

Michigan Campaign Finance Complaint

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MICHIGAN
2015 DEC 15 PM 3:31
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL

Section 1. Complainant

Name: Matthew R. Schonert

Daytime Telephone Number: +1 (231) 250-9931

Mailing Address: 22050 Boulder Avenue, Eastpointe, Michigan 48021

Email: mrschonert@gmail.com

Section 2. Alleged Violator

Name: Suzanne Pixley

Mailing Address: 24305 Grove Avenue, Eastpointe, Michigan 48021

Email: suzannepixley@gmail.com

Section 3. Allegations

Sections of MCFA alleged to be violated:

- **MCL 169.233(1)(b)**
 - Failure to file Post-Election Statement for 11/03/2015 General Election
- **MCL 169.233(1)(c)**
 - Failure to file all July and October Quarterly Statements from 2016–present
- **MCL 169.235(1)**
 - Failure to file all Annual Statements from 2016–present

Explain how those sections were violated:

Background

1. In 2007, Suzanne Pixley organized a candidate committee called CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR with the Macomb County Clerk.¹
2. In 2015, Pixley ran for Mayor of Eastpointe and was elected in November of that year.²

¹ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iCommitteePortal.php?iCommitteeID=4872>

² <https://clerk.macombgov.org/sites/default/files/content/government/clerk/electionresults/2015/Nov/202.html>

Details of allegation

3. According to the Macomb County Clerk, the committee failed to file a post-election statement by the Dec. 3, 2015, deadline.
4. On December 4, 2015, the Macomb County Clerk notified the committee in a letter that the statement had not been filed. The letter also advised the committee that the matter would be referred to the Prosecuting Attorney if the statement was not received within nine days of the due date.³
5. In addition to failing to file the 2015 post-election statement, the committee has failed to file any annual or quarterly statements since that time.⁴
6. As of December 7, 2022, the committee has not been dissolved.
7. The committee does not currently have a reporting waiver.⁵
8. The Macomb County Clerk's campaign finance website shows Pixley's committee as owing \$9,850 in fines.⁶
9. The Macomb County Clerk reports having sent a minimum of 19 "Failure to File" letters to the committee's mailing address to date.
10. In addition, the clerk reports having sent a minimum of 19 "Failure to File" letters to the committee treasurer's address to date.
11. Despite these reminders, the committee's 2015 post-election statement and all subsequent annual and quarterly statements remain unfiled to this day.
12. Consequently, I ask the Bureau of Elections to determine whether Pixley may have knowingly violated MCL 169.233(1)(b), MCL 169.233(1)(c), and MCL 169.235(1).

Evidence included with the submission of the complaint that supports the allegations:

All of the evidence to support the allegations made in this complaint can be found on the Macomb County Clerk's campaign finance website.

Committee information:

<https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iCommitteePortal.php?iCommitteeID=4872>

Committee documents

<https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iDocuments.php?iCommitteeID=4872>

(includes notices of failure to file and notices of late filing fee due)

³ <https://campaignfinance.us/docs.macomb.mi/469103078.pdf>

⁴ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iDocuments.php?iCommitteeID=4872>

⁵ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iCommitteePortal.php?iCommitteeID=4872>


⁶ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iOutstandingLFFs.php>

Because this information is readily available online, I am not sending the BOE a copy of every Notice of Failure to File sent to the committee since the violations began. However, I have attached a few examples:

- Quarterly Statement (October, 2022) due 10/25/2022
- Quarterly Statement (July, 2022) due 07/25/2022
- Annual Statement - 2021 due 01/31/2022
- Annual Statement - 2020 due 02/01/2021
- Post-General - 11/03/15 Election due 12/03/2015

Macomb County's "Committees Owing Fines" page showing that Pixley's committee owes \$9,850:

https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/OutstandingLFFs.php



Macomb County

Macomb County Home | Board of Commissioners Home | County Clerk Home | Circuit Court Home | County Sites

Business
Community
Government

Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds
Campaign Finance Reporting

