

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – ROOM 2D
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011
2:00 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Andrew Norton, Chairperson
Edith Pestana
Dawn Niles
Alexia E. Cruz
Shelly Best
Cheryl Lynn Clarke

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Patricia J. Wrice

STAFF PRESENT

Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director
James O'Neill, Legislative Regulations Specialist
Margaret Peters, Secretary II

I. CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Andrew Norton convened the January 13, 2011 regular monthly meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to order at 2:12 p.m.

II. SECRETARY

In the absence of Commissioner Mambruno a request for approval of the minutes of the December 8, 2010 regular Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Clarke, and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Chairperson Norton requested permission to alter the Agenda by requesting that the Office of Policy and Management's Affirmative Action Plan be moved to the first item of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana to approve the change and seconded by Commissioner Niles. All approved. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

1. Office of Policy and Management

The Office of Policy and Management plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve such goals; and the agency had no deficient elements in the previous plans and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Office of Policy and Management and that it retain its annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Best and seconded by Commissioner Niles to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Office of Policy and Management plan and that the agency retain its annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

III. GUEST SPEAKER

Debra L. Freund, Director of Diversity and Equity for the State Department of Children and Families and President of Connecticut Association of Diversity and Equity Professionals, a professional group of all diversity and equity professionals in all state agencies, municipalities and institutions of higher education, spoke about the work performed by state affirmative action professionals. She noted that it is totally wrong to think that all that these employees do is plans; Employees spend weeks writing a plan; they spend 12 months a year doing investigations. These employees investigate any allegations against an agency regarding discrimination: formal, informal, anonymous, in-house, CHRO, EEOC, Office of Civil Rights, ADA Complaints, Title VI, VII and IX complaints.

IV. OUTREACH REPORT

Cheryl Sharp from the Legal Division gave highlights of what is happening with Education and Outreach.

Attorney Sharp received a request from Lucy Hernandez of the Puerto Rican Affairs Commission to reach out to the Latino Community. Ms. Hernandez would like to see more formalized sessions instead of informational sessions concerning discrimination. She would also like to see Spanish translators and interpreters used more often so that the Spanish community can become better educated in the discrimination process. Ms. Hernandez will get individuals together so the Commission can reach out to the Latino Community. A calendar

of upcoming events has been issued so the Commissioners have a chance to attend these sessions.

Attorney Sharp also noted it is a privilege for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to be chosen to have interns come to us for training and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues. They are the next generation of civil rights attorneys and leaders. They come from New York and Boston for training on discrimination and civil rights.

Robert Zamlowski- Supervisor for Housing Unit

Mr. Zamlowski spoke on how the Housing Unit investigates cases differently than employment cases. We receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which has established guidelines that must be followed. We do full investigations; we do not do merit assessment reviews, mandatory mediations or fact findings.

We have landlords obtain fair housing training. We also do a lot of fair housing training to educate the public. We speak to approximately 300 people yearly.

V. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

A. Staff Recommendations: ***Approvals***

1. University of Connecticut Health Center
 2. Department of Banking
 3. Board of Education and Services for the Blind
 4. Department of Higher Education
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1. Board of Education and Services for the Blind

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to take up separately the affirmative action recommendation for the Board of Education and Services for the Blind. He left the room and Commissioner Pestana took over because Chairperson Norton had a conflict of interest.

The Board of Education and Services for the Blind's plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve such goals; and the agency has substantially addressed any deficiency noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

Commissioner Pestana entertained a motion to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan of the Board of Education and Services for the Blind. A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Cruz. All approved. The motion passed. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion and was not present for the vote on the motion. Chairperson Norton returned after the vote to Chair the meeting.

2. University of Connecticut Health Center

The University of Connecticut Health Center plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve such goals; and the agency has substantially addressed any deficiency noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

3. Department of Banking

The Department of Banking plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; while the workforce is not in parity with the relevant labor market area, the agency has met all or substantially all of its hiring or promotion goals; and the agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

4. Department of Higher Education

The Department of Higher Education plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has not met all or substantially all of its hiring and promotion goals, however, the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals; and the agency had no deficient elements in the previous plans and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendations for approval of the Affirmative Action Plans for the University of Connecticut Health Center, Department of Banking and the Department of Higher Education and that all three agencies retain their annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Niles and seconded by Commissioner Cruz to accept staff recommendations for approval of all three plans and that the agencies retain their annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

B. Staff Recommendations: **Conditional Approval**

1. Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station plan was recommended for conditional approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the workforce, considered as a whole and by occupational category, is not in parity with the relevant labor market area; the agency has not demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve such goals; and the agency had no deficient elements in the previous plans and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendation for conditional approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and that the agency retain its annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Niles to accept staff recommendations for conditional approval of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station plan and that the agency retain its annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

C. Staff Recommendations: **Pending**

1. Department of Public Safety

The Department of Public Safety plan is pending due to unforeseen circumstances. We have 90 days in which to get affirmative action plans approved or disapproved or they get approved by default. The Department of Public Safety's 90th day is January 26th. Therefore we have until January 26th to make a recommendation to approve or disapprove the plan. We will be able to make this recommendation in a timely manner if we do it telephonically.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business. We have made the transition from 21 Grand Street to 25 Sigourney Street, but Executive Director Brothers indicated that we have had to send a lot of our belongings to storage because of the smaller space we have acquired (approximately 1/3 of the space we previously had). The referees have no parking. They have to park on Forest Street and get shuttled to 450 Capitol Avenue. When there are matters before the referees the attorneys are walking to 450 Capitol Avenue, which is not easy in the snow.

There is very little space for meetings and little or no privacy for attorneys to conduct business in a professional manner.

The Commissioners suggested putting together a list of any pending issues with the new location as well as issues at 450 Capitol Avenue and bring them to the next Commission meeting. Solutions to these issues are also recommended.

VII. DIVISION REPORTS

A. Legislative Report

Jim O'Neill provided the Commissioners with an update on meeting with the Governor's new team. He noted that he was familiar with most of the individuals, which was a good thing.

B. Executive Director's Report

We were not able to locate boxes and furniture from 21 Grand Street. We are not sure if items were stored or left behind. We are trying to back track to find out what could have happened to these items.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to go into Executive Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana, seconded by Commissioner Clarke to go into Executive Session. Executive Director Brothers was invited into Executive Session.

IX. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Returned to regular session at 4:52 p.m.

X ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Pestana and seconded by Commissioner Clarke to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.