

**South Carolina Real Estate Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 10:00 am  
110 Centerview Dr., Kingtree Building, Upstate Conference Room  
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

Public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the S.C. Real Estate Commission Office, Synergy Business Park, Kingtree Building, Commission website, and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

**Commission Members Present:**

John Rinehart, Vice Chair – 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Candace Pratt – 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Allen Wilkerson – 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
Janelle Mitchell – 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Brown Bethune – 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Gary A. Pickren, Esq. – At-Large Member  
Jonathan Stackhouse – Public Member

**SCLLR STAFF PRESENT:**

Kyle Tennis, Esq., Office of Advice Counsel  
Meredith Buttler, Program Director  
Erica Wade, Commission Executive  
Ashlynn Kirk, Administrative Coordinator  
Rowland Alston, Esq., Office of Disciplinary Counsel  
LeAnna McMenamin, Esq., Office of Disciplinary Counsel  
Chuck Waters, Office of Investigations and Enforcement  
Wattie Wharton, Lead Investigator Office of Investigations and Enforcement

**PRESENT:**

Cortney Glover, Court Reporter	Kerry Ann Rainey
Austin Smallwood, Esq., SCR	Emily Roch
Michael “Doc” Smith	Ethan Yeary
R. Matthew Carroll	Krystal Thompson
Dwight Moore, Esq.	Michelle Schneider
Deborah Bowen	Patricia Smith
Mary Henry	Summer Henry

**CALLED TO ORDER:** Mr. Rinehart called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.

**INVOCATION**

Mr. Rinehart gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

**INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Commission members and staff introduced themselves.

### **APPROVAL OF EXCUSED ABSENCES**

**Motion:** To approve the absences of Andy Lee and David Burnett.

Moved by Mr. Bethune and seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** To approve the agenda.

Moved by Mr. Stackhouse and seconded by Mrs. Pratt, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion:** To approve the September 13, 2023 Commission meeting minutes.

Moved by Mr. Pickren and seconded by Mr. Bethune, the motion carried by unanimous vote. Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Mitchell abstained from voting due to their absence at the meeting.

**Motion:** To approve the September 14, 2023 Commission meeting minutes.

Moved by Mr. Pickren and seconded by Mr. Wilkerson, the motion carried by unanimous vote. Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Mitchell abstained from voting due to their absence at the meeting.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

None

### **STAFF REPORTS**

a. Office of Investigations and Enforcement (OIE) Report

Mr. Wharton reported that from January 1, 2023, to October 5, 2023, 478 complaints have been filed. OIE currently has 87 active cases and 35 cases have been closed during that time period.

b. Investigative Review Counsel (IRC) Report

Mr. Wharton reported the IRC met on October 3, 2023, via teleconference. The IRC recommends the following: 7 cases for dismissals and 5 cases for Letters of Caution.

**Motion:** To accept IRC recommendations as presented.

Moved by Mr. Pickren and seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

c. Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) Report

Mr. Alston reported as of October 4, 2023, there are 46 open cases of which 25 are pending hearings and agreements, 0 pending closure, and 62 have been closed since January 1, 2023.

d. Board Executive Report

Mrs. Buttler reported there are currently 7,270 active broker-in-charge licensees; 4,897 active broker licensees; 33,161 active salesperson licensees; 1,437 active property manager-in-charge licensees; and 1,781 property manager licensees. The Commission was also presented

the totals for timeshare salesperson registrants, real estate or property management office registrations, and initial application volume from 2015 to present.

The Commission's current account balance as of June 30, 2023, is \$7,131,095.83. Also included in the meeting materials is the cash balance report for the Education and Research Fund as well as the Timeshare Fund.

Mrs. Buttler notified the Commission that in getting the remediation courses developed, she has been working with CE Shop to get a primary quote in order to submit an RFQ. Last week Mrs. Buttler was given a contact at USC who has the potential to develop the courses in which case staff can develop an interagency contract.

Mrs. Buttler was excited to introduce Mrs. Erica Wade as the new Commission Executive. Mrs. Wade is coming to LLR from the Richland County Office of Small Business Opportunities where she served as the Manager for the office. Under her leadership, the office experienced a certifications increase of 70% while maintaining zero challenges to compliance due to procedures implemented to uphold the statutes and regulations set by the program and the County. In addition to working with Richland County, Mrs. Wade has worked with the City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities and Benedict College. In these organizations she has served in various leadership roles and acted as the representative on numerous platforms including SCDOT SBTRC panels, Columbia Chamber of Commerce Small Business Panel, and SBA's Partner Resource Day. Mrs. Wade holds a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership and Bachelors in Business Administration.

