

**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**August 21, 2024**

**10:00 AM**

1122 Lady Street, Suite 500  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

**Present:** Hon. Dennis W. Shedd, Chairman; Ms. JoAnne Day; Mr. Clifford Edler; Ms. Linda McCall; Mr. Scott Moseley.

**Others Present:** Howard Knapp, Executive Director; Jenny Wooten McGill, Director of Government Affairs and Policy; Thomas Nicholson, General Counsel; Madelyn Chavis, Senior Paralegal; Elizabeth Harrell, Executive Assistant, Paige Salonich, Director of Training and County Support Services; TJ Lundeen, Director of Public Information

Chairman Shedd called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chairman Shedd asked Director Knapp if a quorum was present. Director Knapp affirmed it was and advised all notices of the meeting had been posted as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

**COMMISSIONERS**

HON. DENNIS W. SHEDD  
Chairman

JOANNE DAY

CLIFFORD J. EDLER

LINDA MCCALL

SCOTT MOSELEY

Approval of Minutes:

July 17, 2024, South Carolina Election Commission Meeting

August 2, 2024, South Carolina Election Commission Meeting

Chairman Shedd introduced both minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Chairman Shedd and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Day. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Statewide Market Survey

HOWARD M. KNAPP  
Executive Director

Director Knapp explained that the SEC commissioned a statewide market survey of a sample of voters asking various questions related to voter registration and elections. The survey results indicate South Carolina voters are confident in their state's elections. Voter fraud fears are extremely low. Polling places in SC have ranked highly for ADA-accessibility and cleanliness.

Chairman Shedd and Director Knapp discussed the general public's opinions and the language behind this survey's phrasing for questions.

General Election Training Workshop Update

Director Knapp introduced Training and Support Services Division Director, Paige Salonich, and described the general overview of her job duties and employees.

Salonich went into detail on her workshops and how they have transformed from "sit and get" PowerPoints to hands-on workshops. Encouragement of hands-on training was discussed, as well as the difficulties faced. Salonich discussed the piloting of the State Certified Clerk Training Program ahead of the November election, which would help bolster the competency and confidence of the poll clerks, who are responsible for what happens in a polling place.

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Chairman Shedd added emphasis to training turnout of poll workers of polling places and asked about efficiency. Salonich talked about the training division that was funded last year. Chairman Shedd asked about how poll workers are allocated for each precinct. Salonich explained it is under State statute. Chairman Shedd and Salonich entered a discussion about poll workers not showing up and potential back up plans. Director Knapp mentioned the SEC staff working as an ultimate back up plan, and that some counties do have backups – however, they want to be paid for being a backup. Director Knapp mentioned he requested funds for “on call” poll managers in the current fiscal year’s budget, but that was not funded by the General Assembly. The overall conclusion to best solve this problem is to ensure the Training and Support Services’ Division workshops go smoothly. Director Knapp explained the workshop and the counties and directors’ roles in it.

Chairman Shedd stated he wants the commission to be able to say we have done everything possible.

### **NVRA Declination Form**

Chairman Shedd commented about how other state agencies have taken it upon themselves to put this agency’s letterhead on their declination forms and that he has concerns about forcing people to sign their name that they don’t want to register to vote and that such a question may raise constitutional issues. Director Knapp agreed and presented two new NVRA form options.

Chairman Shedd and Director Knapp discussed initialing forms. Commissioner Moseley asked if they get this form every time they go to the office. Director Knapp explained the intricacies of filling out the form and that NVRA “motor voter” agencies must include this form when interacting with customers. Commissioner McCall asked if this is a federal law? Director Knapp stated yes and provided further information. Chairman Shedd motioned to adopt the NVRA Declination form without the signature requirement with the box being removed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCall. The new form was adopted unanimously.

### **Revised Statewide Voting System Upgrade Option**

Director Knapp gave a summary of the Revised Statewide Voting System Upgrade Option. Chairman Shedd explained to the commission members their prior no action taken. Director Knapp gave a brief summary of the new offer from ES&S and the negotiations that followed between himself and the vendor that resulted in nearly a \$2M cost savings to the state.

Director Knapp also stressed how the existing precinct standards will no longer meet federal standards in a few years and that the vendor is no longer making these scanners. Director Knapp emphasized that this proposal is the best and final offer and, in his opinion, is in the best interest of the of South Carolina. Director Knapp also mentioned how most counties were getting additional ballot marking devices to meet anticipated increases in voter turnout, which is important considering a statewide constitutional amendment referendum, as well as an unprecedented number of local tax and bond referendums. Director Knapp stressed that this means most voters will be spending more time at the ballot marking device, which is where the “bottleneck” will be, thus the need for more ballot marking devices.

