

**State of Connecticut
Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities**



**Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 12, 2020
2:00 pm
Via Microsoft TEAMS**

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director
Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

Brian Festa, HRO Attorney	Neva E. Vigezzi, HRO Representative
Michelle Dumas Keuler, HRO Attorney	Michael Roberts, HRO Attorney
Lynda Rizzo Stowe, Regional Manager	Ronald Simpson, Regional Manager
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager	Kristen Daniels, Executive Secretary
Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary	Emily Melendez, Assistant Atty. Gen.

I. Chairperson: Cherron Payne, Presiding

The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m.

II. Secretary: Edward Mambruno

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2020. Commissioner Vatti seconded it and Commissioner Lisa Giliberto abstained. The vote: Yes (5), No (0), and Abstentions (1). The motion carried.

III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp presented the following plans

Staff Recommendations: **Approval**

1. Middlesex Community College

Representing the agency were Regional President Robert Steinmetz, Dr. Steven Minkler, Ed.D and CEO, Leah Glende, Director of Diversity & Inclusion and Debi Freund, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 27.3%. The promotion goals were met at 0% and the program goals were met 100% (1 out of 1).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 110.6% achievement for the SBE and 118.2% achievement for the MBE.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto and seconded by Commissioner Kapoor to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of Middlesex Community College and an announcement was made that **consolidated filing will begin 10/30/21**. The vote: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

2. Naugatuck Valley Community College

Representing the agency were Regional President Jim Lombella, Dr. Lisa Dresdner, CEO, Dana Elm, Dean of Administration, Antonio Santiago, Dean of Danbury Campus, Noel Rosamilio, Associate Dean of Enrollment Management, and Tim Magee, Director of Bridge to College, Ron Clymer, EEO, Leah Glende, and Debi Freund EEO.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency has met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals at 38.5%. The promotion goals were met at 50% and the program goals were met at 100% (1 out of 1).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 achievement for the SBE and for the MBE did not show goal achievement.

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 of the Naugatuck Valley Community College and an announcement was made that **consolidated filing will begin 05/30/21**. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

3. Quinebaug Community College

Representing the agency were Regional President Rob Steinmetz, Dr. Rose Ellis, Ed.D and CEO, Karla Desjardins, HR, Leah Glende, Director of Diversity & Inclusion and Debi Freund, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals at 37.5%. The promotion goals were not established and the program goals were met at 100% (4 out of 4).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 214% goal achievement for the SBE and 196.8% for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2012, 2014, Approved, 2016, Disapproved and 2017, 2018 Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Giliberto to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the Quinebaug Community College and an announcement was made that **consolidated filing will begin 05/30/21**. The vote was, Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (1) (Commissioner Suggs). The motion carried.

4. Three Rivers Community College

Representing the agency were Regional President Rob Steinmetz, Dr. Rose Ellis, Ed.D and CEO, Karla Desjardins, HR, Leah Glende, Director of Diversity & Inclusion and Debi Freund, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals at 37.5%. The promotion goals were not established and the program goals were met at 100% (4 out of 4).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 214% goal achievement for the SBE and 196.8% for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2012, 2014, Approved, 2016, Disapproved and 2017, 2018 Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Giliberto to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the Three Rivers Community College and an announcement was made that **consolidated filing will begin 10/30/21**. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

IV. Request for Reopening

1. Kiana Owens v. City of Hartford

CHRO No. 2010195

Presented by Brian Festa, Commission Counsel

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto and seconded by Commissioner Norton to accept the staff recommendation to **grant/deny** the request to reopen CHRO No 2010195. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0).

**** The vote was put on hold pending notification of all parties**

2. Miriam Parker v. WWE & SDE Corp

CHRO No. 1920101, 1920106

Presented by Brian Festa, Commission Counsel

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto and seconded by Commissioner Kapoor to accept the staff recommendation to **grant/deny** the request to reopen CHRO No. 2020158. The vote was: Yes (5), No (1) and Abstentions (0).