## **DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS**

a. 2021-744, 2022-554, & 2022-560- Deborah Bowen

The purpose of this hearing was to consider the Formal Complaint for Cases No. 2021-744, 2022-554, & 2022-560. Ms. Bowen appeared before the Commission and was represented by Dwight Moore, Esq. Mr. Wattie Wharton (LLR), Mr. Michael "Doc" Smith, Ms. Summer Henry, Mrs. Mary Henry, Ms. Patricia Smith, Ms. Michelle Snyder, and Ms. Kerry-Ann Raney served as witnesses of the State. All were sworn in.

After opening statements were made, Mr. Alston, with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel presented the State's cases. Respondent and her counsel presented her cases and answered questions posed by the Commission.

Disciplinary hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event a verbatim transcript is necessary.

Mr. Stackhouse left the meeting at 3:38pm.

**Motion:** To enter into executive session for legal advice where not votes will be taken.

Moved by Mr. Bethune and seconded by Mr. Pickren, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Motion:** To exit executive session and return to public session.

Moved by Mr. Bethune and seconded by Mr. Wilkerson, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Motion:** With respect to Case No. 2021-744, the state had proven Respondent violated S.C. Code Ann. §40-57-710(A)(5)(2017 Supp.) and S.C. Code Ann. §40-57-710(A)(25)(2017 Supp.). With Respect to Cases No. 2022-554 and 2022-560, The State had proven Respondent violated S.C. Code Ann. §40-57-710(A)(5)(2017 Supp.) and S.C. Code Ann. §40-57-350(I)(1)(2017 Supp.).

The motion included the following sanctions: Respondent be issued a public reprimand; that she pay \$500 per violation for Case No. 2021-744's violations, that she pay \$2,000 per violation for Case Nos. 2022-554 and 2022-560's violations, totaling \$5,000, to be paid within 180 days from the date of the final order; and that the Respondent take both the Unit IIIA and Unit IIIB Broker courses to be completed within 180 days from the date of the final order, which will not count towards continuing education hours. If the Respondent fails to meet all requirements then her license will be administratively suspended.

Moved by Mr. Pickren and seconded by Mr. Bethune, the motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor and 1 opposed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Approval of Forms to be Converted to Spanish

Mrs. Buttler explained that pursuant to prior Commission directives and discussions, she was seeking approval for the Commission to make available the following documents in Spanish: designated agency, disclosure of real estate brokerage relationships, property disclosure, and required language for contracts. Mrs. Buttler explained that the documents would not be the actual documents that were signed (if applicable) but instead be Spanish translations of the existing documents, with the same formatting but with any signature lines removed. Thus, the forms would serve as Spanish-language explanations of the documents, with the actual documents that needed to be signed remaining in English.

**Motion:** To approve the aforementioned forms to be converted to Spanish as described above.

Moved by Mr. Pickren and seconded by Mr. Bethune, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

b. Travel Approval: 2024 ARELLO Leadership Symposium, January 8-10, 2024 in Miami, FL  
Mr. Rinehart is invited to the Leadership Symposium held by ARELLO and the Commission is being asked for travel reimbursement approval.

**Motion:** To approve the coverage of travel expenses needed for Mr. Rinehart to attend ARELLO in January.

Moved by Mr. Bethune and seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

c. Travel Approval: 2024 ARELLO Mid-Year Conference, April 16-18, 2024 in New Orleans, LA

Mrs. Buttler requested travel reimbursement for 5 LLR staff and 2 Commissioners to attend the ARELLO Mid-Year Meeting.

**Motion:** To approve the coverage of travel expenses needed for LLR staff and Commissioners to attend the 2024 ARELLO Mid-year Conference in New Orleans, LA. Moved by Mr. Bethune and seconded by Mr. Pickren, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

- d. Travel Approval: 2024 FARB Forum on Professional Regulation, January 25-27, 2024 in Fort Worth, TX

Mrs. Buttler is asking the Commission for travel reimbursement approval for her, the Commission Executive, as well as any Commissioners that wish to attend. The Forum is designed to address national issues and trends affecting professional licensing boards.

**Motion:** To approve the coverage of travel expenses for Mrs. Wade, Mrs. Buttler, and ODC staff to attend the 2024 FARB Forum in January 2024 in Fort Worth, TX. Moved by Mrs. Pratt and seconded by Mr. Wilkerson, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### **AGENDA TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

None

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Executive session was not needed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** To adjourn.

Moved by Mrs. Pratt and seconded by Mr. Bethune, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:21 pm.