

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



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 8, 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

Commissioners Absent

Lisa Giliberto

Staff Present

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director
Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

Alix Simonetti, HRO Attorney	Neva E. Vigezzi, HRO Representative
Margaret Nurse Goodison, HRO Attorney	Michael Roberts, HRO Attorney
Jody Walker Smith, HRO Attorney	Michelle Dumas Keuler, HRO Attorney
Lynda Rizzo Stowe, Regional Manager	Ronald Simpson, Regional Manager
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager	Kristen Daniels, Executive Secretary
Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary	

I. Chairperson: Cherron Payne, Presiding

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

II. Secretary: Edward Mambruno

A motion was made by Commissioner Suggs to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2020. There was no June meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Kapoor. The vote: Yes (5), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

The following plans were presented by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp

Staff Recommendations: **Approval**

1. Office of the Treasurer

Representing the agency were Lucy Brown, HR Director and EEO, Ronnell Young – HR Generalist 3, and Barbara Housen – Chief Compliance Officer.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all of its hiring goals at 31.3%. The promotion goals were met at 50% and the program goals were 0 out of 0.

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 245.8% achievement for the SBE and 678.6% achievement for the MBE.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of **Office of the Treasurer** and retain **biennial** filing status. The vote: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

2. Department of Aging and Disability Services

Representing the agency were Commissioner Amy Porter, Francine Dew, HR Administrator and Alicia Nunez, EEO Director

** Commissioner Norton recused himself.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency has met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals at 40%. The promotion goals were met at 60% and the program goals were met at 100% (1 out of 1).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 138.9% goal achievement for the SBE and 381.4% 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 Mambruno to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the **Department of Aging and Disability Services** and retain **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

** Commissioner Norton returned to meeting.

3. Manchester Community College

Representing the agency were Regional President Rob Steinmetz, Nicole Esposito- Chief Executive Officer, and Debi Freund -Manager of Diversity and Inclusion.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency met all or substantially met all of its hiring goals at 55%. The promotion goals were met at 83% and the program goals were met at 100% (2 out of 2).

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2018/2019 showed 163% goal achievement for the SBE and 357% 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 Vatti to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the **Manchester Community College** and retain **annual** filing status. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

IV. Request for Reopen

1. Urena v. FTS

CHRO No. 1640362

Presented by Margaret Nurse Goodison, Commission Counsel

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Pestana to accept the staff recommendation to **deny** the request to reopen CHRO No 1640362. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

**Commissioner Mambruno was dropped and not returning to the meeting due to technical difficulties.

2. Nichole Jefferson v. Town of Darien

CHRO No. 2020158

Presented by Jody Walker Smith, Commission Counsel

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to accept the staff recommendation to **grant** the request to reopen CHRO No. 2020158. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

V. Division Reports

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

The Executive Director reported on meeting with the Commissioner of DAS, new hires and vacancies and retirees. The budget review is ongoing, Covid 19 supplies, and technology upgrades. She also made reference to the numerous virtual outreach going on during the pandemic while employees have maintained continuous operations and increasing alliances. Another HUD grant was received and EEOC grant was applied for.

Outreach Report: by Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

See detailed report

- CTPRP3 open and Honest Conversation, Tanya Hughes, panelist, 06/05

- Prayer, Vigil and Peaceful Protest in Solidarity for Black Lives Matter, Cheryl Sharp, 06/05
- Kids Court, Virtual, 06/09
- Fair Housing Training for Landlords (interns and new staff will attend as well)6/10

Legislative update: by Michelle Dumas Keuler

The Commission has been in contact with the Judiciary Committee regarding a change to the sexual harassment statute in relationship to the portability of the training. The Commission is seeking to have the CHRO training (whether in person or online) portable for up to two years. This has been an issue with several employees who work more than one job and have to be trained by every employer due to the wording of the statute. We have worked on language and are hopeful it will pass during the special session. We hope to be involved in the special session as it will likely relate to many civil rights issues given all that is happening in our country today.

VI. New Business: N/A

VII. 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 4:11 pm. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

Invited into Executive Session with the Commissioners were the Executive Director, the Deputy Director, Jody Walker Smith and Michael Roberts, Commission Counsel.

VIII. Return from Executive Session

Commissioner Norton moved to return from Executive session at 4:20 pm and it was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was: Yes (4), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion was unanimous.

IX. Old Business N/A

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Commissioner Suggs. The vote was Yes (4), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.