

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 24, 2024  
10:00 a.m.**

1122 Lady Street, Suite 500  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

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

Others Present: Howard Knapp, Executive Director; Shannan Woovis, Executive Assistant; Bailey Avrett, Digital Designer; Madelyn Chavis, Senior Paralegal; Thomas Lundeen, Program Manager; Thomas Nicholson, General Counsel; Paige Salonich, Training Director; John Michael Catalano, Public Information Coordinator; Nataly Seigler, Social Media Coordinator; Sydni Bain, Outreach Coordinator

**COMMISSIONERS**

JOHN WELLS  
Chairman

JOANNE DAY

CLIFFORD J. EDLER

LINDA MCCALL

SCOTT MOSELEY

HOWARD M. KNAPP  
Executive Director

Chairman Wells called the meeting to order. Director 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 November 15, 2023 (SEC) meeting. A motion was made by Ms. McCall to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Day. The motion passed by unanimous vote. A motion was made by Ms. Day to approve the minutes for the January 5, 2024, SBC meeting, seconded by Ms. McCall. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**New Business**

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The first item under new business was the Democratic Presidential Preference Primary (PPP). Early voting began on Monday, January 22, 2024, and will end Friday, February 2, 2024. As of Wednesday, January 24, 2024, early voting turnout has been low since there is an incumbent President.

The amount of county turnover and support was the second item of new business. There are approximately five counties who have either no Director or an Interim Director, with little to no election experience. The Saluda County Director and entire staff recently quit, leaving the office closed while they had elections and candidate filings. Legally, the SEC can not intervene, except to provide support.

The third item of new business was a legislative update on election bills being considered.

H.3734 – A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 5-15-10, RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF MUNICIPAL PRIMARY, GENERAL, AND SPECIAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT ALL SUCH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BE CONDUCTED

USING THE VOTING SYSTEM APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION. (In the House Judiciary Subcommittee)

H.4589 – A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 5-15-120, RELATING TO VOTE COUNTING IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO DELETE LANGUAGE PROVIDING THAT INCUMBENTS HOLD OVER PENDING FINAL DETERMINATION OF ANY CONTESTS FILED; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 5-15-140, RELATING TO APPEALS FROM DECISIONS REGARDING MUNICIPAL ELECTION CONTESTS, SO AS TO DELETE LANGUAGE PROVIDING THAT A NOTICE OF APPEAL ACTS AS A STAY OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT APPEALS ARE TO BE GIVEN FIRST PRIORITY OF CONSIDERATION BY THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS. (In House Judiciary Committee)

H.4590 - A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 7-13-25, RELATING TO EARLY VOTING, SO AS TO EXTEND THE HOURS OF OPERATION OF EARLY VOTING CENTERS. (In House Judiciary Committee)

H.4022 - A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 5-15-64 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING METHOD OF CONDUCTING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 5-15-60, RELATING TO METHODS OF NOMINATING CANDIDATES FOR AND DETERMINING RESULTS OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO ADD THE INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING METHOD. (In House Judiciary Committee)

H.4591 - A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-870 SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING OR INSTANT RUNOFF BALLOTS IN THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS IN THIS STATE. (In House Judiciary Committee)

H.4259 – A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "HAND COUNT AUDIT ACT"; BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-1180 SO AS TO REQUIRE EACH COUNTY BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS TO CONDUCT A POSTELECTION AUDIT OF ELECTION RESULTS THROUGH A HAND COUNT OF VOTES CAST WITHIN A MINIMUM NUMBER OF RANDOMLY SELECTED PRECINCTS; AND BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-1190 SO AS TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY CHAIRPERSON OF ANY CERTIFIED POLITICAL PARTY AND THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY TO INVESTIGATE THE INTEGRITY OF AN ELECTION AS CONDUCTED WITHIN THAT COUNTY BY REQUESTING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, A FULL HAND RECOUNT, A POSTELECTION AUDIT OF PAPER BALLOTS, OR A FORENSIC AUDIT. (Representative Rob Harris Bill)