To pay a campaign finance fee, click here


Sort by: ☐ Candidate or Committee Name ☒ Amount Owed

96 committees found

ID	Committee	Amount Owed
137930	MARCHWINSKI MARROCCO, MARILYN (COUNCIL / WARREN)	\$16,250.00
137916	DEVOUR, JEFFREY (COUNCIL / WARREN)	\$16,000.00
138133	GLASS, KIRK (10 COUNTY COMMISSIONER / MACOMB COUNTY)	\$16,000.00
138228	GORDON II, MICHAEL (20 COUNTY COMMISSIONER / MACOMB COUNTY)	\$15,650.00
68999	BUSSE, CHARLES (COUNCIL / WARREN)	\$15,500.00
138263	SANTIA, DAVID (TRUSTEE / CLINTON TWP)	\$14,750.00
137692	WAGNER, BRENDAN (TRUSTEE / WARREN CONSOLIDATED SD)	\$14,500.00
136638	MOFFITT, MARK (COUNCIL / ST. CLAIR SHORES)	\$14,200.00
138217	FRAME, PAULA (TRUSTEE / CHESTERFIELD TWP)	\$13,650.00
137719	HOOKE, BECKY (08 COUNTY COMMISSIONER / MACOMB COUNTY)	\$13,500.00
138558	YOUNG, THOMAS (11 COUNTY COMMISSIONER / MACOMB COUNTY)	\$13,000.00
138984	DAVIS, JAREMY (TRUSTEE / NEW HAVEN)	\$12,500.00
139156	SELVA, ANGELO (TRUSTEE / CHIPPEWA VALLEY SD)	\$11,500.00
139660	COMMITTEE TO RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY IN WARREN	\$11,250.00
138435	WHITE, BRENT (TRUSTEE / ROSEVILLE SD)	\$10,500.00
137921	PIXLEY, SUZANNE (MAYOR / EASTPOINTE)	\$9,850.00
136953	KEPLER, IRENE (COUNCIL / ROSEVILLE)	\$9,450.00
137971	LOVELOCK, MICHAEL (SUPERVISOR / CHESTERFIELD TWP)	\$9,000.00
139267	FOSTER, YVETTE (COUNCIL / FRASER)	\$8,600.00
139698	KNOWLIN, KI (TRUSTEE / ANCHOR BAY SD)	\$7,300.00
137332	REYNOLDS, DEAN (TRUSTEE / CLINTON TWP)	\$7,175.00
139355	REYNOLDS, DEAN (SUPERVISOR / CLINTON TWP)	\$7,175.00
138785	HEMELBERG, MATTHEW (COUNCIL / FRASER)	\$7,050.00
139551	JOHNSON, RANDONA (COUNCIL / EASTPOINTE)	\$6,525.00
139170	SIGLOW, TADD (PRESIDENT / ROMEO)	\$6,400.00

Section 4. Certification

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, formed after a reasonable inquiry under the circumstances, each factual contention of this complaint is supported by evidence.

X  12/12/2022
Signature of Complainant Date

Section 5. Certification without Evidence (Supplemental to Section 4)

If, after a reasonable inquiry under the circumstances, you are unable to certify that certain factual contentions are supported by evidence as indicated above, you may make the following certification:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, information, or belief, there are grounds to conclude that the following specifically identified factual contentions are likely to be supported by evidence after a reasonable opportunity for further inquiry. Those specific contentions are:

NOT APPLICABLE

X _____
Signature of Complainant Date

Section 6. Submission

This complaint is hereby submitted to:

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Richard H. Austin Building – 1st Floor
430 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48918



Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE
NOTICE OF FAILURE TO FILE**

MACOMB COUNTY

ID # 137921

Date 10/26/2022

CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR
24305 GROVE
EASTPOINTE, MI 48021

Please be advised that our records indicate that you have not filed the following Statement as required under MCL 169.234(1)(c)(iv):

Quarterly Statement (October, 2022)

10/25/2022

Statement

Due Date

Please send the required Statement to the address listed below. If a required filing is not received in this office within 9 days of the due date, MCL 169.216(8) requires us to refer the matter to the Prosecuting Attorney.

If you have questions, contact us immediately.

Sincerely,

**ANTHONY G. FORLINI
MACOMB COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
32 MARKET STREET
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48043**



Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE
NOTICE OF FAILURE TO FILE**

MACOMB COUNTY

ID # 137921

Date 07/26/2022

CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR
24305 GROVE
EASTPOINTE, MI 48021

Please be advised that our records indicate that you have not filed the following Statement as required under MCL 169.234(1)(c)(iii):

Quarterly Statement (July, 2022)

07/25/2022

Statement

Due Date

Please send the required Statement to the address listed below. If a required filing is not received in this office within 9 days of the due date, MCL 169.216(8) requires us to refer the matter to the Prosecuting Attorney.

If you have questions, contact us immediately.

Sincerely,

**ANTHONY G. FORLINI
MACOMB COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
32 MARKET STREET
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48043**



Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE
NOTICE OF FAILURE TO FILE**

MACOMB COUNTY

ID # 137921

Date 02/01/2022

CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR
24305 GROVE
EASTPOINTE, MI 48021

Please be advised that our records indicate that you have not filed the following Statement as required under MCL 169.235(1):

Annual Statement - 2021

01/31/2022

Statement

Due Date

Please send the required Statement to the address listed below. If a required filing is not received in this office within 9 days of the due date, we are required to refer the matter to the Prosecuting Attorney. In addition, please be advised that late filing fees accrue at \$25.00 per business day (not to exceed \$500.00), as long as the statement remains unfiled.

If you have questions, feel free to contact us at (586) 469-5209.

Sincerely,

**ANTHONY G. FORLINI
MACOMB COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
32 MARKET STREET
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48043**



Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE
NOTICE OF FAILURE TO FILE**

MACOMB COUNTY

ID # 137921

Date 02/02/2021

CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR
16103 BAYHAM
CLINTON TWP, MI 48038

Please be advised that our records indicate that you have not filed the following Statement as required under MCL 169.235(1):

Annual Statement - 2020

02/01/2021

Statement

Due Date

Please send the required Statement to the address listed below. If a required filing is not received in this office within 9 days of the due date, we are required to refer the matter to the Prosecuting Attorney. In addition, please be advised that late filing fees accrue at \$25.00 per business day (not to exceed \$500.00), as long as the statement remains unfiled.

If you have questions, feel free to contact us at (586) 469-5209.

Sincerely,

**ANTHONY G. FORLINI
MACOMB COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
32 MARKET STREET
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48043**



Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE
NOTICE OF FAILURE TO FILE**

MACOMB COUNTY

ID # 137921

Date 12/04/2015

CTE SUZANNE PIXLEY FOR MAYOR
24305 GROVE
EASTPOINTE, MI 48021

Please be advised that our records indicate that you have not filed the following Statement as required under
MCL 169.233(1)(b):

Post-General - 11/03/15 Election

12/03/2015

Statement

Due Date

Please send the required Statement to the address listed below. If a required filing is not received in this
office within 9 days of the due date, MCL 169.216(8) requires us to refer the matter to the Prosecuting
Attorney.

If you have questions, contact us immediately.

Sincerely,

**CARMELLA SABAUGH, COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
40 NORTH MAIN
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48043**



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

January 11, 2023

Suzanne Pixley
24305 Grove Avenue
Eastpointe, MI 48021

Re: *Schonert v. Pixley*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 – 12 – 226 – 233, 235

Dear Ms. Pixley:

The Department of State (Department) has received a formal complaint filed against you by Matthew Schonert alleging that you violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act). Specifically, the complaint alleges that you failed to file a post-election statement for the November 2015 election by the December 3, 2015 deadline and that you have failed to file any annual or quarterly reports since that time. The Department independently confirmed that, as of January 4, 2023, the Macomb County Clerk's website¹ does not indicate receipt of those reports. A copy of the complaint is included with this notice.

The MCFA requires committees to file contributions and expenditures with the appropriate filing official by specific dates. MCL 169.233(1) – (3). The Act requires a committee that receives or expends more than \$1,000 during any election to file campaign finance reports in compliance with the act. MCL 16.233(6). A person who knowingly omits or underreports expenditures required to be disclosed by the Act is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$1,000 or the amount of the expenditures omitted or underreported, whichever is greater. MCL 169.233(11).

Additionally, the MCFA requires committees to file an annual report by January 31 of each year with the appropriate filing official. MCL 169.235. If the committee raised \$10,000 or less in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$25 for each business day, but not to exceed \$500. If the committee raised more than \$10,000 in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$50 for each business day, but not to exceed \$1,000. MCL 169.235(3).