Commissioner Moseley asked if the ballot would be double sided, and Director Knapp said many would be and that the agency was doing all it could to ensure ballots would not be on two separate pages. Chairman Shedd discussed with Knapp that the SEC may possibly have a press release because we need to help the public perception of voting. Interpreting this as going to be in line for a long time and this slowing down the process. Director Knapp emphasized that this additional

and newer equipment will help these larger counties meet the anticipated increase in voter participation. Chairman Shedd asked if this a completely new system and Director Knapp answered that it is an upgrade of an already existing system and it will allow us to meet the forthcoming federal standards.

Chairman Shedd talked with General Counsel, Thomas Nicholson, on the legality of this contract. Nicholson stated he spoke with the State Treasurer's Office, and he was confident that it met all legal requirements. Chairman Shedd asked if this is used in other areas of the state. Nicholson answered in the affirmative, most often by cabinet agencies and colleges. Chairman Shedd asked Director Knapp asked about the support of the General Assembly. Director Knapp indicated the support of the General Assembly, discussed letters received in support of the upgrade, and that there has been no opposition. Chairman Shedd asked if Beaufort would be able to receive additional state funding without this deal, to which Director Knapp answered in the negative. Director Knapp assured that this funding would go throughout the state and not just to Beaufort County. Commissioner Day emphasized and reiterated that, either way, the DS200 precinct scanners will need to be replaced in a few years. Commissioner McCall asked about the details of payment. Director Knapp stated: yes, there would be no payments until the following fiscal year and he had received verbal assurance that the agency will get the appropriations to fund the upgrade loan in the next fiscal year. Commissioner Day asked if the deal was interest free? Director Knapp referenced the master lease agreement, and that it would interest free for a year.

A motion was made by Chairman Shedd to authorize Knapp, as the Executive Director, to sign the master lease agreement on behalf of the agency. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Day. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### Old Business:

#### **Public Comment Policy**

Chairman Shedd read the paragraph of the proposed Public Comment Policy, indicated that the burden of deciding whether the public can present comments to the Commission should not solely rest with the Executive Director and proposed changing the policy to the decision of the Executive Director after consultation with the Chair. The Chairman stated the Commission can change it back if this does not have its intended effect.

A motion was made by Chairman Shedd and he asked for second.

Discussion between Chairman Shedd and Commissioner McCall. Discussion between Chairman Shedd and Commissioner Edler that testimony should be 1-2 minutes.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edler. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### **SEC Revised Logo**

Director Knapp gave examples of how the revised logo has been implemented in posters. Chairman Shedd stated should we have another poster that we put up in county offices that displays that more significantly, which Director Knapp assured we already have made and implemented.

No action needs to be taken.

### **Voter Education/Outreach**

Director Knapp explained various new outreach partnerships with ColaToday and putting the agency's Prep for the Polls campaign on 108 billboards statewide. Another partnership with the high school football leagues was discussed. The SEC also has participated in several events. Two examples being: the Midlands Resource Fair and Disability Resource Fair. The Board and Chairman reacted positively to this. Chairman Shedd asked if the agency would spend the whole public information budget? Director Knapp stated that the agency seeks to expend all funds by the end of each fiscal year, including Public Information. Commissioner Moseley asked if the outreach from those communities with the longer voting lines come from the county offices? Director Knapp responded yes, stating larger counties tend to publish their own ads in addition to the ads the SEC publishes. Director Knapp explained that the SEC has more resources and tries to put those resources where the most voters are for maximum return on investment.

### **October meeting in Charleston**

After discussion on the venue for the October Commission meeting, the Chairman stated that, if it was feasible, that staff should pursue organizing the meeting at The Citadel. The time decided on was 11 a.m. on Thursday, October 17.

### **Election Infrastructure Security Update**

Director Knapp explained that the agency was notified this week that six non-citizens were registered to vote in this state in three different counties. They have been removed from the voter list and this matter has been referred to SLED. The agency continues to work with its state and federal law enforcement and intelligence partners to ensure that our elections are secure and accurate. Chairman Shedd stated this proves the system is being monitored and once any problems are found, the action is taken.

On the motion of Chairman Shedd, seconded by Commissioner McCall, the Commission voted to go into executive session to receive legal updates and advice. On the motion of Chairman Shedd, seconded by Commissioner Day, the Commission voted unanimously to leave executive session. Chairman Shedd noted no votes were taken in executive session.

Director Knapp noted the next meeting would be held Wednesday, September 18, at 10am at the SEC.

Chairman Shedd adjourned the meeting.