



VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
MATTHEW TAYLOR MORRIS

VSJ Docket No. 23-022-127437

SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION  
(PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS)

On March 17, 2023, a meeting was held in this matter before a duly convened Second District, Section II Subcommittee consisting of Ann R. Caudle, Lay Member; E. Rebecca Gantt, Esq.; and Patrick L. Maurer, Esq., Chair. During the meeting, the Subcommittee voted to approve an Agreed Disposition for a Public Reprimand with Terms pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.B.4 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Agreed Disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar, by Seth T. Shelley, Assistant Bar Counsel, and Matthew Taylor Morris, Respondent, *pro se*.

WHEREFORE, the Second District, Section II, Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Reprimand with Terms:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent was licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in October 2012.
2. On October 12, 2022, Respondent's license was administratively suspended for failing to pay bar dues.
3. On November 7, 2022, Respondent became aware that his license had been administratively suspended. On November 9, 2022, Respondent paid the dues and late fees to be reinstated as a member in good standing.
4. Records from VSB Regulatory Compliance indicate that the Annual Dues Statement was prepared on June 1, 2022 and mailed to Respondent's address of record on June 13, 2022. On August 3, 2022, an Annual Dues Statement indicating that payment

was “Past Due” was prepared and mailed to Respondent’s address of record on August 10, 2022. On October 14, 2022, a letter was prepared by DaVida Davis, Director of Regulatory Compliance, informing Respondent that his license had been suspended on October 12, 2022. The letter was mailed on October 28, 2022 to Respondent’s address of record.

5. Respondent stated he did not get the documents from the VSB concerning bar dues or the suspension. Respondent admitted that his “house is a mess” and “there is mail everywhere.” Respondent said a family member could have received the mail and put it somewhere in the house. Respondent asserted that he “didn’t know [the bar dues] were due” and “it slipped my mind” but recognized the responsibility was his.
6. During the 4-week period that he practiced law while administratively suspended, Respondent appeared in Portsmouth courts as an Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney on 82 cases. Respondent was asked if judges were alerted to the suspension and he said, “No, I don’t believe so.”

## II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

### **RULE 5.5 Unauthorized Practice of Law**

\* \* \*

(c) A lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction in violation of the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction, or assist another in doing so.

## III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS

Accordingly, having approved the Agreed Disposition, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a Public Reprimand with Terms. The term is:

1. For a period of two (2) years following the service of the Subcommittee Determination, Respondent will not engage in any conduct that violates the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct, including any amendments thereto, and/or which violates any analogous provisions, and any amendments thereto, of the disciplinary rules of another jurisdiction in which Respondent may be admitted to practice law. The terms contained in this paragraph will be deemed to have been violated when any ruling, determination, judgment, order, or decree has been issued against Respondent by a disciplinary tribunal in Virginia or elsewhere, containing a finding that Respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct referred to above, provided,

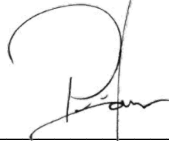
however, that the conduct upon which such finding was based occurred within the period referred to above, and provided, further, that such ruling has become final.

If the term and conditions are not met by the time specified, pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.F and G of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the District Committee shall hold a hearing and Respondent shall be required to show cause why a Certification for Sanction Determination should not be imposed. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

The effective date for the sanction shall be the date of service of the Subcommittee Determination in this matter.

Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-9.E. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR



---

Patrick L. Maurer  
Subcommittee Chair

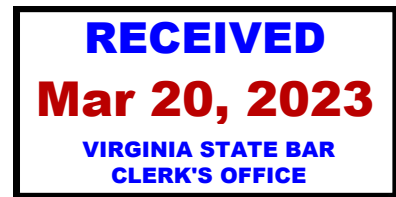
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that on March 20, 2023, a true and complete copy of the foregoing Subcommittee Determination (Public Reprimand With Terms) was sent by certified mail to Matthew Taylor Morris, Respondent, at Top Tier Law Group, P.L.L.C., 1877 Pittsburg Landing, Virginia Beach, VA 23464, Respondent's last address of record with the Virginia State Bar, and by email to [morrism@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:morrism@portsmouthva.gov).