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Department's examination of these matters and your right to respond to the allegations before the Department proceeds further. It is important to understand that the Department is neither making this complaint nor accepting the allegations as true. The investigation and resolution of this complaint is governed by section 15 of the Act and

¹ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iDocuments.php?iCommitteeID=4872>

the corresponding administrative rules, R 169.51 *et seq.* An explanation of the process is included in the enclosed guidebook.

If you wish to file a written response to this complaint, you are required to do so within 15 business days of the date of this letter. Your response may include any written statement or additional documentary evidence you wish to submit. Materials may be emailed to BOERegulatory@michigan.gov or mailed to the Department of State, Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918. If you fail to submit a response, the Department will render a decision based on the evidence furnished by the complainant.

A copy of your answer will be provided to Mr. Schonert, who will have an opportunity to submit a rebuttal statement to the Department. After reviewing the statements and materials provided by the parties, the Department will determine whether “there may be reason to believe that a violation of [the MCFA] has occurred [.]” MCL 169.215(10). Note that the Department’s enforcement powers include the possibility of entering a conciliation agreement, conducting an administrative hearing, or referring this matter to the Attorney General for enforcement.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, you may contact the Regulatory Section of the Bureau of Elections at BOERegulatory@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

Enclosure
c: Matthew Schonert



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

February 9, 2023

SECOND NOTICE

Suzanne Pixley
24305 Grove Avenue
Eastpointe, MI 48021

Re: *Schonert v Pixley*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-12-226-233, 235

Dear Ms. Pixley:

The Department of State (Department) has received a formal complaint filed against you by Matthew Schonert alleging that you violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act). Specifically, the complaint alleges that you failed to file a post-election statement for the November 2015 election by the December 3, 2015 deadline and that you have failed to file any annual or quarterly reports since that time. The Department independently confirmed that, as of January 4, 2023, the Macomb County Clerk's website¹ does not indicate receipt of those reports. A copy of the complaint is included with this notice.

The Department sent you notice of this complaint in a letter dated January 11, 2023. That letter informed you that you had 15 business days from that date to provide a response to the complaint. **As a courtesy, the Department is extending you an opportunity to submit a response within 15 business days of the date of this second notice.** If you do not submit a response within 15 business days of the date of this notice, the Department will have no choice but to adjudicate the complaint based on the facts and allegations included in the complaint alone.

The MCFA requires committees to file contributions and expenditures with the appropriate filing official by specific dates. MCL 169.233(1) – (3). The Act requires a committee that receives or expends more than \$1,000 during any election to file campaign finance reports in compliance with the act. MCL 16.233(6). A person who knowingly omits or underreports expenditures required to be disclosed by the Act is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$1,000 or the amount of the expenditures omitted or underreported, whichever is greater. MCL 169.233(11).

Additionally, the MCFA requires committees to file an annual report by January 31 of each year with the appropriate filing official. MCL 169.235. If the committee raised \$10,000 or less in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$25 for each business day, but not to exceed \$500. If the committee raised more than \$10,000 in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$50 for each business day, but not to exceed \$1,000. MCL 169.235(3).

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Department's examination of these matters and your right to respond to the allegations before the Department proceeds further. It is important to understand that the Department is neither making this complaint nor accepting the allegations as true. The investigation and resolution of this complaint is governed by section 15 of the Act and the corresponding administrative rules, R 169.51 *et seq.* An explanation of the process is available on the Department's [website](#).

If you wish to file a written response to this complaint, you are required to do so within 15 business days of the date of this letter. Your response may include any written statement or additional documentary evidence you wish to submit. Materials may be emailed to BOERegulatory@michigan.gov or mailed to the Department of State, Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918. If you fail to submit a response, the Department will render a decision based on the evidence furnished by the complainant.

A copy of your answer will be provided to Mr. Schonert, who will have an opportunity to submit a rebuttal statement to the Department. After reviewing the statements and materials provided by the parties, the Department will determine whether "there may be reason to believe that a violation of [the MCFA] has occurred [.]” MCL 169.215(10). Note that the Department's enforcement powers include the possibility of entering a conciliation agreement, conducting an administrative hearing, or referring this matter to the Attorney General for enforcement.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, you may contact the Regulatory Section of the Bureau of Elections at BOERegulatory@Michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

MDOS-BOERegulatory

From: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2023 6:55 PM
To: Suzanne Pixley
Subject: RE: Schonert v Pixley Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-12-226-233, 235

Ms. Pixley,

The Department would appreciate your attention to this matter. It has been one month since you asked for an extension. If we do not hear from you by this Friday, March 17, we will proceed to the determination stage based on the materials submitted.

