

Meeting With Kathy Hazelwood (SC Ethics Commission) – July 2, 2013

Gary Spires and I met with Mrs. Hazelwood today to discuss the possibility of me offering myself as a candidate for the SC House of Representatives, District 93, for the unexpired term of Harry Ott.

The specific purpose of the meeting was to determine, in her opinion, what the requirements would be of me and my employer, SC Farm Bureau, should I decide to run for the House seat. Furthermore, we discussed the allowable employment relationship I would be able to maintain with SC Farm Bureau in the event I was successful in my bid for the seat. The following best represents the questions that were asked of Mrs. Hazelwood and her answers to those questions:

1. Would I be required to take an unpaid leave of absence from Farm Bureau should I decide to run?

Not necessarily. I would obviously have to deregister as a lobbyist prior to filing for the seat and then there are two options that could be used that would allow me to remain an employee of the Federation during the length of the campaign.

- a. Farm Bureau could deregister as a Lobbyist Principal for the duration of the campaign **or**
- b. Gary could also deregister as a lobbyist during the duration of the campaign which would leave FB with no registered lobbyists as paid employees. Buddy Jennings, a contract lobbyist for FB, would not be required to deregister and could continue to represent the Federation on any issues that may arise outside of the legislative session. This option would be exactly the same method the Medical Association of SC employs with Rep. Todd Atwater who serves as a member of the House while also being employed by the Medical Association as their CEO.

With both of these scenarios, FB and/or Gary would simply reregister after the election is over. I too could reregister in the event that I lost the campaign.

2. What type of employment relationship could I have with SCFB in the event I won the election?

Because SCFB employs registered lobbyists I, as a member of the General Assembly, would be prohibited from being an employee of the Federation. I could, however, enter into a contract relationship with SCFB for a whole host of different work related activities. We asked Mrs. Hazelwood specifically about Federal work, policy development at the County level, member recruitment, research, and commodity committee support. All of these would be allowable under the contract relationship. Mrs. Hazelwood did state that it could be problematic if SCFB was the only contract I had under my LLC and that it would certainly be better if I held more than one contract.

3. What types of votes would I need to recuse myself from as a member of the House and a contractor for SCFB?

*The only types of votes that I would need to abstain from casting would be those that **directly** impacted SCFB. During the eight years that I have been at Farm Bureau the only example that I can think of would have been the "Ag Tag" legislation. Because the proceeds from the sale of those license plates go toward the Ag in the Classroom program, I believe I would have needed*

to abstain from that vote had I been a member at that time. All other bills dealing generally with Agriculture would be allowable. Mrs. Hazelwood did say, though, that I should refrain from being the primary sponsor of any legislation that is being introduced and pushed solely on behalf of SCFB.