

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2006, 2:00 P.M.
21 GRAND STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06106
4th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Andrew M. Norton, Chair
Benjamin F. Rhodes, Jr., Secretary
Lillian H. Brown
Larry Conaway
James L. Griffin
John Lobon
Edward Mambruno
George Marshall

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Gloria Mengual

STAFF PRESENT

R. Hamisi Ingram, Executive Director
Raymond P. Pech, Assistant Director
Robert Brothers, Jr., Managing Director & Commission Attorney
Michael Fryar, Curriculum Manager
Cheryl Sharp, Interim HRO Regional Manager
James Flynn, HRO Regional Manager
Epifanio Carrasquillo, HRO Regional Manager
Zenaida Colon, Fiscal Administrative Supervisor
Lena Ferguson, Regulations & Legislative Specialist
Alvin Bingham, Contract Compliance Supervisor
Neva Vigezzi, Affirmative Action Program Analyst
Valerie Kennedy, Affirmative Action Program Analyst
Paula Ross, Affirmative Action Program Analyst

I. CONVENE MEETING:

Chairperson Norton convened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and requested Commissioner Conaway to read a letter from Governor Rell dated June 1, 2006 appointing him as CHRO's Chairperson. Chairperson Norton thanked Commissioner Lobon for serving as the Chairman for the last year.

II. Review and Approval of the Transcript of May 11, 2006 Regular Commission Meeting:

It was moved by Commissioner Griffin and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2006 Regular Commission meeting as presented. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Griffin, Brown, Mambruno and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: R. Hamisi Ingram

A. Agencies Proposed Affirmative Action Plans:

Staff Recommendation: ***Approval***

1. Board of Trustees / Community Technical College
2. Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired
3. Connecticut State Library
4. Military Department
5. Department of Social Services
6. Manchester Community College

Executive Director Ingram congratulated Chairperson Norton on his recent appointment and introduced CHRO's new employee Donna Lin, Hearings Adjudicator. Chairperson Norton requested a motion to approve items III. A. 1-6. It was moved by Commissioner Griffin and seconded by Commissioner Mambruno to accept the staff recommendations to approve the affirmative action plans for Board of Trustees/Community Technical College, Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Connecticut State Library, Military Department, Department of Social Services and Manchester Community College.

CHRO Commission Meeting
Minutes
June 8, 2006

Chairperson noted that several Commissioners were in attendance and provided them with an opportunity to comment. The Chair asked for discussion from CHRO Commissioners and staff. There was discussion between, Commissioners, staff and attending officers from various agencies. The Chairperson made some recommendations and comments regarding the plans and called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously with the Chair not voting.

Staff Recommendation: ***Conditional Approval***

1. Charter Oak State College

Raymond Pech elaborated on the process of voting on all affirmative action plans at one time. He indicated that it is appropriate to have a motion before you begin your discussion. However, his recommendation to the Commissioners was that they should vote on each affirmative action plan individually in case they don't all agree with the recommendation.

Chairperson consulted with Commissioner Lobon regarding his past experience. The Chairman agreed with Commissioner Lobon's rationale and decided to embrace the past procedure of voting on the affirmative action plans one at a time.

It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to accept the staff recommendation to conditionally approve the affirmative action plan for Charter Oak State College. The Chair asked for discussion. A discussion took place between the Commissioners, staff and officers from the Charter Oak State College. A motion having been made and properly seconded to accept the staff recommendation to conditionally approve Charter Oak State College's affirmative action plan, the Chairperson called for a vote. The motion carried with Commissioner Lobon abstaining and the Chair not voting.

2. Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to accept the staff recommendation to conditionally approve the affirmative action plan for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. The Chair asked for discussion. A lengthy discussion took

CHRO Commission Meeting
Minutes
June 8, 2006

place between the Commissioners and staff from the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. Several of the Commissioners strongly reprimanded the Commission for being the partakers of a recommendation for receiving a conditional approval. The Commissioners reminded CHRO that they are held to a much higher standard since they are the reviewers for all affirmative action plans. David Teed the Assistant Attorney General who was one of the reviewers of the affirmative action plan per the commissioners request, expounded on the sequence of events that caused the Commission On Human Rights and Opportunities to receive a staff recommendation of a conditional approval. David Teed also gave the Commissioners several options to make sure that in the future a conditional approval would be avoided. A motion having been made and properly seconded to accept the staff recommendation to conditionally approve the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities affirmative action plan, the Chairperson called for a vote. The motion carried with Commissioner Lobon abstaining and the Chair not voting.

