

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – ROOM 2D  
HARTFORD, CT 06106  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011  
2:00 P.M.**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Andrew Norton, Chairperson  
Edith Pestana  
Dawn Niles  
Alexia E. Cruz  
Shelly Best  
Cheryl Lynn Clarke  
Edward Mambruno, Secretary  
Patricia J. Wrice

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

**STAFF PRESENT**

Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director  
James O'Neill, Legislative Regulations Specialist  
David Teed, Assistant Attorney General  
Margaret Peters, Secretary II

**I. CHAIRPERSON**

Chairperson Andrew Norton convened the February 9, 2011 regular monthly meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to order at 2:13 p.m.

**II. SECRETARY**

Commissioner Mambruno requested approval of the minutes of the January 13, 2011 regular Commission meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke to approve the January 13 minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Niles. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Commissioner Mambruno requested approval of the minutes of the January 26, 2011 special Commission meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Niles to approve the minutes as presented. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Chairperson Norton requested permission to alter the Agenda by entertaining a motion that we start with invited speaker Dr. Fred McKinney, proceed to Cheryl Sharp then to proceed with the Affirmative Action Plans then resume the agenda as outlined. A motion was made by Commissioner Niles to approve the change and seconded by Commissioner Clarke. All approved. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

### **III. GUEST SPEAKER**

The Commission heard from Dr. Fred McKinney, President and CEO the Greater New England Supplier Developmental Council (NESDC). Dr. McKinney is in the business of advocating for minorities and others in the business world.

NESDC is a non-profit corporate membership organization based in Hamden, CT with an office in Boston, MA whose mission is to significantly increase opportunities to certified minority businesses with our corporate membership

Minority owned businesses are defined by NESDC as businesses that are 51% owned, managed and controlled by African Americans, Latinos, Asians or Native Americans.

### **IV. OUTREACH REPORT**

Attorney Cheryl Sharp from the Legal Division gave highlights of what is happening with education and outreach. Attorney Sharp noted that the informational sessions from last year were very successful and they are planning this year's sessions. There is a priority to hold sessions in the Windham and Norwich regional areas as they were unable to do so last year.

The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History had a MLK celebration on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Several attorneys from the Legal Division, Commissioner Pestana and the Dept. of Environmental Protection participated in that MLK celebration. It was very successful; approximately 6,000 people attended. We need to prepare more literature for upcoming events as we ran out of brochures. These events are funded by EEOC and HUD.

We had a forum "I have a dream" where students could participate. They completed the "My dream is to..." slogan. We will put a link on our Web page so to publish some of their responses.

Attorney Sharp also noted that an intern from Professor Jamie Mill's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clinic will be with the Legal Division this semester and will assist with the Transgender Live conference scheduled for April.

**V. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED**

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

1. Department of Environmental Protection
2. Department of Children and Families

Department of Environmental Protection

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Department of Environmental Protection and that the agency retain its annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Wrice to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Department of Environmental Protection and that the agency retain its annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously, except that Commissioner Pestana excused herself from voting. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Department of Children and Families

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Department of Children and Families and that the agency retain its annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Wrice to accept staff recommendation for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Department of Children and Families and that the agency retain its annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

B. Staff Recommendations: **Conditional Approval**

1. University of Connecticut

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Niles to accept staff recommendation for conditional approval of the University of Connecticut 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 Developmental Services

The Department of Developmental Services plan is pending staff review due to unforeseen circumstances. We have 90 days in which to get affirmative action plans approved or disapproved or they get approved by default. We have until February 28<sup>th</sup> for a recommendation to approve or disapprove the plan.

Chairperson Norton requested a motion for approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for the Department of Developmental Services and that the agency retain its annual filing status instead of calling a special meeting at a later date.

A motion was made by Commissioner Best and seconded by Commissioner Clarke for approval of the Department of Developmental Services plan and that the agency retain its annual filing status. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

**Pekah Wallace – Manager, Waterbury Office**

Ms. Wallace, Manager of West Central Regional Office located in Waterbury, spoke on filing process and process of complaints in the Waterbury Region.

The West Central office currently has 8 staff and myself which bring the total to 9. There are 6 investigators (one is on leave), currently the work is divided among 6 investigators. We cover 27 – 29 Towns which include the New Haven County. The region historically has the largest inventory. The inventory is growing because of the economy; more people losing jobs and more people claiming discrimination. We handle employment and public accommodation cases.

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Executive Director Brothers indicated that the Office of Public Hearings has limited space and parking issues. He would like to see the Office of Public Hearings moved to the same building as Central Office, even if it is located on a different floor. When Legal has meetings at OPH, the attorneys are walking (due to limited parking) to 450 Capitol Avenue, which is not easy in the snow and other elements.

Commissioner Niles reiterated that the split of Central Office and OPH is temporary. However, DPW is under the impression that we will not be moving.

VII. **DIVISION REPORTS**

A. Legislative Report

Jim O'Neill provided the Commissioners with an updated legislative report. The session has been slow due to snow. He gave copies of bills that are being tracked. More detailed information will be available after the Governor's upcoming budget address.

B. Executive Director's Report

Executive Brothers attended the MLK bell ringing ceremony, which was very inspirational and nicely done as it has been done in the past. He had an opportunity to speak with Dennis King and plans to work with him over the next year.

Executive Director Brothers met with building management to discuss parking and other building issues. He also met with the Governor and his chief of staff as well as other state agency heads. The Governor laid out plans he has. He plans to meet with the head of an agency each month.

This week a state audit started, which is time consuming and will be done over the next few months.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to go into Executive Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Wrice, seconded by Commissioner Mambruno to go into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

**IX. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**

Returned to regular session at 5:03 p.m.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Wrice and seconded by Commissioner Pestana to adjourn the meeting at 5:03 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote.