

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – ROOM 1A
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012
2:00 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Andrew Norton, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Cheryl Lynn Clarke
Dawn Niles
Tracey Gove
Edith Pestana
Lyn May
Suzanne Tirado

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Patricia Wrice

STAFF PRESENT

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

I. CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Andrew Norton convened the Wednesday, February 8, 2012 regular monthly meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to order at 2:03 p.m.

Chairperson Andrew Norton asked for a moment of silence in honor of the Rev. Martin Luther King.

Executive Director Robert J. Brothers announced that the two new commissioners; Commissioner Tirado and Commissioner May have completed their ten hours of training and can vote today.

Executive Director Brothers asked for an amendment to the agenda that Pending Litigation be included under Executive Session as a second item.

II. SECRETARY

Commissioner Mambruno requested approval of the minutes of the Wednesday January 11, 2012 regular Commission meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Gove to approve the January 11, 2012 minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

III. GUEST SPEAKER – Robin McCalin

True Colors is an agency that does education and advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, True Spirit, Same Gender Loving, etc. We are a non profit agency. As an agency we work with young people in sort of all the places that touch their lives; we work with schools, family members, the Department of Children and Families. In fact we have a joint task force with the Department of Children and Families that look at the needs of this population of young people in out of home care. We do an annual conference, we run a mentoring program that bring benefits of mentoring to this population of young people. We are often called upon to advocate for our young people in the various systems that touch their lives, in fact we have worked with CHRO a number of times in that arena.

IV. OUTREACH REPORT - Attorney Cheryl Sharp from the Legal Division

Attorney Cheryl Sharp from the Legal Division along with Attorney Jacobsen and Director Brothers were featured during a morning show at WILI radio station where they discussed the CT Kids Court Competition, discriminatory bullying in schools and the mission of the agency. The interview is available on the radio station's website.

CHRO Attorneys Fox, Kent, Sharp and Simonetti participated in the MLK celebration in New Haven and the Yale Peabody Museum, sponsored by the Department of Energy and Environmental protection.

CHRO Attorneys Zamlowski and Sharp participated in a Section 8 meeting held at the Chief State's Attorney's office with DEEP and the Department of Public Health regarding the disproportionate number of Black and Latino youth that have elevated lead levels and are living in Section 8 or RAP or TRAP housing.

The Legal department has received multiple requests for training, and CHRO Attorneys have been providing training sessions across the state as a result of the re-establishment of the Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau appears on the CHRO Website and any requests for speakers may be made to CHRO Attorney Cheryl Sharp.

V. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

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

1. Department of Children and Families
2. University of Connecticut
3. Norwalk Community College
4. Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to accept staff recommendations for approval of three Affirmative Action Plans: Department of Children and Families (annual filing status), University of Connecticut (annual filing status) and Norwalk Community College (6 month filing status) and that the motion includes the retention of their annual/6 month filing status. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Pestana and seconded by Commissioner May.

1. Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has met all program goals, but not its hiring and promotion goals; the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals; the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review.

2. University of Connecticut

The University of Connecticut plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has demonstrated good faith effort to achieve hiring and program goals; the agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the commission in prior plan reviews.

3. Norwalk Community College

The Norwalk Community College 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; the agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the commission in prior plan reviews.

Chairperson Norton called for a vote on the motion to accept the staff recommendation for approval of the Department of Children and Families (annual filing), University of Connecticut (annual filing) and Norwalk Community College (6 month filing) and the retention of their annual/6 month filing status. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

4. Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the retention of their annual filing status. Commissioner Pestana recused herself from voting on this matter. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Mambruno.

The Department of Energy & Environmental Protection plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has met all of its program goals; the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals and the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review.

Chairperson Norton called for a vote on the motion to accept the staff recommendation for approval of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the retention of their annual filing status. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

B. Staff Recommendations: **Conditional Approval**

1. Department of Developmental Services

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to accept staff recommendation for Conditional Approval of the Department of Developmental Services and the retention of their annual filing status. Commissioner Mambruno recused himself from voting on this matter. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Gove and seconded by Commissioner Clarke.

The Department of Developmental Services plan was recommended for Conditional 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; the agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the commission in prior plan reviews.

Chairperson Norton called for a vote on the motion to accept the staff recommendation for Conditional Approval of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the retention of their annual filing status. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. East Haven

In April 2009 we were involved in the East Haven matter, approximately 2 years ago. During that time Attorney Sharp and Attorney Zamlowski prepared a running report of what was going on at that time. Executive Director Brothers recommended that we table any further discussion for Executive Session.

VII. DIVISION REPORTS

A. Legislative Report

Jim O'Neill Legislative Report: The Governor's budget came out today. He is proposing the Merger of CHRO with the office of Protection and Advocacy which will be called The Department of Human Rights Protection and Advocacy. The two agencies will be as they are now, but under one banner.

The Governor is proposing to take back one million dollars originally planned for the disparity study. This will require Legislative approval, but that is the Governor's proposal.

A Public Hearing was held this morning in reference to the Affirmative Action Regulations. A number of people showed up, but only 4 people spoke.

B. Executive Director's Report

To be discussed in Executive Session under Pending Litigation

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation. A motion was made by Commissioner Pestana and seconded by Commissioner Gove. Executive Director Brothers, Assistant Attorney General David Teed, Attorney Cheryl Sharp and Manager Robert Zamlowski were invited into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

X. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

At 4:50 p.m. Commissioner Norton entertained a motion to return to Regular Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Niles and seconded by Commissioner Clarke to return to Regular Session. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.

No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Commissioner Norton stated that the Mayor of East Haven, made remarks which were recently confirmed in reports in various media. These remarks were offensive and reveal prejudice to people of other races, in this case the Hispanic American Ancestry. This commission wants to condemn those remarks in the strongest possible way. Chairperson Norton entertained a motion to open the agenda up immediately for the purpose of taking up any activity regarding resolution of condemnation regarding Inappropriate and offensive behavior by public officials. Motion was made by Commissioner Gove and seconded by Commissioner Niles. Motion passes. We have a new Item on the agenda.

Commissioner Niles made a motion that the Commissioners direct Executive Director Brothers to write a letter declaration / resolution of condemnation to the Editor on behalf of the commissioners of CHRO regarding the inappropriate offensive language recently brought forth by the Mayor of East Haven. The letter would be signed by all Commissioners. Commissioner May seconded.

Commissioner Niles requested a motion to withdraw her motion. All agreed.

Commissioner Niles made a motion that we do a letter of Resolution of condemnation on behalf of the CHRO commissioners regarding the incident that recently occurred from the East Haven Mayor and that this be sent out in a press release sent to all legitimate Newspapers in the State of Connecticut. Commissioner May seconded. Motion passes.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Niles and seconded by Commissioner Tirado to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.