

Tennessee Registry of Election Finance
January 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes

The Tennessee Registry of Election Finance ("TREF" or "the Registry") of the Tennessee Bureau of Ethics and Campaign Finance ("BECF" or "the Bureau") met at approximately 9:30 AM on January 22, 2026, in the Knoxville Room of the WRS Tennessee Tower, 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., Nashville, TN 37243.

Chairman Tom Lawless initially presided over the meeting, joined by Registry Members Henry Fincher, William "Paz" Haynes, Curtis Johnson, and Paige Burcham Dennis. Member Burcham Dennis appeared electronically.

Also present were Executive Director Bill Young, Assistant Director Lance Frizzell, Chief of Staff Janet Williams, and General Counsel J. Seth May. The meeting was open to the public and recorded via video and audio recording.

Director Young opened the meeting. Member Fincher moved to allow Member Burcham Dennis to participate electronically, seconded by Member Haynes. The motion passed unanimously. Member Johnson moved to allow items to be taken out of order as identified by Registry staff. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Election of Officers

Chairman Lawless moved to accept Member Haynes as chair by acclamation. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Lawless moved to accept member Johnson as secretary. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes from the Registry's November 18, 2025 Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Chairman Lawless moved to accept the minutes from the Registry's November 18, 2025 Regular meeting, seconded by Member Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Faith Family Freedom Fund/Cade Cothren, Case Co. C20-07

Chairman Haynes recused himself from consideration of this matter. Member Fincher moved to appoint Member Lawless to act as Acting Chairman. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cothren was not present at the hearing, but attorneys Rob Peal and Erik Lybeck appeared on his behalf. Counsel were given the opportunity to present their argument to the Registry. A document generated by Westlaw comparing versions of Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-10-105 in 2022 and 2026 was admitted as Exhibit 1.

Multiple Registry members recognized the quality of Mr. Cothren's representation, both their verbal and written argument to the Registry.

Member Fincher moved to explicitly find that the Registry provided Mr. Cothren with sufficient notice of the hearing and the subject of the hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Fincher moved to find Mr. Cothren in violation of Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-10-110 and assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$10,000. Member Fincher later amended his motion to assess a penalty in the amount of \$80,000. Member Fincher derived this number by assessing a civil penalty of \$10,000 for each of 8 filings which were found to be in violation of § 2-10-110. The motion passed unanimously.

Gabrielle Hanson by Margaret Hubbard Kingsbury, Case No. C25-02

The response from Ms. Hanson's counsel was entered into evidence as a collective exhibit. Member Fincher moved to assess costs in the amount of \$250, seconded by Acting Chairman Lawless. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Show Cause Hearing for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order/Personally Appearing:

LaRhonda Williams, Case No. 25-81

Member Burcham Dennis moved to assess costs in the amount of \$250, seconded by Member Fincher. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Audit/Reconsideration:

Damita Dandridge, Case No. 25-01

Counsel for Judge Dandridge appeared on her behalf and requested reconsideration of the penalties assessed against her. Member Fincher moved to reopen the matter for reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Counsel for Judge Dandridge requested a continuance to allow for remedial action to be taken and to correct Judge Dandridge's campaign accounts. Member Fincher moved to continue the matter to the Registry's September 15, 2026 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. Show Cause Hearings for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order for Failure to Provide Audit Records:

Brian Carniello, Case No. 25-57

Member Burcham Dennis moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$20,000 and to direct Registry staff that they are no longer obligated to pursue an audit of this matter. Member Fincher voiced his opposition to this motion. Member Burcham Dennis amended her motion to leave the

existing civil penalty, to direct Registry staff to refer the existing penalty for collections, and directed staff they are no longer obligated to pursue an audit of this matter. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Charles (Charlie) Cooper, Case No. 25-58

Member Johnson moved to refer this matter for collections and direct Registry staff that they are no longer obligated to complete an audit of this matter.

G.A. Hardaway, Case No. 25-143

Rep. Hardaway had multiple items on the agenda; the Registry considered them all together. Member Lawless moved to continue this matter to the Registry's July meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7. Show Cause Hearing for Failure to Respond to Desk Review Correction Notice for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order:

Joe Towns, Jr., Case No. 25-145 (3rd Quarter Correction)

This matter was continued to the Registry's July meeting.

8. Request for Reconsideration:

Joe Towns, Jr., Case No. 25-46 (3rd Quarter)

The matter was continued to the Registry's July meeting.

9. Show Cause Hearing on Audit of Campaign Finance Account for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order:

JB Smiley, Jr., Case No. 25-49

The matter was continued to the Registry's July meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Show Cause Hearings for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order/Statements Submitted:

Amber Huett-Garcia, Case No. 25-114

Ms. Huett-Garcia appeared in person. Registry staff advised that paperwork was corrected such that there was now no violation. The matter was dismissed.

