



Minutes of the February 26, 2025 Meeting of the
Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices
45 Memorial Circle, Augusta, Maine

Present: William Schneider, Esq., Chair; Dennis Marble; David Hastings, Esq. (by Zoom); Sarah LeClaire, Esq. (by Zoom) and Beth Ahearn, Esq.

Staff: Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director; and Jonathan R. Bolton, Assistant Attorney General
Commissioner Schneider convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

1. Ratification of the Minutes of the January 29, 2025 Meeting

Ms. Ahearn moved to ratify the January 29, 2025 minutes. Mr. Marble seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

2. Request for Penalty Waiver – Hon. Laura Supica

Representative Laura Supica was a traditionally financed candidate for House District 22 in 2024. Candidates who make any single expenditure of \$1,000 or more in the last 13 days before an election must disclose it within one day by filing a 24-Hour Report. On January 22, 2025, while making amendments to a previously filed 42-Day Post-General Report, Rep. Supica's treasurer, Sarah Nichols, entered an October 25, 2024 expenditure of \$1,101.41 to Print Bangor for printing and postage. The campaign should have filed a 24-Hour Report by the end of day, October 26, but it was not filed until January 22. The preliminary penalty for the late report was \$1,938.64 and Rep. Supica requested a penalty waiver.

Rep. Supica explained to the Commission this was her first election cycle as a traditionally financed candidate. She was preoccupied with various matters in her life and delegated more campaign tasks to others than in previous elections. She recognized having a hands-off approach may not have been in her best interest and that she may not have communicated with her treasurer as well as she should have. She accepted full responsibility for the late report and requested a reduced penalty.

Mr. Schneider moved to find the report was filed late and reduce the penalty to \$300. Ms. Ahearn seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

3. Request for Penalty Waiver – Hon. Holly Rae Eaton

Representative Holly Rae Eaton was a Maine Clean Election Act-financed candidate for House District 15 in 2024. Candidates for the legislature were required to file the 42-Day Post-General Report by December 17, 2024. The report was filed six days late on December 23 by her treasurer, Christina Brewer. The preliminary penalty for the late report was \$1,117.21 and Rep. Eaton requested a waiver of the penalty. Rep. Eaton was unable to attend the Commission meeting due to a prior obligation and asked the Commission to rely on her written statement.

Mr. Schneider moved to find the report was filed late and reduce the penalty to \$300. Mr. Marble seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Proposed Stakeholder Group to Simplify Pre-Election Deadlines

At the Commission's January 29, 2025 meeting, the Commission voted in favor of convening a stakeholder group to try to uncomplicate campaign finance reporting toward the end of the election season by making recommendations for statute or rule changes. The Commission was in favor of organizing an informal nonpartisan or bipartisan group that would not result in any cost to the Legislature. The group would focus on the deadlines for 24-Hour and Independent Expenditure Reports, in addition to whether training of candidates and others by videoconference would be helpful.

Anna Keller, Executive Director of Democracy Maine, was present at the February 26, 2025 meeting and was invited to speak. She expressed interest in participating in the stakeholder group. She said her organization's mission is to represent the public and the interests of voters. She encouraged the Commission to make sure there was a systematic approach to the reporting. She also suggested that a member of the press be invited to participate in the group. Mr. Schneider agreed with a systematic approach and taking a broad view to see how the rules and regulations fit together to require campaign finance reporting in the last period of an election.

Ms. LeClaire suggested Mr. Marble should chair the working group. Mr. Marble agreed to lead the group.

Mr. Schneider moved to appoint Mr. Marble as chair of the working group. The motion was seconded by Ms. LeClaire. The motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment

Ms. Ahearn made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hastings seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director