

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – ROOM 1A
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2012
2:00 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Andrew Norton, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Cheryl Lynn Clarke
Patricia Wrice
Lyn May
Dawn Niles
Suzanne Tirado

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Edith Pestana
Tracey Gove

STAFF PRESENT

Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director
David Teed, Assistant Attorney General
Alvin K. Bingham, Supervisor, Affirmative Action/Contract Compliance
Valerie Kennedy, Human Rights & Opportunity Representative
Neva E. Vigezzi, Affirmative Action Program Analyst
James J. O'Neill, Legislative Liaison
Heather Petit, Administrative Assistant

I. CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Andrew Norton convened the Wednesday, July 11, 2012, regular monthly meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to order at 2:04 p.m.

II. SECRETARY

Secretary Mambruno requested a motion for the approval of the minutes of the Wednesday, June 13, 2012, Regular Commission Meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Niles to approve minutes as presented which was seconded by Commissioner May. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

III. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

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

1. Quinebaug Valley Community College
2. Tunxis Community College
3. Bureau of Rehabilitative Services

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to accept staff recommendations for approval of two Affirmative Action Plans: Quinebaug Valley Community College and Tunxis Community College. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Niles. Chairperson Norton stated that he would later recuse himself from any involvement, discussion or voting in regard to the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services' Affirmative Action Plan.

1. Quinebaug Valley Community College

Representing the college were Toby Bates, Director of Employee Relations and HR/AA Administrator, Wendy Bovia, HR Associate and Dennis Sidoti.

Alvin Bingham reported that the Quinebaug Valley Community College'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 its goals; and the agency substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

Chairperson Norton noted that Dr. Kennedy recommended that the college retain its biennial filing status.

Commissioner May noted there was no written input from the President or Affirmative Action Officer. Chairperson Norton asked Dr. Kennedy to explain the reason for the lack of written input and what form it should take.

Dr. Kennedy said that they are looking for input from the President and/or Affirmative Action Officer. Dr. Kennedy explained that this section allows the agency to talk about other things they are doing to implement the Affirmative Action Plan. Dr. Kennedy gave the following examples: diversity initiatives they are taking to retain minorities and women in their workforce, if they are doing exit interviews to find out why people are leaving, and regular meetings the President may hold with his/her cabinet, etc. The AA Officer can include various meetings and trainings they are doing with the staff.

Mr. Sidoti, HR Director, thanked Dr. Kennedy for giving them this insight. Mr. Sidoti stated that if you look at the QVCC's AA plan, they have done a lot of

those things and put them in their plan; however, they neglected to add a letter. Mr. Sidoti stated they do discuss affirmative action at leadership team meetings, and stated he conducts trainings for the entire staff. Mr. Sidoti assured the Commission that he and President Tomlin are committed to affirmative action and constantly impress upon employees and search committees the importance of affirmative action.

2. Tunxis Community College

Representing the college were Charles Cleary, Dean of Administration, Toby Bates, Director of Employee Relations and HR/AA Administrator, and Wendy Bovia, HR Associate.

Alvin Bingham reported that the Tunxis Community College'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 its goals; and the agency substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews. The Commission recommended that Tunxis Community College retain its biennial filing status.

Chairperson Norton asked if there were any questions or discussion, but there was none.

Chairperson Norton called for a vote on the motion to approve the plans, which includes the caveat that Quinebaug Valley Community College and Tunxis Community College retain their biennial filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.

Chairperson Norton then asked Secretary Mambruno to take the chair and excused himself so that the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services' Affirmative Action Plan could be discussed.

3. Bureau of Rehabilitative Services

Representing the agency were Amy Porter, Bureau Director, and Astread Ferron-Poole, Director of Administration.

Alvin Bingham reported that the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services' plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required. This is the agency's first filing of an Affirmative Action Plan and as such, there is no five year history. According to Mr. Bingham, the agency is deemed in compliance with the B2 and B4 standard.

Acting Chairperson Mambruno asked for a motion to accept staff recommendations for approval of the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services' plan

which includes the caveat that they retain their annual filing status. Such a motion was made by Commissioner May and seconded by Commissioner Clarke. There was no discussion.

Acting Chairperson Mambruno called for a vote on the motion to approve the plan. The motion passed unanimously. Acting Chairperson Mambruno did not vote.

Chairperson Norton returned to the meeting at this time.

III. GUEST SPEAKER – Teresa Younger, Executive Director, PCSW

Ms. Younger thanked the Commission for the invitation to the meeting. Ms. Younger stated that PCSW is a part of the legislative branch of government working on women's public policy issues. PCSW has a small staff of five. Ms. Younger stated she feels that they have now reached a point where they have been most impactful. PCSW has moved out of direct service and into the policy position. They have three key priority areas: health and safety, economic security and the elimination of gender discrimination. Ms. Younger said that clearly along the lines of gender discrimination is where they align with CHRO.

PCSW receives sexual harassment complaints from the public and forwards them on to CHRO. They also provide administrative assistance for Affirmative Action training, foundation and update training for Attorney General Designees and Affirmative Action Officers. Additionally, PCSW testifies on many of the bills CHRO supports and puts forth; including, testifying in support of CHRO's budget and making sure there is no further erosion or elimination.

PCSW recently had an article in the CT Mirror, "Affordable Health Care Act is great news for women." Ms. Younger announced that PCSW is also hosting a conference in September called, "Be the Change You Want to See."

During the last legislative cycle, PCSW monitored 104 bills and testified on 32 pieces of legislation. Additionally, PCSW testified on various pieces of the budget including the disparity study. PCSW has been actively involved and engaged in the conversations about the need for a disparity study and the role of women within that study.

Ms. Younger said that the CHRO staff is very well informed and very helpful to PCSW. Ms. Younger stated that the outreach staff is outstanding and the agencies have a strong partnership when it comes to putting together and updating training tools.

Chairperson Norton asked Ms. Younger her opinion on the minority set aside as many people are concerned about the grouping of women and minorities together. The concern is that it allows for the increase of women involved in businesses that get state contracts to overshadow the opportunities for minorities to enjoy some of those same contracts. Chairperson Norton noted that Connecticut law is such that 6.25% of all state contracts are set aside for minority business enterprises.

Ms. Younger reported that women-owned businesses are some of the fastest growing businesses in the country and the state. To say that there are more women-owned businesses which are taking more state contracts may actually be true. However, Ms. Younger said it does not mean that minority owned businesses need to sacrifice. Ms. Younger stated it means that we need to 1) confirm that women-owned business are truly women-owned business and not the front for other business, 2) ensure the pool is large enough and holding state agencies accountable for the contracts they put forward and 3) that we are going out actively soliciting those business to do business with the state.

Chairperson Norton thanked Ms. Younger very much for coming to speak to the Commission today.

VI. DIVISION REPORTS

A. Legislative Report

Mr. O'Neill stated he previously distributed the Legislative Report via email for the year which included all the bills that became Public Acts. Mr. O'Neill said there were no significant changes; however, the Commission was moved from Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to the Department of Labor (DOL) for administrative purposes only as the chairs of the Appropriations Committee felt it would be a better fit for the agency.

The governor proposed to cut the money in half allotting \$500,000 for the disparity study in this new fiscal year, which was agreed upon by the legislature. In doing so, the study was transferred from CHRO and DAS to the CT Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE). DAS and CHRO expressed significant concerns about the reduction and transfer of the study. CASE is going to do the work themselves with academia.

Mr. Brothers stated that legislation indicates that the study will be done in conjunction with CHRO. Mr. Brothers stated that he sent a letter last week to CASE making himself available to sit down with them. Mr. Brothers stated that he would continue to request information from CASE and give a report to the Commissioners as he is updated.

Chairperson Norton stated that it is his opinion that the legislature thought that by giving it to CASE it would not be impacted by possible budget cuts that the Executive Branch can do in the middle of a fiscal year when there is a crisis. Chairperson Norton said he was under the impression that they were making the enterprise a bit safer by putting it under the egis of the Legislative Branch opposed to the Executive Branch.

B. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brothers said that some time ago he was were exploring sending out the Commission materials via email and would like to discuss this possibility again. As the agency has the ability to scan documents, materials can be sent electronically via email starting with the next Commission Meeting. Chairperson Norton requested that the materials be sent in Word. Commissioner May asked that Ms. Petit confirm that they received them. Chairperson Norton asked if any commissioners objected to receiving the materials via email. There were no objections.

Chairperson Norton discussed the schedule of the Commission Meeting day and time. Chairperson Norton asked the Commissioners if they would prefer to have the meetings on a different day. As no commissioners requested a different day or time, Chairperson Norton kept the schedule for meetings the same.

Mr. Brothers spoke of the transition of CHRO's administrative functions from DAS to DOL which was effective July 1, 2012. Mr. Brothers stated that he has had meetings with both agencies. Mr. Brothers has another meeting with DOL tomorrow. Mr. Brothers stated that it is his understanding that DOL will take over the same functions that DAS was performing for the agency, i.e. payroll, billing, purchasing, retirement and FMLA leaves, accommodation requests, AA plans, etc. Mr. Brothers noted that Marla Shiller, Affirmative Action Manager at DOL, was in attendance. Mr. Brothers stated that she will not only be writing an AA plan for DOL, but now also for CHRO.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss litigation as well as personnel matters. Chairperson Norton asked Mr. Brothers and David Teed, Assistant Attorney General, to stay for the session. A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Tirado. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

At 3:53 p.m. the Commission returned to Regular Session from Executive Session. Chairperson Norton noted that they were joined in Executive Session by Commissioner Patricia Wrice. Chairperson Norton stated that no votes or actions were taken in Executive Session.

IX. VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS
(Requires a Vote by Commissioners on the Record)

None

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, it was moved by Commissioner May and seconded by Commissioner Clarke to adjourn the meeting at 3:55 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.