

**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, October 15, 2025
10:00 AM**

1122 Lady Street, Suite 500
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Present: Judge Dennis Shedd, Chairman; Ms. JoAnne Day; Mr. Clifford Edler; Mr. Scott Moseley

Others Present: Jenny Wooten, Interim Director; Thomas Nicholson, General Counsel; Elizabeth Harrell, Executive Assistant; TJ Lundein, Director of Public Information and Outreach; Jonathan Knicely; State Treasurer Curtis Loftis and staff; various press

Chairman Shedd confirmed with Interim Director Wooten there was a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

COMMISSIONERS

HON. DENNIS W. SHEDD
Chairman

JOANNE DAY

CLIFFORD J. EDLER

SCOTT MOSELEY

Approval of Minutes:

August 27, 2025, State Election Commission Meeting
September 17, 2025, State Election Commission Meeting

Wooten introduced the past Commission meeting minutes to be approved. On motion of Commissioner Day, seconded by Commissioner Edler, the meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Jenny Wooten
Interim Director

New Business

2024–2025 Accountability Report

Interim Director Wooten provided an overview of the annual Accountability Report, noting that all state agencies are required to submit the report to the Department of Administration. Due to internal agency changes, the agency received an extension, and the submission deadline is October 26. Chairman Shedd confirmed that the report reflects agency activities and accomplishments from the previous year. Wooten affirmed this understanding.

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2026–2027 Agency Budget Request

Wooten reported that the agency is finalizing its budget request for FY2026, developed in consultation with division directors. She stated that the request has been reviewed with Thomas Nicholson, General Counsel, and LaToria Williams, Director and Finance and Admin, and must be submitted by the end of this week. The submission will require Chairman Shedd's signature, pending his approval.

She further noted that the agency's overall request has increased by approximately \$4.7 million, due in part to anticipated increases associated with renegotiated RFPs. Chairman Shedd inquired whether the request includes funding for voting machine payments. Wooten

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confirmed that \$25 million is included to cover the outstanding balance of the loan for equipment purchased the prior year.

Chairman Shedd further explained that former Executive Director Knapp had previously informed the Commission that new voting machines were needed and that the purchase would be completed through the Treasurer's master lease program. Subsequent issues connected to approximately \$10 million in obligations have since arisen. Wooten confirmed that the current budget request covers the cost of all voting equipment purchased through the master lease.

State Board of Canvassers Meeting Schedule

Wooten clarified that the State Board of Canvassers (SBC) and the State Election Commission (SEC) Commissioners consist of the same members. Chairman Shedd confirmed that all vote totals were reported accurately.

Upcoming SBC meetings were announced as follows:

- Friday, October 24, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
 - State House District 21 and 88 Primaries
 - State Senate District 12 Primary
- Friday, November 7, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
 - State House District 98 Primary

Staffing Updates

Chairman Shedd addressed recent staffing matters that have received media attention. He stated:

- The former Executive Director Knapp was removed for inappropriate conduct, including:
 - misuse of agency funds for personal purposes,
 - conspiring with other management staff to falsify documents, and
 - contributing to a toxic and potentially hostile work environment.
- Knapp misled the Commission regarding contract matters, and additional misconduct has come to light following his dismissal.
- Knapp and former employee Paige Salonich were involved in secretly placing a device in the Commission room during an executive session.

Shedd reported that SLED, the Attorney General's Office, and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) currently have matters involving Knapp under review. He clarified that the Commission's position regarding the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) voter list request was not a factor in Knapp's termination.

U.S. Department of Justice Data Request

The Commission received a request from the DOJ for the state's voter list. Correspondence related to this request is part of the DOJ's legal proceedings and is a matter of public record. Wooten and Nicholson clarified:

- Approximately 90–95% of the voter list is publicly available for purchase by any registered South Carolina voter.

- The remaining 5%, which includes data fields such as driver's license numbers and Social Security numbers, has been shared with approximately 25 states under strict security protocols pursuant to existing memorandums of understanding and data-sharing consortia.

The Commission has not adopted a formal position regarding the DOJ request.

DOJ staff and SEC staff have held preliminary technical discussions about possible list elements should the agency be required to disclose the data. DOJ intends to develop its own standardized template, which states will receive at a later date. Chairman Shedd noted that he is the primary point of contact with staff regarding the matter, rather than the full Commission.

Public Questions and Press Inquiries

Chairman Shedd opened the meeting to questions from the public and press.

John Monk, with the State Newspaper, requested additional information regarding investigations involving SLED, the Attorney General's Office (AG), and the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Chairman Shedd declined to comment on ongoing investigations. Staff confirmed that the AG's inquiry into misuse of state vehicles remains open.

