

STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 14, 2024 2:00 p.m. Via Microsoft TEAMS

Commissioners Present

Nicholas Kapoor, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox
Lisa Giliberto
Alex Harris
Andrew Norton
Edith Pestana

Commissioners Absent

Joseph Suggs
Tamara Titre

Staff Present

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director
Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney
Jo Keogh, HRO Attorney
Margaret Nurse-Goodison, HRO Attorney
Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison
Gary Madison, HRO Representative
Aubri Petersen, HRO Representative
Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary
Leigh Russo, Secretary
Laura Thurston, Asst. Attorney General

Michelle Dumas Keuler, Managing Director
Jose Michael-Gonzalez, Regional Manager
Cheyanne Clark, HRO Attorney
Courtney Shields, HRO Attorney
Gregory Jones, HRO Attorney
Travis Fuller, HRO Representative
Jase Olavarria, HRO Representative
Laura Roxbury, HRO Representative
Kristen Parker, Executive Secretary
Stephanie O'Loughlin, Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicholas Kapoor called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Commissioner Kapoor welcomed, thanked, and wished everyone a happy summer. He noted a quorum had been obtained with 6 out of 9 members present, and that Commissioners Titre, Suggs, and Gadkar-Wilcox were not present at the moment.

** Commissioner Gadkar-Wilcox joined the meeting at 2:08 PM.**

Chair Kapoor acknowledged the presence of Commissioner Gadar-Wilcox, and congratulated her on the victorious primary election win for the 22nd State Senate District.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Mambruno asked for a motion to approve the July 10, 2024, Minutes as written.

To Approve the Minutes of the July 10, 2024, Regular Commission Meeting:

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: A. Harris

Discussion: Commissioner Giliberto abstained from the vote noting that she was not present during the beginning of the meeting.

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Gadkar-Wilcox, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana)

No: 0

Abstain: 1 (Giliberto)

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp

Connecticut Technical Education & Career System

Staff representing the Connecticut Technical Education & Career System were Executive Director Ellen Solek, Chief of Staff Ronke Stallings, and Affirmative Action Equal Employment Opportunity Director Levy Gillespie.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan does contain all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94. The agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals and despite these efforts has been unable to do so. The agency has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard. There were no Program Goal Achievements established.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 62 out of 170 or 36%
- Promotional Goal Achievement 6 out of 9 or 67%
- Program Goal Achievement --out of -- or --

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2023 Approved (First Filing)

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Connecticut Technical Education & Career System and retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: A. Harris

Discussion: Commissioner Kapoor requested that all items that were previously discussed are submitted to the Commission when ready and complete.

Vote:

Yes: 6(Gadkar-Wilcox, Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

V. REQUEST TO REOPEN

In all cases below, Commission Counsel, Respondent or their representative, and Complainant or their representative were provided five minutes to provide opening remarks. Question and answers from commissioners followed these remarks.

1. Eric Avant v. Stonington Academy

CHRO Case No. 2340417

Presented by HRO Attorney Margaret Nurse-Goodison

To Approve the Request to Reopen CHRO Case no. 23400417 Eric Avant v. Stonington Academy:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: S. Gadkar-Wilcox

Discussion: None

Vote:

Yes: 4 (Gadkar-Wilcox, Giliberto, Norton, Pestana)

No: 1 (Mambruno)

Abstain:1 (Harris)

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

This requires a two-thirds vote of Commissioners present and voting; Staff and guests invited to attend must be noted.

1. Discussion of the Executive Director's Annual Evaluation

Chair Kapoor entertained a motion to enter Executive Session

To enter Executive Session:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: E. Pestana

Discussion: None

Vote:

Yes: 6 (Gadkar-Wilcox, Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The Motion to enter Executive Session was agreed to and Executive Session began at 2:56 PM.

Commissioners Kapoor, Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, and Pestana returned after Executive Session at 3:38 PM.

Chair Kapoor reconvened the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities into public session and noted no actions or votes were taken.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VIII. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report

Commissioner Kapoor informed that Director Hughes was on a well-deserved vacation and noted that the Commissioners were in receipt of the Annual Report filed by her with the General Assembly and the Governor. He also noted there were links to other reports included and any questions/comments should be directed to Director Hughes.

Outreach Report

Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp informed that the federal year will wrap at the end of September. Staff continues to work hard in the regions to close cases, process cases and produce quality closures.

She further informed that nominations are now open for the Civil Rights Leaders and Legends Award and encouraged the group to nominate individuals through the months of August and September.

Plans are in motion to take the Kids Court Academy students to Washington, DC in April 2025 where they will visit several monuments to include Martin Luther King, Jr. Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Washington Monument. There will also be visits to the White House and the African American Cultural Museum.

She also informed that community outreach has increased with the help of bilingual Outreach Coordinator, Ana Mitchell, and the fact that the CHRO brochures are provided in multiple languages.

Plans continue moving forward to build the museum. Meetings have been held with OPM and other interested parties regarding the process to bring it to fruition.

Legislative Update

Legislative and Administrative Advisor, Darcy Strand informed that Griffin and Strong have finished gathering data, collecting anecdotal evidence, and

conducting focus groups and public meetings. In March a draft report from GSPC was shared with CHRO and the Department of Administrative Services presenting its findings and recommendations based on the results of the disparity study. The CHRO and DAS returned comments to Griffin and Strong in May. They have since met with CHRO, OPM, and DAS to address their comments on the draft. Once the Disparity Study report is finalized and released there will be multiple public presentation.

She further informed that the Legislative Committee is working on CHRO's 2025 legislative agenda, as well as legislation that will result from the Disparity Study. The CHRO anticipates introducing legislation regarding: Body size discrimination, adding Case Assessment Review to the Housing Statutes, and Clarification of timing issues in the ELI and ROJ statutes.

Legal Update

There was no Legal Update.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Commission Meeting will occur on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 2:00 PM. This meeting will be held at the Legislative Office Building and will be both in-person and virtual via Microsoft Teams.

X. ADJOURNMENT To Adjourn

Motion: L. Giliberto
Second: A. Harris
Discussion: None

Vote

Yes: 5 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

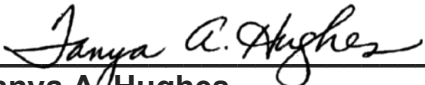
Did Not Vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:02 PM.

The Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting dated August 14, 2024, were approved on September 11, 2024.

Prepared by:



Tanya A. Hughes
Executive Director