

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 11, 2026  
2:00 p.m.  
Via Microsoft TEAMS

## **Commissioners Present**

Lisa B. Giliberto, Chair Pro Tem  
Andrew Norton  
Joseph Suggs  
Edith Pestana  
Alex Harris  
Edward Mambruno, Secretary

## **Commissioners Absent**

Tamara Titre

## **Staff Present**

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director  
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Managing Legal Director  
Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison  
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney  
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager  
Kellye Hudson, Executive Secretary

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Executive Director  
Kimberly Jacobsen, Managing Legal Director  
Renee Vandenwallbake, HRO Attorney  
Johnette Tolliver, Program Manager, AA/CC  
Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary  
Laura Thurston, Assistant Attorney General

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commission Secretary Edward Mambruno called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm. He entertained a motion from Commissioner Lisa Giliberto to approve the minutes.

**Motion: To approve the minutes as written.**

Second: Commissioner Joseph Suggs.

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Giliberto, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Mambruno)

Secretary Mambruno then entertained a motion from Commissioner Edith Pestana to elect Pro Tempore to chair the meeting.

**Motion: To elect Commissioner Lisa Giliberto as Chair Pro Tempore**

Second: Commissioner Joseph Suggs

**Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Giliberto, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Mambruno)

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## II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT & ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair Pro Tem Lisa Giliberto announced that Executive Director Hughes confirmed that a quorum was present. No further information to report.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

This vote was handled under agenda item one by Commissioner Edward Mambruno.

## IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Plans for CAES, DOH, and DDS presented and approved per transcript.

### 1. Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Staff representing the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station were Jason White, PhD, Director, Lindsay Triplett, PhD, Vice Director, Lana Mistry, Human Resources Generalist II and Debra Freund, TWR.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan contains all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94, inclusive and 46a-68-102(b)(3), the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals, and despite these efforts has been unable to do so, and 46a-68-102(b)(4), the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

Hiring Goal Achievement: 4 out of 11 possible total goals or 36%

Promotional Goal Achievement: 0 out of 1 possible promotion goals were met or 0%

Program Goal Achievement: 3 out of 3 possible goals were met or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2024 Approved; 2022 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2020 Conditionally Approved; 2018 Approved.

**Motion: from Commissioner Edith Pestana to approve the AA plan for the CAES and that it retains its biennial filing status.**

Second: Commissioner Joseph Suggs

**Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Mambruno, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Giliberto)

### 2. Department of Housing

The staff representing the Department of Housing were Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner (she exited the meeting prior to presentation on the agenda), Julian Pierce, Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Shante Hanks, Senior Advisor, Maricielo Fabian,

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Human Resources Generalist, Victoria Cruse, Human Resources Generalist, and Ghammam Mansoor, Equal Employment Opportunity Representative.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan contains all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94, inclusive and 46a-68-102(b)(3), the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals, and despite these efforts has been unable to do so, and 46a-68-102(b)(4), the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

Hiring Goal Achievement: 12 out of 14 possible total goals or 86 %

Promotional Goal Achievement: 0 out of 2 possible promotion goals were met or 0%

Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible program goal was met or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2024 Approved; 2022 Approved; 2020 Approved; 2018 Approved; 2016 Approved.

**Motion: from Commissioner Mambruno to approve the AA plan for the Department of Housing and that it retains its annual filing status.**

Second: Commissioner Joseph Suggs

**Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Mambruno, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Giliberto)

### **3. Department of Developmental Services**

Representing the Department of Developmental Services was Jordan Scheff, Commissioner.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan contains all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94, inclusive and 46a-68-102(b)(3), the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals, and despite these efforts has been unable to do so, and 46a-68-102(b)(4), the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

Hiring Goal Achievement: 49 out of 126 possible total goals or 39%

Promotional Goal Achievement: 14 out of 34 possible promotion goals were met or 41%

Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met or 100%

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The five-year approval history is as follows: 2025 Approved; 2024 Approved; 20213 Approved; 2022 Approved; 2021 Approved.

**Motion: Commissioner Andrew Norton moved to approve the AA plan for the Department of Developmental Services and that it retains its annual filing regimen.**

Second: Edward Mambruno

**Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Mambruno, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Giliberto)

### V. REQUEST TO REOPEN – VOTE REQUIRED

1. Taveon Walker v. Fernandez Trucking, LLC.  
CHRO Case No. 2530765  
Presented by HRO Attorney Renee Vanden Wall Bake

**Motion: To deny reopening** was made by Commissioner Alex Harris.

Second: Commissioner Joseph Suggs

**Vote:** Unanimous. Yes (5) (Suggs, Pestana, Norton, Mambruno, Harris). No (0). Abstain (Mambruno).

### VI. DIVISION REPORTS

*Executive Director Report* was provided by E.D. Hughes who reported on an extremely busy month with meetings with various agencies and departments, including the office of the governor, OPM, bits, and D O L. She reported on the agency position regarding correspondence from commissioner Gilman and others, indicating their intent to hire in accordance with the governor's bill that allows a fast track on hiring. CHRO maintains that every agency must still adhere to the guidelines of affirmative action these were not excluded, and those exclusions are not permitted under the public act that was cited.

CHRO continues to pursue filling the positions that were granted to render us independent from the DOL.

She discussed correspondence from federal legislators resulting in setting up meetings with s group of contractors, DAS and Dot.

We are working closely with the AGs office on multi state litigation to defend housing protections.

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Executive Director Hughes provided updates to the disparity study implementation process, indicating that a purchase order request had been entered for the vendor who will be developing the computer program.

*Deputy Director Report* was provided by Deputy Director Sharp. She announced that we continue to be busy as it relates to education and outreach. Anticipate 8 new interns, coordinated by Ana Mitchell, Outreach Coordinator (HS through college). Spring Symposium on April 9 – Education Reform; KCA has resumed and is seeking speakers to present to the students regarding the criminal justice and the prison pipeline; program has grown exponentially with participants from all over the state. Agency wide meeting in June (TBA); robust legislative involvement; we continue to pursue the Civil Rights museum along with promotion of outreach; described increase in transcript costs, translation, etc. and that received an increase in allotment for these services. Numerous presentations during Black History month. Each month we are out shaping the way the agency is viewed.

*Legislative Report* was provided by Legislative Analyst Darcy Strand. She stated that mid legislative session. The public hearing portion of the session is written close to being over. Our agency bill is still left to testify on, hopefully it is going to be next week before the Judiciary Committee. We've submitted testimony on seven or eight bills at this point, ranging on things from, a bill in the Labor Committee about giving menopause conditions reasonable accommodations in the workplace, to an AI related bill. And then there are also several bills relating to contracting on which we will be submitting testimony this week. So, it has been busy session, but we are keeping up on everything, and we also have had our budget hearings.

We're all done with that at this point. So, we're just waiting to see what comes out of the Appropriations Committee. We've met with the committee several times to talk about our asks, including and most prominently the request from CHRO and DOL to remove us and hire finance and business office personnel for Chro rather than continuing to be housed over at DOL. A bill tracking sheet has been provided for further information.

*Legal Report* was provided by Managing Legal Director Michelle Dumas Keuler. She announced the Fair Housing Training on April 25<sup>th</sup>, emphasizing that part of the focus will be demystifying the Section 8 process, stating that we still get a fair amount of complaints related to Section 8, so we're hoping to provide information from a consumer perspective.

### **VII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 2:00 pm via Teams.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Joseph Suggs**

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Second: Commissioner Edith Pestana

**Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved. Yes (5) (Suggs, Norton, Mambruno, Pestana, Harris). No (0) Abstain: (1) (Giliberto)