

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – RM 1D
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013
2:00 P.M.**



MINUTES

Regular Commission Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gary Collins, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Cheryl Lynn Clarke
Edith Pestana
Dawn Niles
Tracey Gove
Andrew Norton
Caesar Noble

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Patricia Wrice

STAFF PRESENT

David Teed, Assistant Attorney General
Monica Hammie-Richardson, Executive Secretary
Jim Flynn, Regional Manager

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director

Charlie Krich, Principal Attorney
Cheryl Sharp, HRO Attorney III
Alvin Bingham, AA/CC Supervisor

Jim O'Neill, Legislative Liaison
Patrick Kilby, AA/CC Asst.
Valerie Kennedy, HRO Rep.
Donna Wilkerson Brilliant, Regional Mgr.

Sue Hom, HRO Rep
Alix Simonetti, HRO Attorney III

- I. **CHAIRPERSON:** Gary H. Collins, Presiding
Chairperson Gary Collins convened the Wednesday, December 11, 2013 Regular Commission Meeting of the Commission of the Human Rights to order at 2:10p.m. He offered some words of tribute to Nelson Mandela and a moment of silence in memoriam. This was the last meeting of the year and noted recognition of the Commissioners was made. A plaque was presented by Executive Director Hughes to

Commissioner Norton for his past service as commission chairperson.

A motion to amend the Agenda was made by Commissioner Noble and seconded by Commissioner Clarke regarding notation of the CHRO recommendation of the AA plan for Dept. of Labor. It was to correct a typographical error indicating the plan was recommended for "Approval" and it should have said "Conditionally Approved". The vote: 6 in favor; no abstentions; 1 person opposed.

II. **SECRETARY:** Edward Mambruno

A motion to accept the November 13, Minutes from the Regular Commission Meeting was made by Commissioner Noble. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the November 27, Telephone Minutes of a Special Meeting was made by Commissioner Noble and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The motion carried with two abstentions –Commissioners Clarke and Niles.

III. **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED:**

A. Staff Recommendations: Approved

- (1) Division of Criminal Justice
- (2) Department of Agriculture

B. Staff Recommendations: Conditionally Approved

- (1) Department of Labor

Presiding Chairman Collins asked for staff recommendations for the three plans listed above. He recognized all representatives from each agency by name and title and thanked them for coming. Alvin Bingham was called upon to present each plan.

A. Staff Recommendations (Approval)

1. Division of Criminal Justice

Representing the agency were Kevin Kane, Chief States Attorney and Nqina Gibson. The Division of Criminal Justice plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: it contained all elements required; the agency has met all or substantially all of its hiring and program goals; no deficiencies were noted in the prior plan review. The five year history of the plan was: 2008 approved; 2009 conditionally approved; 2010- 2012 were approved.

There were no questions from the Commissioners.

A motion was made to accept the staff recommendation to approve the Division of Criminal Justice plan by Commissioner Mambruno and seconded by Commissioner Clarke. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Department of Agriculture

Representing the agency were Steven K. Reviczky, George Krivda, Jason E. Bowsza, and Irena B. Wright. The Department of Agriculture plan was recommended for approval based on the following; it contained all elements required; the agency met all or substantially all of its hiring and program goals; no deficiencies were noted in the prior plan review ; the five year history of the plan for 2007-2011 were all approved.

There were no questions or comments from the Commissioners.

A motion was made to accept the staff recommendation to approve the Department of Agriculture's plan by Commissioner Niles and seconded by Commissioner Clarke. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Staff Recommendation (Conditional Approval)

1. Department of Labor

Representing the agency were Commissioner Sharon Palmer, Neil Griffin, and Marla Shiller. The Department of Labor plan was recommended for conditional approval based on the following; it contained all elements required ; the agency considered as whole by occupation category, was not in parity with the relevant labor market; it has not met all promotion and hiring goals; it is in compliance with B3 standards; the total goal achievement was 43%;the previous plan contained no deficient elements; the five year history of the plans were: 2008 approved; 2009 conditionally approved; 2010 approved by default; 2011 conditionally approved; and 2012 approved.

Chair Collins noted that the plan was filed 40 days late. A comment from Commissioner Clarke: "This agency does an exceptional job hiring the right people and it's difficult not approving their plan." CHRO program analyst, Neva Vigezzi, gave a comprehensive explanation regarding "Availability Analysis" and DOL not getting a recommended approval due to their hiring and promotion. Marla Shiller of DOL expressed her concerns in terms of getting people hired in the upper echelons of the agency. A comment from Commissioner Noble noted that the agency asked for technical assistance from CHRO/Affirmative Action and he agreed that was the way to go. DOL Commissioner Palmer thanked the Commissioners and CHRO for their comments and questions.

A motion was made to accept the recommended conditional approval of the DOL plan by Commissioner Pestana and seconded by Commissioner Niles. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. DIVISION REPORTS:

A. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Tanya Hughes

The ED report included a proposal for CHRO's five year strategic plan with committees that will include direct involvement and input from: (1) Strategic Planning Committee, (2) a Legislative Committee, (3) Community Relations and Outreach Committee and (4) an Enforcement, Contract Compliance and Affirmative Action Planning Committee.

She further reported on the status of case processing and monthly and year to date closure and settlement statistics. She emphasized that the Bridgeport Regional office will need to appoint/ hire a manager.

Jim Flynn, manager of the Easter Regional office (Norwich) gave an update of our ongoing process for the new CTS system. Good news from BEST was we will not have to work with two separate data bases. We can combine/ merge all cases (past, present and pending). The migration of all cases in one system is great news and will assist with providing data to the public.

B. OUTREACH REPORT, Cheryl Sharp, Human Rights Attorney 3

The reception and education and Outreach event to congratulate the newly appointed ED, Tanya Hughes was well received. Discussion of the “N” word in a symposium at a State University in CT was discussed. A discussion around the Strategic Planning Committee, SWOT analysis, and surveys (anonymous process) was highlighted. A number of requests for our Business Training Institute are scheduled. The Racial Profiling Town hall meetings in Bridgeport, Fairhaven, and New London, and a Spanish speaking forum are next on the “listen, learn, and speak out on Racial Profiling” town hall meetings. CHRO will be at the MLK celebration at the Peabody Museum at Yale in January. It was suggested that when CHRO gets a large grant we should immediately issue a press release.

C. LEGISLATIVE REPORT, Jim O’Neill

The 2014 CHRO legislative package was sent electronically to Commissioners Collins, Mambruno, Pestana and Assistant Attorney General David Teed. They voiced some concerns about the new language. It is a work in progress.

Motion to go to Executive Session was made by Commissioner Mambruno and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. Unanimous vote to go into executive session.

V. Return from Executive Session

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 3:55pm.

A declaratory ruling request filed by Cheshire Academy was recommended by staff to be set down for a specified proceeding, possibly ELI. It was presented by Attorney Cheryl Sharp.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mambruno to set it down for specified proceedings (an investigation) and seconded by Commissioner Noble. The vote carried unanimously.

The January 2014 meeting date was discussed and recommended to be held on Tuesday, January 14. A motion was made by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Clarke. The motion carried unanimously.

There were birthday wishes given to ED Tanya Hughes and Commissioner Norton.

VI. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Mambruno and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The motion carried unanimously to adjourn the Commission meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.