Brian Lamkin stated that no further comment would be made regarding the OIG's current review, which concerns agency operations. When asked whether the OIG inquiry relates to voting machine procurement, Chairman Shedd stated that it may relate to matters previously discussed.

Lucy Valeski, with the State Newspaper, asked about staff involved in document falsification under former Executive Director Knapp. Chairman Shedd confirmed that the individuals involved are no longer with the agency and stated that the falsified documents pertained to previously discussed matters.

Nick Reynolds, with the Post and Courier, asked whether any staff were removed for divulging information to the media, referencing an employee currently suing the Commission. Chairman Shedd stated that no evidence supports that allegation but noted that any unlawful conduct would be addressed if discovered.

Jeffrey Collins, with the Associated Press, asked how many employees had been terminated and whether all misconduct has been identified. Chairman Shedd stated that an internal review followed Knapp's dismissal and that all known wrongdoing has been addressed.

Wooten and Nicholson cautioned that additional issues from the prior administration may surface. The Chairman emphasized that none of the misconduct affected election operations.

Mr. Monk sought clarification on payments related to the voting machine contract. Chairman Shedd summarized that Knapp misrepresented the necessity, cost, and financing of new voting machines, initially presenting a \$28 million figure that later increased to \$32

million. He noted that appropriated funds will not be available until February, although a payment of approximately \$10.9 million to TD Bank is due September 30. Wooten confirmed that ES&S is the vendor.

Old Business

Master Lease Agreement (September 2024)

Chairman Shedd opened the floor to Treasurer Loftis. Treasurer Loftis reported:

- The Treasurer's Office administers the statewide master lease program, arranging financing between agencies and third-party financial institutions.
- The Commission and TD Bank are the contracting parties; the Treasurer's Office does not underwrite obligations.
- The General Assembly altered the timing of appropriations, moving the Commission's funding from September to February.
- TD Bank is willing to execute an amendment to reflect the new timeline; however, due to the public nature of the matter, additional scrutiny exists.
- Treasurer Loftis noted that he was not informed that appropriations had been shifted to February.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- Misrepresentations made by former Executive Director Knapp to both the Commission and the Treasurer's Office.
- Concerns over signing an amendment that is tied to a procurement process misrepresented to the Commission.
- The possibility of negotiating an independent agreement not connected to the prior contract amendment.

Treasurer Loftis reiterated that failure to sign could result in the bank repossessing the equipment. He noted the significant penalties involved and emphasized that the issue stems from misrepresentations by Knapp, not the actions of TD Bank or the Treasurer's Office. After discussion, Chairman Shedd called upon Jonathan Knicely, who expressed a preference to discuss potential remedies in executive session.

Public Comment

Melissa Goforth, a South Carolina registered voter and poll clerk at the West Columbia precinct, addressed the Commission regarding the statutory prohibition on distributing campaign literature within 500 feet of a polling location. She expressed concern that the agency's interpretation, allowing distribution of materials related to candidates not on the ballot, differs from her reading of the statute.

Chairman Shedd and General Counsel Nicholson acknowledged the concern and noted that the grey area arose in the poll manager handbook revisions made in 2019.

Municipal Election Day

Wooten provided details about upcoming Municipal Election Day including there are 227 municipal elections scheduled across 40 counties on November 4, 2025, with early voting

available at 59 centers from October 20–31. Approximately 1.3 million voters are eligible to participate, and SEC staff will support counties through poll worker training and Election Day staffing.

Election Infrastructure Security Update

Wooten confirmed the SEC continues to work with our state and national law enforcement and security partners to ensure that elections are secure and accurate in South Carolina.

The Commission recessed briefly before entering executive session.

Executive Session

The Commission entered executive session to receive legal updates and advice regarding:

- *Crook v. S.C. Election Commission*
- *Salonich v. S.C. Election Commission*
- Master Lease Agreement (September 2024)

The Commission returned to open session at 1:24 pm. Chairman Shedd stated that no votes were taken during executive session.

He further announced:

- The Commission has not agreed to sign the amendment to the contract presented by the Treasurer's Office.
- The Commission will direct Interim Director Wooten to inform TD Bank that the agency is committed to resolving the issue and pursuing a remedy outside the proposed amendment.
- The Commission seeks an independent agreement that includes forbearance on interest and a firm deadline, and may engage outside counsel with banking expertise to draft such an agreement.
- The Commission acknowledges that TD Bank acted in good faith and that the Treasurer's Office presented the amendment as provided.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m.