

**ALABAMA ETHICS COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**August 5, 2026
9:30 a.m.
9th Floor, RSA Union Building
Montgomery, Alabama**

The Alabama Ethics Commission met on August 5, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the Public Service Commission Hearing Room on the 9th Floor of the RSA Union Building.

Commission Members Present:

Honorable J. David Dodd, Chair
Honorable George Pierce, Vice-Chair
Honorable Greg Pappas, Member
Honorable David R. Pruet, III, Member
Honorable Carole Smitherman, Ret. Circuit Judge, Member

Commission Members Absent:

Commission Staff Present:

Thomas B. Albritton, Executive Director
Cynthia Raulston, Deputy Director
Brian Paterson, Chief Counsel
Byron Butler, Executive Assistant to the Director
Chris Clark, Chief Special Agent
Dustin Lansford, Senior Special Agent
Chris McCay, Senior Special Agent
Brian Baker, Special Agent
Dylan Baker, Special Agent
April Innes, Special Investigator
Kayla Pfeil, Lobbyist/Principal Liaison
Will Morris, Administrative Support Assistant

Mr. Dodd served as chair for the meeting, called the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. and introduced Rev. Clint Landry, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church Wetumpka, who gave the invocation.

Old Business:

Approval of the minutes from the June 3, 2026, meeting:

Mr. Pierce moved to adopt the minutes as written. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

New Business:

Advisory Opinion No. 2026-10

Requested by Daniel A. White, P.E., PMP, Deputy Director, Jefferson County Commission, Environmental Services Department

Mr. Paterson explained the request for Advisory Opinion No. 2026-10. *Judge Smitherman moved to adopt Advisory Opinion No. 2026-10 as written. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.* Opinion No. 2026-10 holds that under the Ethics Act does not prohibit the family member of an individual serving as both public official and public employee from accepting ordinary-course employment with private engineering, construction, utility, vendor, contractor, subcontractor, or consulting firms that do business with, seek work from, are regulated by, or appear before the public entities with which the individual serving as both public official and public employee serves, provided that the individual serving as both public official and public employee recuses himself and is not otherwise involved in any aspect of any matter involving his family member or her employer and does not use his position, including any confidential information or public equipment, facilities, time, materials, human labor, or other public property under his discretion or control, to obtain personal gain for himself, his family member, or a business with which he is associated. The Ethics Act permits the family member of a public official or public employee to seek or accept employment with a principal provided that the circumstances make it clear that the position would be provided for reasons unrelated to the public service of the family member who is a public official or public employee. A copy of each contract, regardless of the amount, entered into by a public official, public employee, a member of the household of the public employee or the public official, and any business with which the person is associated shall be filed with the commission within 10 days after the contract has been entered into.

Advisory Opinion No. 2026-11

Requested by Antwionne Dunklin, Producer Licensing Director, Alabama Department of Insurance

Mr. Paterson explained the request for Advisory Opinion No. 2026-11. *Mr. Pruett moved to continue Advisory Opinion No. 2026-11 to the next scheduled meeting. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.*

FCPA Appeals

Raymon Cortez Hall

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pierce moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first and second violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations three through ten. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Chequita Lemel Surles

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through five. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Emily Jones

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pruet moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through five. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Phillip Dembowski

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through five. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Ronald Tracy Adams

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pierce moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through four. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Welton Dale Graben

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. Ms. Flowers spoke on her own behalf. *Mr. Pappas moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through four. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Micheal Ray Beck

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pierce moved to uphold the fine and offense for violations three through five. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Katrina Hennings

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. Ms. Hennings spoke on her own behalf. *Mr. Pruet moved to uphold offense and reduce fine to \$50.00. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Mark Malone Craig

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through five. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Aristotle Onassis Kirkland

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pierce moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations two through four. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Barry Chancey

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pruet moved to uphold the fine and offense for the first violation. Remit the fine and offense for violations four through six. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Albert F. Turner, Jr.