**** The vote was put on hold pending notification of all parties.**

**** Commissioner Pestana left the meeting at 3:56 pm.**

V. Division Reports

Executive Director's Report: by Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

The Executive Director reported on meeting with the Department of Labor and the new EEO designee, Muriel Carpentier re EEO functions; Information regarding Covid - 19 work conditions and governor's Executive orders and/or announcements are immediately disseminated to staff; Close monitoring of the budget is on-going; CHRO IT response team is continuing to train via TEAMS; the production report showed strong closure numbers during teleworking conditions; Speaking engagements on Police Accountability; Virtual Town Hall meetings, and Social Justice conversions; and HUD grants and EEOC contract modifications were reported on.

Outreach Report: by Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

See detailed report

- Race, Racism, Restoration & Healing Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, Agency wide virtual meeting (pt. 2), EAP facilitated, 7/01
- Quarterly FHAP, 7/02
- Greater Hartford NAACP Labor & Industry Committee, 7/02
- Black and Hispanic Caucus, 7/09
- Police Misconduct/Inmate Complaints Training, 7/24
- Diversity and Inclusion Training in the Town of Cheshire, 7/31

Legislative update: by Michelle Dumas Keuler

There was a special session in July. The session included bills on Police Accountability and no excuse absentee ballots. Both passed. The Police Accountability Bill addresses qualified immunity for police officers/departments, expands the collection of data related to police departments use of force and creates an inspector general's office under the State's Attorney's Office. The Inspector General will conduct independent investigations when a Connecticut resident is harmed or killed by a police officer. The Commission provided testimony on the bill. Further, the Commission was asked to be part of and has already participated in a subgroup task force committee created by the bill.

The second bill concerns No Excuse absentee ballots. The measure allows every registered voter to vote by absentee ballot. It expands the definition of sickness to include concern of getting COVID.

There will likely be a second special session in September. This session may include a bill regarding housing.

VI. Executive Session

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

Commissioner Norton moved to go into Executive session at 4:23 pm. Commissioner Mambruno seconded it. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

Invited into Executive Session with the Commissioners were the Executive Director, the Deputy Director, AAG Emily Melendez and Attorney Michael Roberts.

Pending Litigation:

1. CHRO v. Holly J. Digertt, LLC
CHRO Case No. CC2019-002
Presented by Attorney Michael Roberts

2. CHRO v. John C. Digertt, Inc.
CHRO Case No. CC2019-003
Presented by Attorney Michael Roberts

Return from Executive Session

Commissioner Kapoor moved to return from Executive session at 4:20 pm and Commissioner Giliberto seconded it. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

VII. Vote on Executive session items: *(Action May Be Required)*

CHRO v. Holly J. Digertt, LLC
CHRO Case No. CC2019-002

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Giliberto to accept the staff recommendation that the Commission vote to approve the proposed settlement in the matter of **CHRO v. Holly J. Digertt, LLC, case no CC2019-002**. A copy of the proposed settlement agreement was provided. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

CHRO v. John C. Digertt, Inc, Inc
CHRO Case No. CC2019-003

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to accept the staff recommendation that the Commission vote to approve the proposed settlement in the matters of **CHRO v. John C. Digertt, Inc case no CC2019-003**. A copy of the proposed settlement agreement was provided. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

** Commissioner Norton proposed there be an exploratory discussion on transgender athletes at the next meeting. There was never a vote on Intervenor status we could update during executive session of the September meeting. Attorney Roberts will provide the update.

Commissioner Norton moved to reconsider the reopening of the cases of Kionna Owens v. City of Hartford (case no 2010195) pending notification of parties and it was seconded by Commissioner Giliberto. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Norton moved to reconsider the reopening of the cases of Marian Parker v. WWE & SDG Corp. (case no's 1920101 & 1920106) pending notification of parties to the September meeting. Commissioner Giliberto seconded it. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Giliberto seconded it. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0), and Abstentions (0).
The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.