



STATE OF MAINE
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0135

Agenda

January 30, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Note: this meeting will be conducted in person and streamed on the Commission's YouTube channel. A link to the channel may be found at www.maine.gov/ethics.

1. Ratification of the Minutes of the December 21, 2022 Meeting

2. Request for Waiver of Late-Filing Penalty – Hon. Mark Lawrence

State Senator Mark Lawrence was a candidate for re-election in the 2022 general election. He was required to file a 24-Hour Report on November 3, 2022. His campaign filed the report on December 21 when completing the post-election campaign finance report. The preliminary penalty is \$5,000. In requesting a waiver, Sen. Lawrence stated that the campaign made a mistake due to a combination of demands on his campaign manager.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommends reducing the penalty to \$500.

3. Request for Waiver of Late-Filing Penalty – Hon. Ronald Russell

Representative Ronald Russell was a candidate for the Maine House of Representatives in the 2022 general election. He was required to file a 24-Hour Report on October 29, 2022. He filed the report on December 20 when completing the post-election report. The preliminary penalty is \$1,573.52. Rep. Russell requests a waiver because he did not recognize that a report was due.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommends reducing the penalty to \$350.

4. Request for Waiver of Late-Filing Penalty – Hon. Reagan Paul

Representative Reagan Paul was a candidate for the House in the 2022 general election. She was required to file a 24-Hour Report on November 1, 2022. She filed the report on December 20 when completing the post-election report. The preliminary penalty is \$1,945.30. Rep. Paul requests a waiver due to inexperience, the pressures in the week before the election, and because her usual practice was to report payments when they cleared the bank.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommends reducing the penalty to \$350.

5. Request for Waiver of Late-Filing Penalty – Neil MacLean, Jr.

Neil MacLean, Jr. was a candidate for District Attorney, Prosecutorial District 3 in the 2022 general election. His campaign was required to file a 24-Hour Report on November 4, 2022 for a payment of \$4,600 to a texting platform. The report was filed on December 14 when the campaign's treasurer was completing the post-election report. The preliminary penalty is \$3,680. The treasurer requests a waiver because of the inexperience of the campaign, work and family

demands contributed to the error, she viewed the \$4,600 as an amount placed on reserve rather than an expenditure, and the preliminary penalty of \$3,680 is disproportionately high.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommend reducing the penalty to \$350.

6. Request for Waiver of Late-Filing Penalty – Hon. Sharri MacDonald

Representative Sharri MacDonald was a candidate for Senate District 31 in the 2022 general election. She filed campaign finance reports on September 26 and October 28, 2022 showing no campaign expenditures. In fact, she made three purchases during the report periods totaling around \$861. The Commission staff views both reports as late because they were not substantially compliant. The two late-filing penalties total \$1,255.87. Rep. MacDonald requests a waiver because this was an unintentional error, the expenditures “slipped through the cracks,” and she was careful with her campaign spending.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommends reducing the penalty to \$350.

7. Request for Waiver of Late Filing Penalties – Aroostook County Republican Committee

The Aroostook County Republican Committee was required to file the 11-Day Pre-General campaign finance report by Friday, October 28th, but it was not filed until Sunday, November 6th, making the report nine days late. The committee was also required to file a 24-Hour Report by Saturday, November 5th, but it was not filed until Monday, November 7th, making the report two days late. The combined penalty for the two late reports is \$620. The committee is requesting a waiver of these penalties because the treasurer had Covid at the time the reports were due.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommend reducing the total penalties to \$220.

8. Potential Maine Clean Election Act Violation – Frank Roma

In 2022, Frank Roma participated in the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) program as a candidate for the Maine House of Representatives. He used \$943.00 in personal funds to pay campaign debts, intending to be reimbursed by the campaign. Confusion over the two bank accounts resulted in the campaign having insufficient MCEA funds to repay the debts. Mr. Roma consequently spent more than he was authorized as an MCEA candidate.

Staff recommendation: the Commission staff recommends finding Mr. Roma violated 21-A M.R.S. § 1125(6) and assessing a penalty in the range of \$200 - \$400.

9. Update on Matthew Toth and Clinton Collamore

In 2022, the Commission noticed irregularities in the applications for Maine Clean Election Act funding by two candidates. The staff conducted investigations and referred the matters to the Office of the Attorney General for further investigation. The Attorney General’s office sought and obtained indictments for both candidates.

Other Business

ADJOURNMENT