Bureau of Elections, Regulatory Section
Michigan Department of State
Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson
P.O. Box 20126
Lansing, Michigan 48901

From: Suzanne Pixley <suzannepixley@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 10:23 AM
To: MDOS-BOERegulatory <MDOS-BOERegulatory@michigan.gov>
Subject: Re: Schonert v Pixley Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-12-226-233, 235

CAUTION: This is an External email. Please send suspicious emails to abuse@michigan.gov

I received Letter #1 on January 31 as my mail had been on hold while I was at my daughters celebrating my 82nd birthday. Thank you for the recent e mail or Letter #2. I will get back to you next Monday after I make a few contacts to resolve this long standing issue. Suzanne Pixley

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 8, 2023, at 4:34 PM, MDOS-BOERegulatory <MDOS-BOERegulatory@michigan.gov> wrote:

Please see the attached.

Thank you,

Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

From: [Suzanne Pixley](#)
To: [MDOS-BOERegulatory](#)
Subject: Schonert v Pixley Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-12-226-233,235
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 9:26:19 AM

CAUTION: This is an External email. Please send suspicious emails to abuse@michigan.gov

In regards to the above complaint, I have taken the following actions.

1. Related to Late Fee Quarterly Statement, I sent a \$200 check to the Macomb County Treasurer per his request on Feb 22, 2023. Copy enclosed. To date this check has not been cashed or withdrawn from my personal checking account. I will stop payment of this check if it is not cashed by March 22, and reissue the same.
2. In the meantime, I have received a letter from the Macomb County Clerk requesting that the \$500 check be sent to him. I sent a check yesterday, from my personal account for the remaining \$300.
3. My campaign finance account with First State Bank was closed several years ago by the bank. The monthly service fees for the remaining balance following the election had emptied the account. As I recall, there were no donations and no withdrawals after the last campaign statement had been filed following the 2015 election. I have contacted First State Bank for copies of all of the Campaign Finance Account to be sure of that statement. Every donation that I received and every expenditure was processed through First State Bank. Nothing was processed through my personal account which is also held by First State Bank. The funds that were taken by inactivity were those I loaned to myself as I did not want to pay them back until two issues made by the clerk were resolved. I was notified yesterday afternoon that the Campaign Finance Account records were located and now available for pick up and I will pick them up this morning.
4. One issue related to an In Kind Donation of food. This related to the same person who had made the same donation for all five of my elections. I filed it the same way for four elections with the clerk accepting it each time. On the fifth election, she said it had to be done a different way. When I explained that the method I used for the fifth election had been used the same way the other four times, she said I would have to go back and correct it, back to 2005, changing all the campaign files.
5. The second issue related to an amount due for services rendered by Mr. Sabaugh. In the past, I have sought legal advice related to this as I felt I was being conned by another politician. The attorney was able to stop those actions by the other politician so it hopefully would not happen again to another candidate but I hesitate to reveal further information about this without finding my legal records to substantiate my information.
6. Since I filed my last records, I have had multiply physical problems including the necessity to have a total knee, complete foot reconstruction, the year of COVID, cataracts, etc etc—everything you expect in people who are 82. I had all my personal records in a giant box ready to update all my campaign finance records till last year when a squirrel came down through my chimney screen while I was away and literally invaded my house. While that sounds like a lame excuse, the squirrel decided to become a living room squatter and despite all sorts of trails to the outside, traps with things that squirrels like, he brought havoc to books, boxes of records, etc. We ended up throwing out a recliner, a couch, tearing up the carpeting and then sanding, staining and varnishing the living room and hall. It was at the same time as my cataract surgery which ended up slightly problematic for a couple months. Now I stare at boxes and boxes of information in my basement looking for the box with the campaign records.
7. Once I review the bank records, and once I can find the stored box of election records, I will meet with the clerk's office to see what they will accept. If they won't meet with me until all the fines are paid, it will not happen any time soon. I live on social security and it will take 18 months making minimal payments to pay off those fines.

Suzanne Pixley



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

March 20, 2023

Matthew Schonert
22050 Boulder Avenue
Eastpointe, MI 48021

Via email

Re: *Schonert v. Pixley*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-12-226-233, 235

Dear Mr. Schonert:

The Department of State received a response from Ms. Pixley to the complaint you filed against her alleging a violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, 1976 P.A. 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* A copy of the response is provided as an enclosure with this letter.

You may file a rebuttal statement after reviewing the enclosed response. If you elect to file a rebuttal statement, you are required to do so within 10 business days of the date of this letter. The rebuttal statement may be emailed to BOERegulatory@Michigan.gov or mailed to the Department of State, Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918.

Sincerely,

Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Suzanne Pixley



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

May 1, 2023

Suzanne Pixley
24305 Grove Avenue
Eastpointe, MI 48021

Re: *Schonert v. Pixley*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 – 12 – 226, 233, 235

Dear Ms. Pixley:

The Department of State (Department) has finished investigating the campaign finance complaint filed against you by Matthew Schonert alleging that you violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act). This letter concerns the disposition of that complaint.

The complaint alleged that you failed to file a post-election statement for the November 2015 election by the December 3, 2015 deadline and that you have failed to file any annual or quarterly reports since that time. The complaint includes your page on the Macomb County's campaign finance website, showing at least 19 failure to file notices and that your committee owes \$9,850 in fines.

You responded to the complaint in an email dated March 17, 2023. In your response, you claimed that you sent a \$200 check and a \$300 check to the Macomb County Treasurer in response to a February 22, 2023 letter from the county, which you believe satisfies an outstanding fee for a quarterly statement. You indicated that your campaign finance account was closed several years ago by the bank, after service fees for the account emptied the account.

You also indicated that you ran into an issue regarding the reporting of an in-kind donation of food. Because that issue was not addressed in the complaint, it will not be considered in this determination.

In the letter, you explained that you have encountered a variety of health concerns and disruptions to your living situation which leave you unable to locate your campaign finance records. However, you indicated that you will meet with the Macomb County Clerk's office to see what they will accept and will work with them to pay your outstanding fees and fines. Finally, you stated that you live on social security and it will take 18 months making minimal payments to pay off those fines.

The Department provided Mr. Schonert with an opportunity to submit a rebuttal statement, in a letter dated March 20, 2023. To date, no rebuttal has been received.

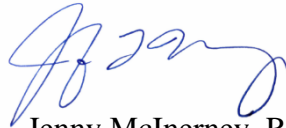
The MCFA requires committees to file contributions and expenditures with the appropriate filing official by specific dates. MCL 169.233(1) – (3). The Act requires a committee that receives or expends more than \$1,000 during any election to file campaign finance reports in compliance with the act. MCL 16.233(6). A person who knowingly omits or underreports expenditures required to be disclosed by the Act is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$1,000 or the amount of the expenditures omitted or underreported, whichever is greater. MCL 169.233(11).

Additionally, the MCFA requires committees to file an annual report by January 31 of each year with the appropriate filing official. MCL 169.235. If the committee raised \$10,000 or less in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$25 for each business day, but not to exceed \$500. If the committee raised more than \$10,000 in the previous two years, the late filing fee is \$50 for each business day, but not to exceed \$1,000. MCL 169.235(3).

The Department has independently reviewed the Macomb County campaign finance [website](#). A letter from the county clerk on March 23, 2023 indicates that your \$300 check, received on that date, was applied to your outstanding late filing fee for the 2022 annual report in partial satisfaction of the \$500 fee owed for that report. The letter further states that your \$200 check was attached to a notice sent by the county treasurer and was accordingly applied as a partial payment for the 2022 October quarterly. Finally, the website indicates that you paid \$500 on April 21, 2023, \$350 of which was applied to your 2015 pre-general report and \$150 of which was applied to your 2015 post-general report.

Given that you have indicated that you are working with your filing official to pay your outstanding fees and that you have recently paid \$1000 toward those fees, the Department directs you to continue to do so, and further directs you to file your outstanding reports. Please work with the Macomb County Clerk's office to address this matter, and to secure a waiver from filing if appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny McInerney', is positioned above the typed name.

Jenny McInerney, Regulatory Attorney
Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Matthew Schonert