Rural West Tennessee Caucus, Case No. 25-89

Member Fincher moved to take no action in this matter. The motion passed unanimously.

Larry Hunter, Case No. 25-116

Mr. Hunter advised that he was told by county officials that he did not need to file further paperwork. Member Johnson moved to dismiss the matter. The motion passed unanimously.

Dee Shawn Peoples, Case No. 25-125

Acting Chairman Lawless moved to take no action in this matter. Member Fincher seconded the matter, and the motion passed unanimously.

11. Show Cause Hearings for Consideration of Civil Penalty Order:

Edmund Ford, Jr., Case No. 25-86

Member Johnson moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$250, seconded by Member Fincher. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlie Caswell, Jr., Case No. 25-87

Member Johnson moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$250, seconded by Member Fincher. The motion passed unanimously.

Jerred Price, Case No. 25-88

Member Fincher moved to assess costs in the amount of \$250, seconded by Member Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Eric Stewart, Case No. 25-79

Acting Chairman Lawless moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$10,000, opposed by Member Fincher. Member Fincher moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$500, seconded by Member Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Jason Sharif, Case No. 25-133

This matter was taken out of order, as Mr. Sharif appeared in person. Member Burcham Dennis moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$250, seconded by Acting Chairman Lawless. The motion passed unanimously.

Ozell Pace, Jr., Case No. 25-123

Acting Chairman Lawless moved to assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$500, seconded by Member Fincher. The motion passed unanimously.

Meggan Kiel, Case No. 25-118

This matter was dismissed with no action taken.

Continuances

The following matters were continued to the Registry's next meeting, in part to allow Registry staff to verify that the respondents' issues had been corrected: Britney Thornton, Case No. 25-138, Nicholas Scott, Case No. 25-132, Joe Brown, Case No. 25-95.

Civil Penalty

The following matters were considered together:

Eddie Johnson, Case No. 25-90

Cathy Anderson, Case No. 25-92

Keith D. Austin, II, Case No. 25-93

Alex Boulton, Case No. 25-94

Britney Chauncey, Case No. 25-96

Davin Clemons, Case No. 25-97

Joyce Dorse Coleman, Case No. 25-98

Yolanda Cooper-Sutton, Case No. 25-99

Handel R. Durham, Jr., Case No. 25-100

Wanda R. Faulkner, Case No. 25-101

Roderic Ford, Case No. 25-102

Edmund Ford, Sr., Case No. 25-103

Chelsea Glass, Case No. 25-104

Janeen Gordon, Case No. 25-105

Timothy Green, Jr., Case No. 25-106

Althea Greene, Case No. 25-107

Jaques Hamilton, Case No. 25-108

Brian Harris, Case No. 25-109

Darrick Harris, Case No. 25-110

Darrick Dee Harris, Case No. 25-111

Eric Harris, Case No. 25-112

Sheleah Harris, Case No. 25-113

Danielle Huggins, Case No. 25-115

Kymberly Kelley, Case No. 25-117
Kenneth Lee, Case No. 25-119
Stephanie Love, Case No. 25-120
Kawantias McNeary, Case No. 25-121
Towanna Murphy, Case No. 25-122
Jarrett Parks, Case No. 25-124
Rondanial Ransom, Case No. 25-126
Angela Rogers, Case No. 25-127
Joshua Roman, Case No. 25-128
Rick Rout, Case No. 25-129
Austin Rowe, Case No. 25-130
Tamara Sawyer, Case No. 25-131
Benji Smith, Case No. 25-134
Christine Stephens, Case No. 25-135
Carla Jean Stotts, Case No. 25-136
Kristy Sullivan, Case No. 25-137
Pearl Eva Walker, Case No. 25-139
Scott Williams, Case No. 25-140
Jasmine Wilson, Case No. 25-141
Lemichael Wilson, Case No. 25-142

Member Fincher moved to assess a \$10,000 penalty against each of the above-named individuals, seconded by Member Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Review and Discussion of Request for Advisory Opinion Related to HB 1073

**13. Persons Subject to Possible Issuance of Show Cause Notice/Statement Submitted:
Tennessee Sportsmen's Caucus**

This matter was dismissed with no action.

14. Person Subject to Possible Issuance of Show Cause Notice:

Jonathan Yancey

Motion was made to issue a notice of show cause hearing in this matter. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Discussion of Advisory Opinion related to Sole Proprietorships

16. Update CLE Credit

17. Pending Legislation and Rule Review Update

Assistant Director Frizzell provided an update on pending legislation.

18. Other Business

There was no other business.

19. Executive Session

No executive session was held.