



State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

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To: Public Disclosure Commission

From: Tabitha Townsend, Compliance Coordinator

Date: October 18, 2021

Re: Candidate for and Currently Serving Fire Commissioner Ronnie Little, PDC Case 95396

Agenda Item

PDC staff is alleging that Ronnie Little, an incumbent and a candidate for Fire Commissioner for King County Fire Protection District #40, violated RCW 42.17A.205 by failing to register her campaign (C-1 report) within two weeks of becoming a candidate or no later than June 4, 2021 and RCW 42.17A.700 by failing to file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement (F-1 report) that was due no later than April 15, 2021 to disclose the financial activities from the calendar year 2020.

Background

- Ronnie Little is a Candidate for Fire Commissioner for King County Fire Protection District #40 (KCFPD 40) in the 2021 Election Cycle.
- Ronnie Little has been an incumbent Fire Commissioner for King County Fire Protection District #40 (KCFPD 40), since being elected to office in 2009. Her current term is set to expire on December 31, 2021.
- As an incumbent Fire Commissioner, Ms. Little was required to file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement (F-1 report) in accordance with RCW 42.17A.700 not later than April 15, 2021, disclosing financial activities for calendar year 2020. As of the date of this memorandum, no F-1 report has been filed by Ms. Little.
- As a Candidate for Fire Commissioner, Ms. Little was required to file a registration (C-1 report) for her campaign within two weeks of becoming a candidate or no later than June 4, 2021. As of the date of this memo there is no C-1 filed by Ms. Little.
- Ms. Little filed her annual F-1 dated February 28, 2019 covering calendar year 2018. (*See Exhibit 1*)

- Per the King County Fire District #40 website (<https://www.fd40.com/>) Ms. Little has served for 15 years and her current term is ending December 31, 2021.
- On March 5, 2018 Ms. Little filed her F-1 report covering calendar year 2017. (**See Exhibit 2**)
- On October 14, 2021 the PDC Staff mailed PDC Case 95396 Hearing Notice to the address on file for Ms. Little. (**See Exhibit 3**)
- On October 18, 2021 the PDC Staff served Ms. Little with an emailed PDC Case 95396 Hearing Notice (**See Exhibit 4**)
- There is currently an outstanding balance owing of \$3,100 from prior penalties assessed including two prior cases for violations of RCW 42.17A.700 within the statute of limitations, 25923 \$1,000 and 80252 \$1,500. No payments have been received to date on these penalties.

Prior PDC Enforcement History of RCW 42.17A.700 violations

- PDC Case 80252: At the February 25, 2021, Enforcement hearing, Ms. Little was found in violation of RCW 42.17A.700 by failing to file an F-1 report for calendar year 2019, which was due not later than April 15, 2020. Ms. Little was assessed a total civil penalty of \$1,500 for the missing F-1 report, in accordance with F-1 penalty schedule adopted by the Commission which was in effect at the time. (**See Exhibit 5**)
- PDC Case 25923: At a February 27, 2018 Enforcement Hearing, Ms. Little was found in violation of RCW 42.17A.700 by failing to file an F-1 report for calendar year 2016, which was due not later than April 17, 2017. Ms. Little was assessed a penalty of \$1,000 for the missing F-1 report, in accordance with F-1 penalty schedule adopted by the Commission which was in effect at the time. (**See Exhibit 6**)

Staff Recommendation/Comments

Staff recommends the Commission find that Ronnie Little violated: (1) RCW 42.17A.205 by failing to file the Candidate Registration (C-1 report) disclosing information concerning her 2021 Re-election Campaign; and (2) RCW 42.17A.700 by failing to file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement (F-1 report) disclosing personal financial information as required for an elected official for calendar year 2021. The F-1 report was required to have been filed no later than April 15, 2021, and the C-1 report was required to have been filed within two weeks of becoming a candidate or no later than June 4, 2021.

1. Staff further recommends the Commission assess Ms. Little a total civil penalty of \$4,000, in accordance with the Penalty factors listed in WAC 390-37-182 for the two violations. Staff would note that the Penalty Schedule does not address the specific facts in this instance, and staff is recommending the Commission assess the penalty in accordance with the penalty ranges for each occasion for failing to file the C-1 and F-1 reports, as follows:
 - Assess a \$1,000 civil penalty for failing to file or timely file the C-1 report based on the penalty factors, that included this being the Respondent's first occasion for failing to file the C-1 report at an Enforcement Hearing before the Full Commission.

- Assess a \$3,000 civil penalty for failing to file or timely file the F-1 report, based on the penalty factors that included this being the Respondent's third occasion for failing to file the F-1 report at an Enforcement Hearing before the Full Commission, the Respondent has several prior F-1 violations and has outstanding penalties owed that have been sent to collection.

The \$4,000 civil penalty is payable within 30 days of the date of the Order, if not paid within 30 days is to be forwarded to collections without further action of the commission.

2. Order Ms. Little to file her required PDC reports in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(4); and to file the missing C-1 report for her Campaign and the F-1 report as an elected official within 30 days of the date of the Order.