

**State of Connecticut
Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
Regular Commission Meeting
Legislative Office Building – Rm 1A
Hartford, CT 06106**



**Wednesday, April 8, 2015
2:00 p.m.
Regular Commission Meeting
Minutes**

Commissioners Present

Gary H. Collins, Chairman
Edith Pestana
Dawn Niles
Andrew Norton
Joseph Suggs

Commissioners Absent

Edward Mambruno
Shuana Tucker

STAFF PRESENT

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director
Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary
Emily Melendez, Assistant Attorney General
Donna Wilkerson- Brillant, Regional Manager
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Attorney III

Jim Flynn, Regional Manager
Kim Jacobsen, Attorney III
Jim O'Neill, Legislative Liaison

I. Chairperson: Gary H. Collins, Presiding

Chairman Collins convened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. He spoke about recent events involving civil rights such as the state of Indiana which recently passed a law violating the civil rights of gay persons and a murder in South Carolina which seems to be fueling the racial tension between Blacks and police officers. The latest incident has brought forth the issue of utilizing body cameras on the police, stressing how important the role of CHRO is with respect to the current climate in the country.

Chair Collins announced there was a quorum with the presence of the commissioners. The appointment of two more commissioners, Mr. Joe Suggs, former state treasurer and Dr. Shuana Tucker, educator, is announced.

II. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2015 Special Telephonic Commission Meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Niles. The vote was unanimous.

III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

The plans were presented to the Commissioners by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp.

Staff Recommendations: **Approved**

1. Department of Revenue Services

Representing the agency were Commissioner Sullivan and EEO specialist Penny Potter.

The affirmative action plan of the Department of Revenue Services 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 met all or substantially all of its hiring goals (87%), and substantially met its promotion goals (87%). There were no program goals 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.

Chair Collins asked why no program goals were established and Penny Potter answered they didn't need them because DRS had established so many goals that were affirmative. Commissioner Norton noted the high percentage of hiring goals. Commissioner Sullivan assured the CHRO commission that DRS makes a continuous and large effort to diversify.

2. Department of Correction

Representing the agency were Commissioner Scott Semple, Cheryl Cepelak, Monica Rinaldi, and Holly Darin.

The affirmative action plan for Department of Correction 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 met all or substantially all of its hiring goals (43%). They substantially met promotion goals (63%) and its program goals (83%). There were no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore in compliance with the B4 standard. The five year filing history is as follows: 2009

and 2010 approved, 2011 – disapproved, and in 2012 and 2013, the plans were approved.

Chair Collins asked DOC if their plan was a challenge at the leadership level, because though it's a good plan it looks the same as the last one. Commissioner Semple answered they maintain a legacy of diversity and improvement.

Chair Collins requested of Mr. Bingham to provide the Commissioners with an analysis or a one page snapshot of more data about the previous years of the plans. Maybe going back three to five years.

3. Department of Children and Families

Representing the agency were Eileen Meehan, Debi Freund, Vic Brathwaite, Jeri Beckford, and Irma Reyes

The affirmative action plan of the Department of Children and Families 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 met all or substantially all of its hiring goals (87%), and substantially met its promotion goals (82%). There were no program goals for this filing period. There were no deficiencies in the prior plan review therefore met the B4 standard. The five year filing history is as follows: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, the plans were approved.

Chair Collins commented that DCF had the highest numbers of minorities and women in leadership and professional positions that he had ever seen. Debi Freund said DCF made commitment years ago to reflect the children they serve and she also thanked CHRO for their help and guidance.

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton to accept the staff recommendation to approve the plans for the Department of Revenue Services, Department of Correction and the Department of Children and Families. It was seconded by Commissioner Niles. The vote was unanimous.

Director Hughes requested to amend the agenda to include under Item VI., Executive session the topic of "Scarborough 11."

A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana to amend the agenda, add the item, and receive legal advice during Executive session in regards to Scarborough 11. It was seconded by Commissioner Norton. The vote was unanimous.

- IV. Reopening:
CHRO Case No. 1310460, Terry Perry v. Capitol Community College
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Attorney 3

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton to accept CHRO's recommendation not to reopen case no.1310460. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was unanimous.

