

STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes Wednesday, July 12, 2023 2:00 p.m. Via Microsoft TEAMS

Commissioners Present

Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Lisa Giliberto
Alex Harris
Nick Kapoor
Andrew Norton
Edith Pestana
Joseph Suggs

Staff Present

Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Managing Director
Robert Aldi, Regional Manager
Gabriela Sandoval, HRO Attorney
Darcy Strand, Legislative Analyst
Gary Madison, HRO Representative
Jase Olavarria, HRO Trainee
Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary

Kimberly Jacobsen, Managing Director
Jaime Rubin, Regional Manager
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Michael E. Roberts, HRO Attorney
Neva Vigezzi, Supervisor, AA (TWR)
Ana Mitchell, Human Rights Investigator
Kristen Parker, Executive Secretary
Laura Thurston, Asst. Attorney General

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Nick Kapoor called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON PRO TEMPORE

Commissioner Kapoor entertained a motion to elect the Chair Pro Tempore. Commissioner Giliberto moved to elect Commissioner Kapoor as Chairperson Pro Tempore for the July 12, 2023, Commission meeting. Commissioner Pestana seconded the motion. The motion carried. Yes (6); No (0); Abstentions (0).

III. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Commissioner Kapoor informed that he did not have anything to report. He also noted that all the Commissioners were present, and a quorum was assembled.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Mambruno entertained a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 14, 2023, Regular Commission Meeting as presented. Commissioner Suggs moved the motion to accept the Minutes. Commissioner Pestana seconded. The motion carried Yes (4); No (0); Abstentions (2 – Giliberto, Kapoor).

V. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Michelle Dumas Kueler, Managing Director, Legal Department

Department of Aging and Disability Services

Prior to the discussion and vote Commissioner Norton recused himself.

Staff representing the Department of Aging and Disability Services were Amy Porter, Commissioner, Mildred Verdejo, Human Resources Specialist-EEO, and Jennifer Napiello, HR Business Partner.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all the elements required by sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-68-94, inclusive.

The agency has not met all or substantially met all of its hiring and promotion goals. The agency demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals, but despite these efforts was unable to do so. The agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan reviews and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 4 out of 35 or 26.1%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 5 out of 12 or 42.9%
- Program Goal Achievement 0 out of 1 or 0%

The five -year history of filing is as follows: 2022 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2020 Approved; 2019 Approved; 2018 Approved.

Commissioner Giliberto moved to approve The Department of Aging and Disability Services Affirmative Action Plan and for them to retain annual filing status. Commissioner Harris seconded. The motion carried. Yes (5); No (0); Abstentions (0), Commissioner Norton recused.

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Staff representing the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services were Nancy Navarretta, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Barbara Viadella, AAO, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, Shannon Wegele, Chief of Administrative Services, Jennifer Gambacorta, EEO Specialist 2, Ancy Destin, EEO Specialist 1, and Michelle Beekman, EEO Specialist 1.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all the elements required by sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-68-94. The agency has not met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals and promotional goals. No program goals were established in the prior filing. The agency demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals and despite these efforts was unable to do so. The agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 92 out of 255 or 36%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 36 out of 104 or 35%
- Program Goal Achievement: None

The five-year history of filing is as follows: 2022 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2020 Disapproved; 2019 Disapproved; 2018 Approved.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services Affirmative Action Plan and for them to retain their annual filing status. Commissioner Pestana seconded. The motion carried. Yes (6); No (0); Abstentions (0).

VI. REQUESTS TO REOPEN

1. Mark Hunt v. Tilcon, Inc.
CHRO Case No. 2110110
Presented by HRO Attorney Megan Graefe
2. Tanisha West v. City of Danbury Police Department
CHRO Case No. 2220031
Presented by HRO Attorney Libby Reinish
3. Annette Scatton v. Lincoln College
CHRO Case No. 1930467
Presented by HRO Attorney Michael E. Roberts

The case of the Mark Hunt v. Tilcon, Inc. CHRO Case No. 2110110 was withdrawn prior to the commission meeting therefore no discussion or vote occurred.

In the case of the second item Tanisha West v. City of Danbury Police Department CHRO Case No. 2220031 Commissioner Giliberto made the motion to deny the request to reopen in this matter. Commissioner Mambruno seconded. There being no discussion the motion carried. Yes (6); No (0); Abstentions (0).

In the case of the third item Annette Scatton v. Lincoln College CHRO case no. 1930467 Commissioner Giliberto made the motion to deny the request to reopen in this matter. Commissioner Suggs seconded. There being no discussion the motion carried. Yes (6); No (0); Abstentions (0).

VII. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report, Executive Director Tanya Hughes.

