**State of Connecticut**

**Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities**

**Regular Commission Meeting**

**Legislative Office Building – Rm 1A**

**Hartford, CT 06106**

**Wednesday, October 14, 2015**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Regular Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioners Present** **Commissioners Absent**

Edward Mambruno Dawn Niles

Edith Pestana

Joseph Suggs

Andrew Norton

Shuana Tucker

**STAFF PRESENT**

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

Emily Melendez, Assistant Attorney General

Jim Flynn, Regional Manager Donna Wilkerson- Brillant, Regional Manager

Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary          Jody Walker-Smith

Alix Simonetti, Commission Counsell III Kim Jacobsen, Commission Counsel III

1. Secretary

The meeting convened at 2:04 p.m.

Commissioner Suggs made a motion to elect Ed Mambruno as chair for the Commission meeting. Commissioner Pestana seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

1. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana and seconded by Commissioner Norton to

approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2015 Regular Commission Meeting. The vote was

unanimous. The motion carried.

     III.      Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

The three plans, Department of Children and Family Services, Western CT State University and

Eastern CT State University were presented by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp.

1. Staff Recommendations: **Approved**
2. Department of Children and Family

Representing the agency were Victor Braithwaite, Geri Beckford, and Debbie Freund.

The plan was recommended for **approval** based on compliance with the following: It contained all

elements required; the agency demonstrated good faith efforts to achieve its goals; the agency did

not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 50.3%, the promotion goals were met at

43.6% and the program goals were met at 100% for this filing period.   There were no

deficiencies in the prior plan review. The five year filing history is as follows: 2010, 2011, 2012,

2013, and 2014, the plans were approved. **They will retain their annual filing status**.

Debi Freund thanked the Commission and Neva Vigezzi in particular for all her assistance. She

also highlighted DCF’s Racial Justice Initiative in which everything from the intake call to outreach

will be looked at through a racial lens.

2.  Western CT State University

Representing the Agency were President, Dr. John B. Clark, Carolyn Lanier, and Fred Cratty.

The plan was recommended for **approval** based on compliance with the following: It contained all

elements required; the agency demonstrated good faith efforts to achieve its goals; the agency

did not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 31%, the promotion goals were met

at 55.5% and program goals were met 100% for this filing period.   There were no deficiencies in

the prior plan review. The five year filing history is as follows: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014

they were approved. **They will retain their annual filing status**.

Carolyn Lanier also thanked Neva Vigezzi for her assistance, and introduced the new President,

John B. Clark as of July, 2015.

3. Eastern CT State University

Representing the agency were President, Dr. Elsa Nuňez and Stacy Close.

The plan was recommended for **approval** based on compliance with the following: It contained all

elements required; the agency demonstrated good faith efforts to achieve its goals; the agency did

not meet all of its hiring goals at 50%. They met promotion goals at 53.8% and its program goals

were met at 100%. There were no deficiencies in the prior plan review. The five year filing history

is as follows: In 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, they were approved. **They will retain their**

**annual filing status**.

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to

approve the plans and retain their filing status of the Department of Children and Family Services,

Western CT State University and Eastern CT State University. The vote was unanimous. The

­­ motion carried.

IV. Petition for Declaratory Ruling

Woodrow Vereen, Jr. v. City of Bridgeport, Police Department

CHRO no.1520559

Charles Krich, Principal Attorney, CHRO

Commissioner Norton made a motion that we grant the City of Bridgeport’s petition for

declaratory ruling and set the matter of Woodrow Vereen v. City of Bridgeport, CHRO No. 1520559

down for specified proceedings – an investigation. He further moved that Mr. Vereen’s complaint

be treated in the same manner as any other compliant being investigated. The motions were

seconded by Commissioner Suggs. The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

V. Division Reports:

Executive Director’s Report, Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

Director Hughes began her report stating that the Legislative Liaison, Jim O’Neill would be retiring officially on November 1. She is seeking refill of this position along with a position in the Capitol region. The Capitol Region retiree was Manuel Reyes. The CHRO on Sigourney St is going to have 10 new hires beginning October 16. There will be three week training for them and the Commissioners will be notified in case they want to attend. The training will include topics such as frequently asked questions, case processing, starting with July 2015. The new manual for uniformity within the regions will be rolled out. The move to 450 Columbus Blvd is continuing. We are focusing on reducing our surplus inventory..

She reported that IOARHA was a phenomenal experience. The Director expressed she came away from the experience with a renewed sense of purpose for CHRO. Cheryl Sharp received an award from her peers. She wished that many more could attend the future IOARHA annual meetings.

CASE has reactivated their Diversity Study. They are in Phase 3. Their contract was renewed with support from the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. Commissioner Suggs asked if there was a completion date. He was provided with copies of materials received at the last meeting.

The new CTS is working well and is able to produce reports needed for the government and the other sites.

VI. Outreach Report, Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

Deputy Director Sharp gave an report on the many successful outreach activities:

**Future:** Library Tours coming up in Harford and New Haven to increase awareness about CHRO.

The annual EEOC conference in New Hampshire, Housing Uniformity committee meeting soon to commence

**Successes:** Coalition Building with True Colors and operation, “Stand Down” which reaches out to veterans’. Wesleyan University, Black Lives Matter Panel discussion

Many events are listed in the full October Outreach Report.

VII. Request for Exemption:

University of Connecticut Health Center

Alix Simonetti, Attorney III, CHRO

Commissioner Suggs made a motion to accept staff recommendation for conditional

approval for FY. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana.

. Executive Session:

*(Requires a two-thirds vote of Commissioners Present and Voting – Staff and Guests Invited to Attend*

*Must Be Noted)*

Invited into Executive session was Tanya Hughes, Cheryl Sharp, Emily Melendez, Charles Krich,

and Jody Walker Smith. Commissioner Pestana made a motion to go into Executive session and

was seconded by Commissioner Mambruno. The Commission went into Executive session at

3:30 pm.

Commissioner Suggs made a motion to end Executive session and the motion was seconded by

Commissioner Tucker. The motion carried unanimously. Executive session ended at 3; 59 pm.

No votes were taken during Executive session.

VIII. Vote on Executive Session items:

*(Action May Be Required)*

No motions were taken during Executive Session.

1. Pending Claim(s)/Litigation:

1. CHRO ex rel. David Butler v. Hallkeen Management Inc.

CHRO No. 1450080

Jodi Walker-Smith, Attorney I, CHRO

2. CHRO ex rel. Rosa Mass v. Jerimiah George

CHRO No. 1550214

Jodi Walker-Smith, Attorney I, CHRO

1. Personnel Matter:

Complaint against Agency Administrators

Commissioner Tucker made motion to defer to DOL the complaint of Pekah Wallace.

It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

Commissioner Norton made a motion to have Commissioner Mambruno sign all documents. It

was seconded by Commissioner Tucker. The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

IX. New Business – Change the date of November Commission meeting to November 18, 2015.

Commissioner Mambruno made a motion to change the date to November 18. It was seconded by

Commissioner Pestana. The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

X. Old Business

XI. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Mambruno to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Commissioner Norton. The motion to adjourn carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 4:15 p.m.