

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**



**Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2020
Via Microsoft TEAMS**

Commissioners Present

Cherron Payne, Chair
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Lisa Giliberto
Nicholas Kapoor
Andrew Norton
Edith Pestana
Joseph Suggs (via phone)
Neeta Vatti

Staff Present

Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director
Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

Alix Simonetti, HRO Attorney	Lynda Rizzo-Stowe, Regional Manager
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager	Ronald Simpson, Regional Manager
Neva E. Vigezzi, Supervisor	Muriel Carpentier, HRO Representative
Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary	Kristen Daniels, Executive Secretary
Emily Melendez, Asst. Attorney General	Laura Roxbury, HRO Investigator

I. Chairperson: Cherron Payne, Presiding

The meeting was convened at 2:00 p.m.

II. Secretary: Edward Mambruno

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2020 Regular Commission meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Giliberto. The vote: Yes (7), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

The following plans were presented by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp

Staff Recommendations: **Approval**

1. Department of Consumer Protection

Representing the agency were Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull, Arunan Arulampalam, Deputy Commissioner, Catherine Blinder, DCP Chief Education and Outreach Officer and Mitch J. Samal, HR Generalist.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 40.3%. The promotion goals were met at 72.7% and the program goals were met 100% (1 out of 1).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2019/2020 showed **40%** achievement for the SBE and 80% achievement for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018, Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Mambruno to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the Department of Consumer Protection and **retain biennial** filing status. The vote: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

2. Department of Correction

Representing the agency were Commissioner Rollin Cook, Cheryl Cepalak, Deputy Commissioner and Angel Quiros, Deputy Commissioner, Holley Darin, EEO and Karen Martucci, Public Information Officer.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency has met all or substantially all of its hiring goals at 53%. The promotion goals were met at 76% and the program goals were met at 100% (1 out of 1).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 174.7% goal achievement for the SBE and 103.4% for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto and seconded by Commissioner Vatti to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the Department of Correction and retain **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

**Commissioner Edith Pestana recused herself from the discussion of the DEEP AA plan.

3. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Representing the agency were Deputy Commissioner Betsey Wingfield, Barbara K. Viadella, EEO Manager, and Cenit Mirabal, EEO Specialist 1.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 32%. The promotion goals were met at 79% and the program goals were not established in the prior filing period.

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed no data for the SBE and no data for the MBE. The commissioner will follow up with the reviewer.

The filing history is as follows: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto and seconded by Commissioner Mambruno to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of Department of Corrections and retain **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (2 –Commissioner Edith Pestana and Commissioner Nick Kapoor). The motion carried.

** Commissioner Pestana returned to the meeting.

4. Department of Social Services

Representing the agency were Deputy Commissioner Kathleen Brennan, Astread Ferron-Poole, AA Administrator and Nisa Davey, EEO Specialist.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency has not met all or substantially all of its hiring goals at 57%. The promotion goals were not met at 0% and the program goals were met at 100% (2 out of 2).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2017/2018 showed 206% goal achievement for the SBE and 541% for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Giliberto to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan Department of Social Services and retain **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

Staff Recommendation: **Disapproval**

5. Department of Veteran Affairs

Representing the agency were Commissioner Thomas Saadi, (who called in from active duty), Michael Clark, Manager of Fiscal Affairs and Tammy Marzik, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. The plan was recommended for **Disapproval**:

The agency has not met all or substantially all of its hiring goals at 74%. The promotion goals were met at 39% and the program goals were met at 67% (2 out of 3).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2017/2018 showed 206% goal achievement for the SBE and 541% for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Giliberto to accept the staff recommendation to **disapprove** the plan Department of Veteran Affairs and move to **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (6), No (1- Commissioner Mambruno) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

IV. Contract Compliance Request for Extension

Renewal of Municipal Street Paving Limited Exemption,
Presented by Alix Simonetti, Commission Counsel

Following a presentation made by the agency a motion was made by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Pestana to accept the staff recommendation that the Commission grant an exemption from the set-aside program requirements until June 30, 2021 for state financed or assisted municipal public works contracts that exclusively cover street paving work or for those

specific contract portions of large municipal public works contract projects that cover only street paving work. The Commission is authorized by statute (CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46a-56(b) and regulation (Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies § 46a-68j-29) to grant exemptions when it is in the best interest of the state. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

V. Division Reports

Executive Director's Report: Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

The Executive Director reported there has been constant contact with DOL related to COVID-19 work conditions, policies, etc. and information is immediately disseminated to staff; transfer of CHRO personnel to DOL (1); completed interviews for (2) Attorney 1 and (1) Trainee positions; Budget review; Magistrate for OPH is working on cases; received COVID-19 funds from the state (\$49,027); weekly internal Agency-wide training on TEAMS and external training every Tuesday in TEAMS; in regular contact with HUD and EEOC (will receive EEOC contract award at 85%; national distribution amount); the ED production report showed that CHRO is maintaining continual operations and strong closures in all units.

Outreach Report: Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

See detailed report.

- COVID-19 funds will be used for PPE, Lysol products for the safety of staff and the public; electronic equipment and software;
- Kid's Court to be held online; June 10 or 11; Commissioner Giliberto and Commissioner Kapoor volunteered to serve as judges;
- Racial profiling efforts by the committee and police are showing progress;
- Cheryl and Tanya in many discussions related to the disparities related to COVID-19
- OPH – public hearing cases have risen due to business being closed during COVID-19

Legislative update:

Deputy Director Sharp provided a brief update on behalf of Darcy Strand. The Legislative session ended; there may be a special session. The Hairstyle bill, Disparity Study, and the CHRO bill are bills of interest to the agency.

VI. Executive Session – N/A

(Requires a two-thirds vote of commissioners present and voting – staff and guests invited to attend must be noted)

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Commissioner Vatti. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.