr. Phillips in response to the subpoenas issued by the Registry in these matters. Counsel advised that these materials were substantial and would be shared with the members ahead of the scheduled show cause hearing via electronic drop box. Considering the submissions, Member Lawless moved to set both matters for a show cause hearing to address the allegations raised in each respective complaint. Member Johnson seconded the motion, which was approved (6-0). Counsel also advised that the subpoena issued to Domains by proxy had not been successfully served, but that Staff would continue to attempt to serve the subpoena.

Reconsiderations

Kim Frazier, Case No. 24-47: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter and the request for reconsideration. However, there was no motion to reconsider the Registry's previous actions; therefore, the request is deemed denied.

Julie McBee Fritts, Case No. 24-52: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter and the request for reconsideration. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to reconsider the assessment previously ordered by the Registry. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Member Fincher then moved to reduce the assessed penalty to \$250. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Gwen McKenzie, Case No. 24-53: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter and the request for reconsideration. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to reconsider the assessment previously ordered by the Registry. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Member Haynes then moved to rescind and waive the previously assessed penalty. Member Fincher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. No further action will be taken on this matter.

Dominique Primer, Case No. 24-58: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter and the request for reconsideration. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to reconsider the assessment previously ordered by the Registry. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. After discussion, Member Fincher then moved to continue this matter to the Registry's next scheduled meeting. Member Dennis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

John Rosson, Case No. 24-60: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter and the request for reconsideration. Judge Rosson personally appeared at the meeting and addressed the Board. After a short discussion, Member Haynes moved to reconsider the assessment previously ordered by the Registry. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Member Fincher then moved to rescind and waive the previously assessed penalty. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. No further action will be taken on this matter.

Show Cause Hearing/Personally Appearing

TE PAC-TN, Case No. 24-62: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter. Representatives for the PAC, Suzanne Holston and Ryan Baya, were physically present at the meeting and addressed the Board. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to assess a civil penalty of \$500 in this matter. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved (6-0).

Show Cause Hearing/Statements Submitted

Forward Focus Knoxville, Case No. 25-12: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250 in this matter. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was approved (5-1, Member Lawless opposed).

Show Cause Hearings/Consideration of Civil Penalty Order

Case No. 25-03, Bedford County Republican Party: Three additional matters concerning the PCC were also on the Board's agenda for possible issuance of a show cause notice and were considered together with this matter. Director Young presented a summary of each matter. Maleah Claxton appeared on behalf of the Political Campaign Committee (PCC) and addressed the Board. After a short discussion, Member Fincher moved to take no action in these matters. Member Dennis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved (6-0).

Torrey Harris, Case No. 25-04: This matter was continued, without objection, due to the ongoing legislative session.

Jason Emert, Case No. 25-05: Director Young advised that Mr. Emert had requested a continuance of this matter on the grounds that he and his family had recently relocated to Louisiana. Member Fincher moved to continue this matter to the Registry's next scheduled meeting. Member Haynes seconded the motion, which was approved.

Demetrus Coonrod, Case No. 25-10: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter. Ms. Coonrod was physically present at the meeting and addressed the Board. After discussion, consideration of this matter was joined with a reconsideration of Case No. 24-11, which had previously been referred to the Attorney General's Office for collection, and a global settlement was agreed. Member Haynes moved to propose a settlement of \$300 total in both matters. Ms. Coonrod agreed to this proposed settlement. Member Fincher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Erika Stotts Pearson, Case No. 25-15: Director Young presented a summary of the history of this matter. Member Fincher moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250. Member Golden seconded the motion, which was approved (5-1, Member Lawless opposed).

Renarda Renee Clariett, Case Nos. 25-06, 25-07, 25-08, and 25-09: Director Young presented a summary of the history of these matters and advised that all matters were now resolved, showed zero activity, and the filing account was closed. Member Golden moved to assess a civil penalty of \$250 (total) in all of these matters. Member Fincher seconded the motion, which was approved (5-0, 1 PNV).

Member Fincher moved to assess a \$10,000 civil penalty in each of the following matters. Member Lawless seconded the motion, which was approved (5-0, 1 PNV).

Nathan Dressel, Case No. 25-11
Jonathan Joy, Case No. 25-13
John W. Parrish, Case No. 25-14
David Nipper, Case No. 25-17

Persons Subject to Possible Issuance of Show Cause Notice

The following items were taken together as a group. Member Haynes moved to take no action in each of these matters, in which the filings were less than 15 penalty days late. Member Fincher seconded the motion, which was approved (5-0, 1 PNV).

Duane Dominy	Steve Mikels
Terry S. Saine	Nathan Dressel

The following items were taken together as a group. Member Fincher moved to take no action in each of these matters, in which the filings were more than 15 penalty days late but less than 30 days late. Member Haynes seconded the motion, which was approved (4-1, 1 PNV).

Erika Stotts Pearson (4th Quarter)
Bedford County Republican Party (3rd Quarter Correction)

The following items were taken together as a group. Member Fincher moved to take issue a show cause notice in each of these matters, in which the filings were more than 30 days late or unfiled. Member Haynes seconded the motion, which was approved (5-0, 1 PNV).

Curtis R. Johnson	Memphis for All PAC
Wesley Adkins	Noah Nordstrom
Alexander Armor	John W. Parrish
Kenya Brooks	Katrina Robinson
Rueben Dockery	Ross A. Sampson
Stan Hurder	Russell Wayne Steele
Eddie Johnson	Eric Stewart
Jonathan Joy	Volunteer Republican Women's Club

Consideration of the following items was deferred to the Registry's next scheduled meeting due to the ongoing legislative session.

Torrey Harris (4th Quarter)
Joe Towns, Jr. (Pre-General)
Gabby Salinas

Joe Towns, Jr. (3rd Quarter)
London Lamar

Review of Setting of Registry Board Meeting on 11/11/2025 (Veterans Day). The members determined that it would not hold a meeting on 11/11/2015 but would move this meeting to be held on 11/18/2025.

Update on CLE Request by Registry Board, Deferred to Next Scheduled Meeting.

Other Business. None.

Executive Session. None.

Meeting Adjourned.