The Commissioners suggested along with David Teed to bring Joanne Steinnagel, the previous Affirmative Action Program Manager back from retirement on a part-time basis if DAS would approve the request. Joanne Steinnagel would be able to work with Gloria Sparveri the new Affirmative Action Program Manager to bring the affirmative action plan up-to-date. Mr. Ingram said that he would check into that option.

A. Fiscal Report

Nandi Colon, Fiscal Administrative Supervisor congratulated Chairperson Norton for his recent appointment and gave an overview of her CFSR and Position Status report. Ms. Colon expounded on the Southwest Regional office's move which has not taken place as of yet and the West Central Regional office's issue with their telephone which caused a year-end deficit to convert itself to a small surplus. Ms. Colon also indicated that the Martin Luther King Fund did not utilize all of their money during this fiscal year and the remaining funds will lapse. A short discussion continued to take place between Ms. Colon and the Commissioners regarding the 2006 – 2007 budget.

B. Field Operations Report

In Don Newton's absence Epifanio Carrasquillo, HRO Regional Manager presented the report on Caseload Statistics. A lengthy discussion took place regarding Cheryl Sharp, Interim Manager of the West Central Regional office efforts and achievements with monetary settlements. Ms. Sharp expressed her gratitude to her staff for all of their many efforts in achieving such a high success rate. Ms. Sharp also indicated that she believes the other regional offices have achieved much more than is reflected in the report due to the fact that confidential settlements aren't reflected in the complaint tracking system. The discussion continued with the various tactics Ms. Sharp and her region utilize on a daily basis.

Chairperson Norton requested Mr. Ingram, Executive Director to compile a list of the settlement numbers by region for the last decade and submit them at the next commission meeting. Mr. Ingram informed the commissioners that at the end of the fiscal year CHRO will be completing a comparative chart that will give an analysis of what's happening from region to region as well as from year to year. Chairperson Norton thanked Mr. Ingram for providing that information in a report in the near future.

C. Legislative Report

Lena Ferguson, Regulations & Legislative Specialist gave a very brief report regarding Public Act No. 06-152 an act concerning court operations. This Bill requires the Judicial Department and the Criminal Justice Commission to take some affirmative action responsibility effective upon signing the Public Act, which took place on June 6th. Ms. Ferguson mentioned the provisions of the Act in some detail at the last commission meeting. The amendment to the affirmative action plan filing schedule is anticipated to be acted on by the Regulation Review Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Chairperson Norton requested Ms. Ferguson to provide him with a copy of the regulations that are on their agenda this month.

D. Managing Director Report

Robert Brothers, Jr., Managing Director & Commission Attorney, had

CHRO Commission Meeting
Minutes
June 8, 2006

a speaking engagement on Monday, June 5, 2006 where he spoke to a group of approximately 35 members of the Connecticut Bar Association about CHRO's case processing which the legal department normally does. The second round of field visits begins this month with the regional offices to give them some legal updates and training. There are currently three reopening requests pending which should be brought to the commissioners attention at the July commission meeting and thereafter reopening requests should be before the commissioners every thirty to sixty days at the max after they are received.

E. Curriculum Manager's Report

Michael Fryar, Curriculum Manager expounded on the upcoming Commissioners manual. The third section has been completed and should be ready for Mr. Teed to review followed by Mr. Ingram and Mr. Brothers. The finished product should be ready for the commissioners within the next two to three months. The Gala's Save The Date Notice has been mailed to approximately 900 law firms, public interest groups, government groups, etc. Mr. Fryar asked the commissioners to be prepared at July's commission meeting to take a group photo as well as individual photographs.

After the Gala, Investigation Training will take place with the State Police Training Academy who currently has a program that is available to DCF and DMV where they train their Investigators. It is a tailored program for non-police personnel investigations. CHRO is also looking at a training program for Intake Officers.

A survey has recently been distributed to all employees seeking their input regarding the possibility of having a summer outing. As soon as a decision is made the Commissioners will be invited.

Chairperson Norton asked Mr. Ingram for an overview of last years Gala. Mr. Ingram shared that information and the dialogue continued with input from staff as well as Commissioners regarding this year's location of the Gala and the expenses associated with it. Mr. Ingram will review alternatives for the intended guest speaker as well as the location of this years Gala and respond to the Commissioners at a later date.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Memorandum of Understanding Between CHRO and the Department of Transportation Regarding Contract Compliance.