H.4260 - A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "VOTER ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY ACT"; BY ADDING SECTION 7-5-200 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE USE OF PAPER POLL BOOKS ONLY AT VOTING LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE; BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-870 SO AS TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN INHERENT RIGHTS OF OBSERVATION FOR ALL ELECTION OBSERVERS; BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-880 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE USE OF CHAIN OF CUSTODY DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL ELECTION-RELATED MATERIALS AND THE MAINTENANCE OF CHAIN OF CUSTODY RECORDS FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME AFTER AN ELECTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-13-771, RELATING TO CURBSIDE VOTING FOR HANDICAPPED AND ELDERLY ELECTORS, SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT AN ELECTOR FIRST AFFIRM HIS INABILITY TO EITHER ENTER A POLLING PLACE OR STAND IN LINE BEFORE BEING ISSUED A CURBSIDE VOTING BALLOT; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-15-320, RELATING TO PERSONS QUALIFIED TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT, SO AS TO DELETE REFERENCES TO EARLY VOTING, AND TO DELETE THE PROVISION ALLOWING PERSONS SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT; AND BY REPEALING SECTION 7-13-25 RELATING TO EARLY VOTING. (Representative Rob Harris Bill)

H.4261 - A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "CLEAN VOTER ROLL ACT"; BY ADDING SECTION 7-5-35 SO AS TO ENUMERATE CERTAIN DUTIES

DEVOLVED UPON THE COUNTY BOARDS OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS RELATED TO VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE, TO REQUIRE SEPARATE MASTER FILES OF ACTIVE AND INACTIVE REGISTERED ELECTORS, AND TO REQUIRE THAT CERTAIN LISTS OR RECORDS BE FURNISHED UPON REQUEST AND FREE OF CHARGE TO A QUALIFIED ELECTOR; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-3-20, RELATING TO THE VARIOUS DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, SO AS TO REMOVE CERTAIN DUTIES DEVOLVED UPON THE COUNTY BOARDS OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS RELATING TO LIST MAINTENANCE, AND TO REQUIRE THAT CERTAIN LISTS BE FURNISHED UPON REQUEST AND FREE OF CHARGE TO A QUALIFIED ELECTOR; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-5-186, RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES, AND TO PROHIBIT THE SHARING OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION OR DATA WITH THIRD-PARTY NONPROFIT GROUPS OR ENTITIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-5-320, RELATING TO A MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENSE APPLICATION SERVING AS AN APPLICATION FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, SO AS TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, CLARIFY THAT CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORMS ACCEPTED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES MUST ALSO BE TIMELY TRANSMITTED TO THE COUNTY BOARDS OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-5-340, RELATING TO DUTIES OF THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION REGARDING THE REMOVAL OF ELECTORS FROM THE OFFICIAL LIST OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS, SO AS TO DEVOLVE THESE DUTIES UPON THE COUNTY BOARDS OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS, AND TO REQUIRE ANY ELECTOR INCLUDED ON THE MASTER FILE OF INACTIVE REGISTERED VOTERS TO PRODUCE A CURRENT AND VALID PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION TO BE RETURNED TO THE MASTER FILE OF ACTIVE QUALIFIED ELECTORS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 7-5-350, RELATING TO THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION'S ANNUAL VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SO AS TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, REQUIRE THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION TO REPORT ON ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COUNTY BOARDS OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS TO MAINTAIN THE ACCURACY OF COUNTY MASTER VOTER REGISTRATION FILES.  
(Representative Rob Harris Bill)

### **Old Business**

The budget hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee resulted in questions related to voter list maintenance, statewide uniformity, accountability of county offices, and SEC support of failing county offices.

The SEC continues to work with its federal, state, and private security partners to protect South Carolina's election infrastructure.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Wells asked for a motion to go into executive session to receive and discuss legal advice. Ms. McCall made said motion, seconded by Mr. Edler. The motion passed unanimously.

No votes were taken during executive session. Mr. Moseley made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Ms. Day. The motion passed unanimously.

Upon returning to open session, Chairman Wells reminded the Commissioners the next SBC meeting would be on Thursday, February 8, at 3:00p.m. to certify the Democratic PPP, and the next SEC meeting would be held on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 10:00a.m. With no further business to discuss, Ms. McCall made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Day. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannan Woovis