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

North Alabama PAC

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Areatha T. Smith

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Carol Cook Carter

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

Fort Morgan PAC

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. *Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.*

John Carl Harris

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Joseph Elmer Freeman

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Kendall Glover

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Kristi Hagood

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Michael Todd Tewalt

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Randal Cleveland Brown

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

Timothy Frank Ramsey

Mr. Paterson explained the request for the Civil Penalty Appeal. Mike Jones, General Counsel, Alabama Secretary of State was present to speak and answer any questions. ***Mr. Pappas moved to set aside the penalty and offense. Mr. Pruet seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.***

At 10:52 a.m., Mr. Pierce moved that the Commission go into Executive Session. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

At 1:13 p.m., Mr. Pierce moved that the Commission go back into Open Session. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Case No. 2026-0027

Wade Whisenant, Councilmember, Town of Reece City

Mr. Pappas moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Wade Whisenant has committed a minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be handled administratively and referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2026-0067

Wade Whisenant, Councilmember, Town of Reece City

Mr. Pierce moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Wade Whisenant has committed a minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be handled administratively and referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Mr. Pappas seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2025-0575

Dexter Hinton, Mayor, City of Marion

Mr. Pruet moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Dexter Hinton has violated the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2025-0588

Natalie Simmons, Employee, Clarke County Schools

Mr. Pappas moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Natalie Simmons has committed a minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be handled administratively and referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2025-0558

Kossuth Green, Mayor, Town of Pine Hill

Mr. Pruet moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there currently exists insufficient facts to hold that Kossuth Green has violated the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be closed. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2025-0598

Damon Haecker, Employee, Brewton City Schools

Mr. Pappas moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Damon Haecker has violated the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2026-0016

Kimberly Bell, Councilmember, Town of Uniontown

Mr. Pierce moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that Kimberly Bell has committed a minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be handled administratively and referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Judge Smitherman seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Case No. 2026-0026

William Marks, Mayor, City of Athens

Mr. Pruet moved that based on the evidence as presented to this Commission, there exists cause to hold that William Marks has committed a minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act, and further moved that this case be handled administratively and referred for review and appropriate legal action to the District Attorney of the appropriate Judicial Circuit. Mr. Pappas seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Cases Recommended for Dismissal

The following cases were presented to the Commission by Executive Director Albritton, with the recommendation that they be dismissed: Case No. 2025-0385; Case No. 2025-0386; Case No. 2025-0387; Case No. 2025-0533; Case No. 2025-0612; Case No. 2026-0054; Case No. 2026-0060; Case No. 2026-0077; Case No. 2026-0082; Case No. 2026-0138; Case No. 2026-0155; Case No. 2026-0046; Case No. 2026-0047; Case No. 2026-0048; Case No. 2026-0049; Case No. 2026-0308 and Case No. 2026-0375. *Mr. Pappas moved that the Commission dismiss the cases as recommended. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0, with Mr. Pruet and Judge Smitherman recusing themselves.*

Case No. 2024-0363

Brandon Best, Firearms Scientist, Department of Forensic Sciences

Mr. Pappas moved that on June 4, 2025, the Alabama Ethics Commission unanimously found Brandon Best, Firearms Scientist, Department of Forensic Sciences, had committed one (1) minor violation of the Alabama Ethics Act and approved an administrative resolution at the request of the Respondent. The Commission forwarded the case to the District Attorney of the 8th Judicial Circuit who approved the administrative resolution on July 3, 2026. Accordingly, I hereby move as follows: 1) An administrative penalty in the amount of \$4,500.00 be ordered by the Commission to be paid to the Ethics Commission by cashier's check, money order, or online payment on or before December 2, 2026; 2) There is no restitution owing for this minor violation. Mr. Dodd seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

Other Matters

At 1:22 p.m., Director Albritton presented the Commission with the proposed 2027 Commission Meeting dates. Judge Smitherman moved the dates be adopted. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

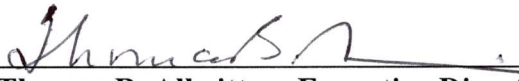
Adjournment

There being no further business at 1:23 p.m., Mr. Pappas moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 with all those present voting.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission is October 7, 2026.



J. David Dodd, Chairman



Thomas B. Albritton, Executive Director



Byron Butler, Recording Secretary