It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes to amend the agenda under New Business to add the proposed contract between the State of Connecticut Department of Correction and its counterpart in the state of New Jersey. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Conaway. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, Mambruno, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Raymond Pech, Assistant Director elaborated on the request from the Department of Transportation, which was a re-visitation of an old issue. Pursuant to CONN.GEN.STAT.§ 46a-68k, the Commission, if it determines that an agency of the state has a contract compliance program that meets or exceeds the requirements and responsibilities of section 4a-60 and 46a-68c through 46a-68f, inclusive, the Commission may approve that such an agency conduct its own contract compliance program. The current MOU expires on June 30, 2006.

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to grant the Executive Director authority to sign the Memorandum of Understanding Between CHRO and the Department of Transportation Regarding Contract Compliance for an extension of one-year. It was moved by Commissioner Griffin and seconded by Commissioner Rhodes. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, Mambruno, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Raymond Pech, Assistant Director was recently contacted by the Department of Corrections to add this item to the agenda. Mr. Pech gave a brief overview outlining the need for this item to be voted on today, due to the fact that some prisoners who have been temporarily transferred to New Jersey because of the threats they represent on our prisons would have to be returned, which would cause an unhealthy environment for the inmates or the correctional officers. Connecticut enters contracts with various states to transfer prisoners back and forth. This happens sometimes for gang

related issues, on a temporary basis for overcrowding or for the protection of informants. This is regarding a handful of inmates at a time for relatively a short period of time to alleviate certain pressures that may exist locally. New Jersey also sends inmates here on a temporary basis. The request is for a ten-year extension. It is a sovereign entity, it will not involve Connecticut employees and it is for the good of the state that we alleviate some of the pressures in the prisons and not put inmates at risk. Mr. Pech recommends the commissioner's grant this request.

Chairperson Norton asked for a motion to grant an exemption so that New Jersey doesn't have to adopt Connecticut language in the agreement, which would bind them to Connecticut Law. It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, Mambruno, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Marshall that the Commission go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing pending litigation and personnel matters. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, Mambruno, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion. All members of the public were excused from Executive Session.

A. Report on Pending Claims or Pending Litigation:

1. Leonyer Richardson v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV625AVC
2. Jewel E. Brown v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV223CFD
3. Femi Bogle Assegai v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV2292JCH

B. Reopening Request:

Tehan v. Sacred Heart University, No. 0420331 & 0520087

C. Personnel Matters:

VI. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION:

It was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to return to Regular Session. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion. The Chairperson noted for the record that Assistant Attorney General David Teed, Executive Director R. Hamisi Ingram, Assistant Director Raymond Pech and Managing Director & Commission Attorney Robert Brothers, Jr., participated in a portion of Executive Session. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

VII. VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

A. Pending Litigation:

Report on Pending Federal Court Litigation: No Discussion, No vote.

1. Leonyer Richardson v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV625AVC
2. Jewel E. Brown v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV223CFD
3. Femi Bogle Assegai v. CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Docket No. 3:02CV2292JCH

CHRO Commission Meeting
Minutes
June 8, 2006

B. Reopening Request:

Tehan v. Sacred Heart University, No. 0420331 & 0520087

C. Personnel Matters:

With regard to item V. A. there was no discussion regarding pending litigation.

With regard to item V. B it was moved by Commissioner Rhodes and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to accept staff's recommendation to deny the reopening request in the matter of Tehan v. Sacred Heart University. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Lobon, Rhodes, Griffin, Brown, and Conaway voting in the affirmative. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

Mr. R. Hamisi Ingram had a brief discussion with the Commissioners regarding a recent informational hearing at the LOB and some of the charges that were leveled against himself as well as the agency and he recommended the commissioners authorize an outside investigation.

Chairperson Norton indicated the commissioners would take his request under consideration and informed Mr. Ingram that it will be discussed at a later time.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Griffin and seconded by Commissioner Marshall to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:19 p.m. The motion carried with Commissioners Marshall, Brown, Conaway, Rhodes, Griffin and Lobon voting in the affirmative.

CHRO Commission Meeting
Minutes
June 8, 2006

IX. CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is the official record of the Commission's June 8, 2006 Regular Commission Meeting, and that these minutes were adopted as true, accurate, and authentic by majority vote of the Commissioners present and voting at the July 13, 2006 Regular Meeting of the Commission.

Attest: _____
Secretary

Date