

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING – ROOM 1A
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2010
2:00 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Andrew Norton, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Edith Pestana
Dawn Niles
Alexia E. Cruz
Patricia J. Wrice

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Shelly Best
Cheryl Lynn Clarke

STAFF PRESENT

Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director
James O'Neill, Legislative Regulations Specialist
Margaret Peters, Secretary II

I. CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Andrew Norton convened the November 10, 2010 regular monthly meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to order at 2:10 p.m.

II. SECRETARY

Commissioner Mambruno requested approval of the minutes of the September 8, 2010 regular Commission meeting and the minutes of October 13, 2010 regular Commission meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Niles to approve the September 8 minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Cruz. All approved with the exception of Commissioner Wrice who abstained because she had not attended the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wrice to approve the October 13 minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Pestana. All approved with the exception of Commissioner Mambruno who abstained because he had not attended the meeting. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

III. OUTREACH REPORT

Executive Director Brothers indicated that, although the education and outreach unit had been cut from budget a number of years ago, he understood the importance of informing the public about the mission of the agency and wanted to do more outreach with staff (Cheryl Sharp & Legal Division). He stated that he is currently working to restore this department.

Cheryl Sharp and Alix Simonetti from the Legal Division then gave highlights of what is happening with Education and Outreach:

- We are currently working with Wesleyan University on a documentary on civil rights that will be produced by the film school. The purpose of the documentary is to provide the public with a historic perspective on civil rights (the CHRO is the oldest state civil rights government agency in the nation). We want to highlight the experience of complainants in using the CHRO process. A screening will take place in December or January at Wesleyan University. Commissioners will be invited.
- We have been contacted by State Library to have information, including the newsletter, sent to the Library for its archives.
- We are conducting informational sessions across the state. The next one will be in Waterbury on November 19. There are currently five co-sponsors: the African American Affairs Commission; the NAACP; the Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission; the Asian & Pacific American Affairs Commission; and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.
- Investigative Training – Attorneys usually go from region to region to train; however we had everyone come to one location in Hartford for the most recent training. We are striving for case processing and investigation to occur quicker with more uniform results.
- We are currently engaged in a number of additional educational and outreach projects throughout the state including but not limited to the celebration of MLK Day at the Peabody Museum. A recommendation for our participation was made by Commissioner Pestana.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

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

1. State Elections Enforcement Commission
2. Workers' Compensation Commission
3. Department of Motor Vehicles
4. Southern Connecticut State University

1. State Elections Enforcement Commission

The State Elections Enforcement Commission 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; and the agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

2. Workers' Compensation Commission

The Workers' Compensation Commission plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has not met all of its substantially hiring and promotion goals but it has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve such goals. The agency had no deficient elements in the previous plans and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

3. Department of Motor Vehicles

The Department of Motor Vehicles plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: the plan contains all elements required; the agency has not met all of its substantially hiring and promotion goals, but has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve its goals; and the agency had no deficient elements in the previous plans and therefore is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

4. Southern Connecticut State University

The Southern Connecticut State University 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 has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews.

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendations for approval of the Affirmative Action Plans for the State Elections Enforcement Commission, Workers' Compensation Commission, Department of Motor Vehicles and Southern Connecticut State University and that all of the agencies retain their annual filing status.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wrice and seconded by Commissioner Niles to accept staff recommendations for approval of all four plans and that the agencies retain their annual filing status. The motion passed without opposition. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Norton requested a motion to accept staff recommendations to grant exemptions from certain contract compliance requirements on the following: a blanket waiver request from the University of Connecticut Health Center for grant-based collaborative and consulting agreements; a request from Capital City Economic Development Authority for a waiver of certain contract compliance requirements with Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Company and certain contract compliance requirements with United Technologies Corporation; a request from the University of Connecticut for a waiver of certain contract compliance requirements in a contract with National Instruments; and a request from Regis University for a waiver of certain contract compliance requirements in a contract with the University of Connecticut Health Center.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mambruno and seconded by Commissioner Cruz to accept staff recommendations to grant all five contract compliance waivers. The motion passed without dissent. Chairperson Norton did not vote on the motion.

VI. DIVISION REPORTS

A. Legislative Report

Jim O'Neill provided the Commissioners with a written Legislative Report. DOT has proposed a bill again this year that would allow it to use its federal affirmative action plan instead of developing an affirmative action plan that meets Connecticut requirements. The Commission was not informed of the bill by the DOT bill; however, the Commission was informed by OPM. Following questioning by Commissioner Niles, Mr. O'Neill agreed to make inquiries to DOT concerning this matter.

B. Executive Director's Report

Regarding the move from 21 Grand Street, Executive Brothers reported that the agency will have to split up. The Office of Public Hearing will be relocating to 450 Capitol Avenue. The Legal Division along with Housing and Affirmative Action will be relocating to 25 Sigourney Street. We are looking to find a place to hold public hearings since there is no space large enough for public hearings to be held at either location and there is generally a shortage of space for Commission activities.

There are also parking issues which must be addressed. There is currently no parking for Commission employees on site. Parking will be off site with a shuttle to 25 Sigourney Street.

Commissioner Niles reminded the Commissioners that any division of the agency was a temporary solution while they looked for a permanent location so that all of the agency's units could be housed together. This was a pledge that the Commissioners had taken.

Chairperson Norton stated that division of the agency was not a satisfactory long-term solution as it did not meet agency needs. There was no disagreement from the other Commissioners.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no Executive Session items. Therefore there was no Executive Session.

VIII. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

No Executive Session.

IX. VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

(Requires a Vote by Commissioners on the Record)

No Executive Session items.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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