



TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Executive Session Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2023, 9:05 a.m.
Capitol Extension, Room E1.014
Austin, Texas 78701



COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Randall H. Erben, Chair; Chris Flood, Vice Chair, Chad M. Craycraft, Mary K. “Katie” Kennedy, Patrick W. Mizell, Richard S. Schmidt, Joseph O. Slovacek, and Steven D. Wolens.

COMMISSIONERS NOT PRESENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Brandon Barrett, Margie Castellanos, Carmen Dalpiaz, Nick Espinosa, David Guilianelli, Jessie Haug, Jordan Hunn, J.R. Johnson, Natalie McDermon, Amy Padilla, Mark Pillsbury, Lindsay Powers, Margaret Sanchez, Patti Shannon, Jim Tinley, Samantha Vasquez, and Bill Wilson.

MINUTES

These minutes are a summary record of the Commission’s actions at the meeting. For a detailed record of discussions and statements made by persons speaking at the meeting, please consult the audio recordings on file at the Commission’s office.

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order; Roll Call.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Erben. J.R. Johnson, Executive Director, called the roll. All Commissioners were present.

Agenda Item 2: Executive session pursuant to Section 551.071, Government Code, Consultation with Attorneys, and Section 551.074, Government Code, Personnel Matters; Closed Meeting.

A. Discussion of pending litigation to seek legal advice relating to the following:

- i. Cause No. D-1-GN-17-001878: *Texas Ethics Commission v. Michael Quinn Sullivan*, in the 250th Judicial District Court in Travis County, Texas; Cause No. 03-17-00392-CV: *Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Third Court of Appeals at Austin, Texas; Cause No. 03-21-00033, *Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Third Court of

Appeals at Austin, Texas; and Cause No. 18-0580: *Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Supreme Court of Texas.

- ii. Cause No. D-1-GN-15-004455: *Texas Ethics Commission v. Empower Texans, Inc. and Michael Quinn Sullivan*, in the 345th Judicial District Court of Travis County, Texas; and related cases, Cause No. 03-16-00872-CV: *Empower Texans, Inc., and Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Third Court of Appeals, Austin, Texas, and Cause No. 22-1064, *Empower Texans, Inc. and Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Texas Supreme Court.
 - iii. Cause No. D-1-GN-21-003269: *Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the 459th Judicial District Court in Travis County, Texas; and related case, Cause No. 03-22-00133-CV: *Michael Quinn Sullivan v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the Third Court of Appeals, Austin, Texas.
 - iv. Case No. 4:23-cv-00808-P, *Institute for Free Speech, a nonprofit corporation and public interest law firm, vs. J.R. Johnson in his official and individual capacities as Executive Director of the Texas Ethics Commission; Mary Kennedy, Chris Flood, and Richard Schmidt in their official capacities as commissioners of the Texas Ethics Commission; and Randall Erben, Chad Craycraft, Patrick Mizell, Joseph Slovacek, and Steven Wolens, in their individual and official capacities as commissioners of the Texas Ethics Commission* in the U.S District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division.
 - v. Cause No. PD-0310-23, *Ex Parte John Morgan Stafford*, in the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.
 - vi. Cause No. D-1-GN-23-008068, *In re Christopher Paddie*, in the District Court for the 419th Judicial District, Travis County, Texas.
 - vii. Cause No. 22-CV-1130, *Matt Wiggins v. Texas Ethics Commission*, in the 122nd Judicial District of Galveston County, Texas.
 - viii. Cause No. 2023-DCL-01478, *Valleywide Pharmacy and DMI, Inc., vs. Texas Ethics Commission, by and through its Executive Director, J.R. Johnson, in his official capacity*, in the 445 Judicial District of Cameron County, Texas.
- B. Discussion of contemplated litigation and to seek legal advice regarding the collection of imposed penalties.
- C. Discussion of contemplated litigation and to seek legal advice involving Chapter 552 of the Government Code and Section 571.139, 571.140 of the Government Code.
- D. Legal advice regarding software licensing agreements related to the campaign finance filing application.

- E. Discussion and possible action related to personnel matters.
- F. Reconvene in open session.

Agenda Item 3: Recess or continue to “Agenda 2” noticed for the same time and place as this agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m. by unanimous consent.