

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



**Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
2:00 pm
Via Microsoft TEAMS**

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director	
Robin Fox, HRO Attorney	Neva E. Vigezzi, HRO Representative
Michelle Dumas Kueler, HRO Attorney	Lynda Rizzo Stowe, Regional Manager
Ronald Simpson, Regional Manager	Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Kristen Daniels, Executive Secretary	Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary
Jamie Ruben, Regional Manager	Emily Melendez, Assistant Atty. Gen.

I. Chairperson: Dr. Cherron Payne, Presiding

The meeting convened at 2:03 p.m.

II. Secretary: Edward Mambruno

A motion was made by Commissioner Vatti to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2020 regular commission meeting. Commissioner Giliberto seconded it; The vote: Yes (7), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required

Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp presented the following plans:

Staff Recommendations: **Approval**

1. Department of Administrative Services

Representing the agency were Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes,

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all its hiring goals at 48%. The promotion goals were met at 63% and the program goals were met 100%.

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2019/2020 showed 125.30 % achievement for the SBE and 32% achievement for the MBE.

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

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

IV. Contract Compliance, Request for Exemption

1. Missouri Community Action Network Presented by Attorney Robin Fox

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Pestana to accept the staff recommendation to **grant** the exemption to allow the Nursing School at Central Connecticut State University to make a one-time purchase from the Missouri Community Action Network (CAN) of a Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) kit to assist nursing students. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

2. Non-Discrimination Certification for Blanket Waiver Request Presented by Attorney Robin Fox

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to accept the staff recommendation to **grant** the exemption extend the Page 2 of 3 previously granted blanket exemption for the continuous period ending November 18, 2021, subject to the specified conditions. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0) and Abstentions (0).

V. Request for Reopening

1. Humberto Castro Cruz v. Board of Regents for Higher Education, CSCU CHRO No. 2030395 Presented by Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler for Brian Festa

A motion was made by Commissioner Vatti to grant the request for reopening to hear the request on the merits. It was seconded by Commissioner Suggs. The vote was: Yes (7), No (0), Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

VI. Division Reports

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

Director Hughes reviewed her written reports

2. Outreach Report: by Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director

See detailed report as highlighted by Deputy Director Sharp.

- Training sessions on sexual harassment continue
- Outreach is continuing in the regions

- Webinars through HUD grants- CARES, Health Equity, and Covid 19)

* Chair Payne exited the meeting at approximately 3:02 p.m. and appointed Commissioner Pestana to serve as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

3. Legislative update: by Darcy Jones Strand

Attorney Strand provided the CHRO Proposed Legislative Agenda for the 2021 session; Submitting a robust civil rights and social justice agenda with technical revisions to our statutes.

4. Office of Public Hearings, Michelle Mount, Chief Referee

Chief Referee gave an overview of the role of her office and limitations based on unfilled vacancies and COVID-19. She maintains that despite those challenges, she has been able to reduce the aged backlog.

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 3:29 pm. Commissioner Mambruno seconded it. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

Invited into Executive Session with the Commissioners was Assistant Attorney General Emily Melendez.

Pending Litigation:

1. Wallace v. Sharp, et al.
2. Johnson v. Hughes, et al
3. Mica Notz v. CHRO

Return from Executive Session

*Commissioner Suggs did not return from Executive Session.

Commissioner Giliberto moved to return from Executive session at 3:51 pm and Commissioner Mambruno seconded it. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

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

No action was taken during Executive session.

IX. Old Business

Calendar 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Kapoor to approve the 2021 Commission Meeting Calendar. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Norton seconded it. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0), and Abstentions (0).
The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

The minutes of the Regular Commission meeting dated November 18, 2020 were approved on December 9, 2020.

Prepared by:



Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director