---

Seth T. Shelley  
Assistant Bar Counsel



VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
MATTHEW TAYLOR MORRIS

VSB Docket No. 23-022-127437

AGREED DISPOSITION  
PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS

Pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.B.4, the Virginia State Bar (“VSB”), by Seth T. Shelley, Assistant Bar Counsel, and Matthew Taylor Morris, Esq. (“Respondent”), hereby enter into the following Agreed Disposition arising out of the referenced matter.

I. STIPULATIONS OF FACT

1. Respondent was licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in October 2012.
2. On October 12, 2022, Respondent’s license was administratively suspended for failing to pay bar dues.
3. On November 7, 2022, Respondent became aware that his license had been administratively suspended. On November 9, 2022, Respondent paid the dues and late fees to be reinstated as a member in good standing.
4. Records from VSB Regulatory Compliance indicate that the Annual Dues Statement was prepared on June 1, 2022 and mailed to Respondent’s address of record on June 13, 2022. On August 3, 2022, an Annual Dues Statement indicating that payment was “Past Due” was prepared and mailed to Respondent’s address of record on August 10, 2022. On October 14, 2022, a letter was prepared by DaVida Davis, Director of Regulatory Compliance, informing Respondent that his license had been suspended on October 12, 2022. The letter was mailed on October 28, 2022 to Respondent’s address of record.
5. Respondent stated he did not get the documents from the VSB concerning bar dues or the suspension. Respondent admitted that his “house is a mess” and “there is mail everywhere.” Respondent said a family member could have received the mail and put it somewhere in the house. Respondent asserted that he “didn’t know [the bar dues] were due” and “it slipped my mind” but recognized the responsibility was his.

6. During the 4-week period that he practiced law while administratively suspended, Respondent appeared in Portsmouth courts as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney on 82 cases. Respondent was asked if judges were alerted to the suspension and he said, "No, I don't believe so."

## II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

### **RULE 5.5 Unauthorized Practice of Law**

\* \* \*

(c) A lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction in violation of the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction, or assist another in doing so.

## III. PROPOSED DISPOSITION

Accordingly, Assistant Bar Counsel and Respondent tender to a subcommittee of the Second District, Section II Committee for its approval the Agreed Disposition of a Public Reprimand with Terms as representing an appropriate sanction if this matter were to be heard through an evidentiary hearing by the Second District, Section II Committee. Bar Counsel and Respondent agree that the effective date for the sanction shall be the date of service of the Subcommittee Determination in this matter. The term with which Respondent must comply is as follows:

1. For a period of two (2) years following the service of the Subcommittee Determination, Respondent will not engage in any conduct that violates the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct, including any amendments thereto, and/or which violates any analogous provisions, and any amendments thereto, of the disciplinary rules of another jurisdiction in which Respondent may be admitted to practice law. The terms contained in this paragraph will be deemed to have been violated when any ruling, determination, judgment, order, or decree has been issued against Respondent by a disciplinary tribunal in Virginia or elsewhere, containing a finding that Respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct referred to above, provided, however, that the conduct upon which such finding was based occurred within the period referred to above, and provided, further, that such ruling has become final.

If the term and conditions are not met by the deadline imposed above, Respondent agrees that a suspension of Respondent's license to practice law for one (1) year shall be imposed pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.F and G of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed pursuant to ¶ 13-9.E of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

If the Agreed Disposition is approved, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-30.B of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Respondent's prior disciplinary record shall be furnished to the subcommittee considering this Agreed Disposition.

THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR



---

Seth T. Shelley  
Assistant Bar Counsel



---

Matthew Taylor Morris, Esquire  
Respondent