V. Division Reports:

1. Executive Director's Report, Executive Director Tanya Hughes

Director Hughes reported that the racial profiling report was released on April 7. Some of the results were going to be used as a screening tool; about 13 agencies will require further analysis of the data collected and more training for municipalities will be provided. More community dialogue is expected along with fair and impartial training. A detailed guide will be released with expectations that all departments and communities can benefit by using this guide to address some of the disparities across the state and show progress.

Ms. Hughes reported that the agency's aged inventory is at an all-time low of 3.8%; the Complaint Tracking System (CTS) is getting closer to going live with a May 1 target date. The ED stated that Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp is now presenting the AA plans in furtherance of uniformity throughout the agency. (The managers of the regions and supervisors do not currently present reports to the Commission board).

2. Outreach Report , Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp

The Outreach report was submitted in its entirety but the following events were highlighted:

- The 2015 CHRO Leaders and Legends Awards Reception, slated to be held at the state capitol was introduced to the Commissioners. There will be six categories and CHRO will ask the commissioners for suggestions or nominations. The awards are to be given sometime in June and will consist of (1) the Mario and Janet Vigezzi Award for Social Justice; (2) the Edith Gaines Award for Inclusive Education; (3) the Maria Colon Sanchez Award for Community Activism; (4) the Constance Baker Motley Award for Excellence in Business or Law; (5) the Paul Newman Award for using Media as platform for Social change and (6) the Alvin W. Penn Award for Excellence in Leadership. Chair Collins expressed the extraordinary nature of this event and wants the commissioners' and their appointing authorities notified.
- In celebration of Fair Housing month, several of our attorneys will go to a HUD conference in CT (a Tale of Two Cities) and another event in Springfield, MA (a Housing and Civil Rights conference) will have a panel discussion in which the ED and the DD will participate on the school to prison pipeline discussion.
- CHRO participated in an Education Working Group featured in the CT law Tribune. The focus of the PSA is antidiscrimination.

- KidSpeak will be on May 22, 2015. Deputy Sharp is looking for several more facilitators. It will be at UCONN School of Law. This year will be the induction of the newly formed College Court, similar to Kids Court; it will allow students to create meaningful dialogue about civil rights issues in 2015.
- The DD and the ED are members of the Racial Profiling Working Group which consists of stakeholders at the highest level. All meetings were attended leading up to the release of the Racial Profiling Report. The data collected will be used to write a detailed guide. It was determined that all those who want to file discrimination complaints will do it through CHRO within 180 days of the discrimination. We have the authority on enforcement. The Alvin Penn act is intended to use the collected data, analyze and educate. The several towns which are creating a buzz are Wethersfield, Hamden, Manchester, New Britain, Waterbury, and East Hartford.

Chair Collins is asking for a Social media report each month on the following:

- i. A half a page on what CHRO is doing that month;
- ii. Incorporate video such as 30 second blurbs in which a speech or panel discussion from our Executive director, Deputy director or staff attorneys at training can be posted; and
- iii. A Facelift of the website.

3. Legislative Report, Jim O'Neill

Jim O'Neill provided an update of current bills in which CHRO has an interest and relevant political interests:

- Secretary of State will have the Regulations up and running as soon as next couple of weeks.
- Senate Bill 1111 – not moving at a greater rate; CHRO is talking to members of the committee to help move that bill.
- President Looney has been notified that his bill had some flaws and his committee is aware and working on that.
- Senate Bill 770 - A body Camera pilot is being proposed to test in 3 towns
- The Legislative session ends on June 3.
- The statewide website is in the process of an overall face-lift, however, it did not meet its deadline (March) because Connecticut's computer system cannot interface with its provider. The face of the website will remain the same for an undetermined amount of time. Though our website will be untouched by this new face lift, Director Hughes is looking at ways to help our website pop or become more current.

VI. Executive Session;
*(Requires a two-thirds vote of Commissioners Present and Voting – Staff and
Guests Invited to attend Must Be Noted)*

At 3:19 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Pestana to go into Executive Session. It was seconded by Commissioner Norton. The motion carried unanimously.

Invited into that session were Director Hughes, Deputy Sharp, Attorney Kim Jacobsen, Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler, and Assistant Attorney General Emily Melendez.

VII. Vote on Executive Session;

The Commissioners came out of Executive Session at 3:41 p.m. The Scarborough 11 matter was discussed but did not require a vote.

VIII. New Business – None

IX. Old Business - None

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

The meeting ended at 3:42 p.m.