

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2022
10:00 a.m.**

1122 Lady Street, 5th Floor
Columbia, SC 29201

Present: Mr. John Wells, Chairman (via teleconference); Ms. JoAnne Day(via teleconference) ; Mr. Clifford Edler (via teleconference); Ms. Linda McCall (via teleconference); Mr. Scott Moseley (via teleconference)

Others Present: Howard Knapp, Executive Director; Chris Whitmire, Deputy Executive Director; Thomas W. Nicholson, General Counsel; Barbara Pittelli, Administrative Coordinator; Trent Anderson, Legislative Audit Council; Natalie Sonek, Legislative Audit Council; Rikki Harris, Legislative Audit Council; five members of the public.

COMMISSIONERS

JOHN WELLS
Chairman

JOANNE DAY

CLIFFORD J. EDLER

LINDA MCCALL

SCOTT MOSELEY

Chairman Wells called the meeting to order. Mr. Knapp advised all notices of the meeting had been posted as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

Approval of Minutes

The first item of business was the approval of minutes for the March 25, 2022 (SBC) meeting, April 1, 2022 (SBC) meeting and the April 20, 2022 (SEC) meeting. A motion to approve all the minutes was made by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Day. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

HOWARD M. KNAPP
Executive Director

New Business

The first item under new business was the new early voting law. Mr. Knapp informed the Commission S108 was signed into law on May 13, 2022, and stated the law contains significant changes to both the Commission and the conduction of elections in South Carolina. As a result, Mr. Knapp advised there were immediate issues that needed to be discussed and approved by the Commission. The first item was whether to continue ongoing in person absentee process for elections that were already open for absentee voting when the bill was signed into law. Mr. Knapp then gave the floor to Mr. Whitmire to discuss the second issue. Mr. Whitmire stated the new law tightens up the rules for absentee by mail voting. He explained, previously, a request for an absentee ballot application could be made electronically either online, by email, or fax. Subsequently, the completed absentee ballot application could be returned by email or fax. Mr. Whitmire advised neither process may be permissible by the statute. Chairman Wells asked for a motion to direct the Executive Director and staff of the Election Commission to accept the request for and return of absentee ballot applications in accordance with the language of the statute. Ms. Day made said motion, seconded by Ms. McCall and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

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The second item of new business was the agency website redesign. Mr. Knapp stated the redesign will be launched in July, after the primaries and runoffs are certified, as not to confuse voters or candidates.

The last item under new business was agency employee appreciation week. Mr. Knapp advised Governor McMaster declared the first week of May as state employee appreciation week. He further advised the State Election Commission staff had performed admirably over the past two years having to hold elections during a pandemic.

Old Business

Statewide standardized procedures update was the first item under old business. Mr. Knapp stated although procedures already exist, the agency will be formatting them into one document with eight sections. He advised the draft of the voter registration section, which is the largest, is nearly finished and once completed will be reviewed with the county director advisory committee.

The second item under old business was the redistricting/reapportionment update. Mr. Knapp advised that SC House and Congressional districts are completed, and that SC Senate will be done in 2024.

The FY2022/2023 budget was the next item under old business. Mr. Knapp stated the state budget was not passed during session, but the General Assembly would return in early June to pass a budget. He further stated the House and Senate approved the State Election Commission's budget.

The election infrastructure security update was the next item under old business. Mr. Knapp advised the agency continues to work with its federal, state, and private security partners to secure the state's election infrastructure.

The last item under old business was the legal updates of:
S.C. NAACP, et al v. Alexander, et al
Scharr, et al v. Whitmire, et al
Osborne, et al v. S.C. State Election Commission, et al
Curry v. S.C. State Election Commission

Chairman Wells asked for a motion to go into executive session to receive and discuss legal advice. Mr. Edler made said motion, seconded by Ms. McCall. The motion passed by unanimous vote and the board went into executive session. No votes were taken during executive session.

Upon returning to open session, Chairman Wells reminded the Commissioners the next SEC meeting would be on June 15, 2022.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Moseley made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Edler. The motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pittelli