Director Hughes updated the group on Personnel, Administrative, and other items. She highlighted information contained in her written report and noted the agency wide meeting that was held on Wednesday, June 28. She further noted upcoming training conferences. EEOC's 2023 FEPA-TERO training in Baltimore, MD from July 25-July 27, IAOHRA (International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies) from August 14-17 in Bethesda, MD, the 2023 Fair Housing Leadership Conference in Denver, CO, and the EEOC Regional Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY September 13-15. She announced the Summer Symposium scheduled for August 3.

Outreach Report, Ana Mitchell, Human Rights Investigator & Bilingual Outreach Coordinator
Ana reported that CHRO's first Juneteenth celebration and march in collaboration with the Juneteenth Coalition of Greater New Haven occurred on June 17th. The 11th Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event took place on June 2; CHRO supported the 5th Annual HBCU Send-Off Celebration held on July 8, and will have a booth at the Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz July 14-16. She also noted that work to secure funding for the Civil Rights Museum continues.

Disparity Study Update: Legislative and Administrative Advisor, Darcy Strand
Darcy informed that both the Disparity and Equity studies are moving into the public portion. Griffin & Strong continues its work on the quantitative data collection and will rely on the data collected for the data analyses. She added that the Disparity Study Survey is live and has been receiving responses since early June. Thus far, about 500 responses has been received. It is slated to be out for another 3- 4 weeks. After that public hearings will begin.

Equity Study Update: Darcy informed that Faulkner Consulting group continues to meet with executive branch agencies to conduct interviews regarding executive branch programs, and to conduct initial analyses of the equity of their programs. Public outreach and focus groups for community-based organizations also continues. In early June, Faulkner completed a series of focus groups with community-based organizations. Currently, a similar series of focus groups are happening for residents to share their experiences with state government.

*Commissioner Suggs left the meeting at 2:55 PM.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It requires a two-thirds vote of Commissioners present and voting staff and guests invited to attend must be noted.

Commissioner Kapoor entertained a motion to go into Executive Session and invite in Executive Director Hughes, Assistant Attorney General Thurston, as well as Attorneys Dumas Keuler, Jacobsen, Moyses, and Sandoval. Commissioner Giliberto moved the motion. Commissioner Norton seconded. There being no further discussion the motion carried. Yes (5); No (0); Abstentions (0).

The Commission and invitees entered Executive Session at 3:01 pm.

Commissioner Kapoor reconvened the Commission in public session at 3:37 PM. Commissioner Kapoor, Commissioner Norton, Commissioner Mambruno, Commissioner Pestana, Commissioner Giliberto, and Commissioner Harris returned after Executive Session.

Commissioner Kapoor noted that no actions or votes were taken during the Executive Session.

IX. VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Ashely T. Jamison v. Farnam Realty Group and Craig J. Delgado-Alonzo
CHRO Case No. 2300061
Presented by HRO Attorney Elizabeth Moyses
2. CHRO v. The Nunes Companies
Proposed Commission Complaint
Presented by HRO Attorney Gabriela Sandoval

In the matter of CHRO Case No. 2350061 Ashely T. Jamison v. Farnam Realty Group and Craig J. Delgado-Alonzo Commissioner Kapoor entertained a motion. Commissioner Harris moved the motion to file this case in the judicial district of New Haven, seek injunctive relief, punitive damages, and a civil penalty. Commissioner Giliberto seconded. There being no further discussion the motion carried. Yes (5); No (0); Abstentions (0).

In the matter of CHRO Proposed Commission Complaint Commissioner Kapoor entertained a motion. Commissioner Giliberto moved to have Commission Counsel file a complaint for non-compliance to the Office of Public Hearing and to pursue any remedies that may be available including but not limited to the three orders set forth in the memo. Commissioner Pestana seconded. There being no further discussion the motion carried. Yes (5); No (0); Abstentions (0).

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of AAIANHNPI (Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Native Pacific Islander designations): Racial Categories in Affirmative Action Plans.

2. Discussion of Lowering College Degree Requirements for State Employment: Recommendation Regarding College Degree Requirements

Commissioner Norton gave a brief synopsis of the previous discussions on these topics. After some discussion there was a consensus to remove both topics from the agenda with a strong majority agreeing to maintain the status quo concerning both topics.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

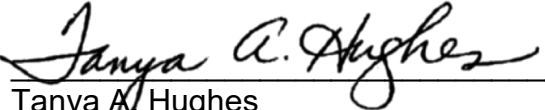
The next Commission Meeting will occur on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 2:00 PM via Microsoft Teams.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kapoor entertained the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Norton moved the motion. Commissioner Giliberto seconded. The motion to adjourn carried. Yes (5); No (0); Abstentions (0). The meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM.

The Minutes of the Regular meeting dated July 12, 2023, were approved on August 9, 2023.

Prepared by:


Tanya A. Hughes