

**PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 25, 2016**

The meeting convened at 1:00 PM, Monday, April 25, 2016 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners present:

Joel Bolstein, Interim Chair
Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst, Vice Chairperson
Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal (phone)
George Dawson (phone)
Gerald S. Robinson
Meron Yemane

Commissioners Absent:

Kathleen Dormer-Carusone (excused)
Hon. Terence Farrell

Staff present:

JoAnn Edwards, Executive Director
Tammy McElfresh, Special Assistant to the Executive Director
Kathy Morrison, Chief Counsel
John Clark, Director of Enforcement
Geoffrey Biringer, Director of Education and Community Services
Christina Reese, Press Secretary
Heather Roth, Harrisburg Regional Office Director
Carl Summerson, Hearing Examiner
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer
Morgan Williams, Acting Pittsburgh Regional Office Director
Diana Medley, Acting Philadelphia Regional Office Director (phone)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bolstein called the meeting to order 1:00 PM. He further announced that the meeting had been advertised and was open to the public, in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Act. He stated that prior to the meeting, in keeping with the confidentiality requirements of the Sunshine Act; there had been a closed session to discuss compliance matters.

Chairman Bolstein announced the meeting was being recorded.

Attendance was taken and the presence of a quorum was noted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chairman Bolstein noted the attendance of guest, Howard Reid and the later arrival of John Burgdoff of York.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Public Commission held on March 28, 2016 were presented for approval.

MOTION:

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yemane to approve the minutes with the correction noted on the spelling of Mr. Reid's name. With all in favor, motion carried.

CHIEF COUNSEL'S LITIGATION STATUS REPORT

Chief Counsel Morrison provided a review of her status report and a copy is attached for review. Ms. Morrison also provided in her report an outline of work done by the legal staff and trainings they have conducted.

Also reported on was the Governor's new policy and Executive Order regarding LGBT discrimination. Neither the policy nor executive order will change the PHRA.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Edwards welcomed Mr. Reid and extended her appreciation of his continued support and partnership with the PHRC.

Report on the Budget

Executive Director Edwards provided an update on the Budget, advising that at the meeting on Friday, the Office of the budget shows a \$56K deficit. The remaining waiver fund balance is at \$140K. The Governor's proposed budget if passed will provide for a complement of 101 plus three additional education positions and a \$500K surplus.

Report of Education and Community Services Division

Director of Education and Community Services Geoffrey Biringer provided an update on current outreach activities and an overview of the division for visitors.

Director Biringer also noted that his division is compiling information regarding all PHRC outreach.

It has been noted there has been racial tension building in Coatesville. The Education Division will be attempting to schedule additional trainings.

A letter was sent to the Reading School District citing deficiencies and the division continues to attempt to schedule a conference with Allentown School District to discuss their equity plan.

Director Biringer reported that the new advisory councils have begun to work on specific issues needed for their areas. Lehigh is the next on the list for development. Montgomery County has been going to each town in their jurisdiction to discuss issues. The ID badges for advisory council members are almost complete.

Commissioner Yiengst and Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson have the opportunity to meet with Pottstown's Council and discussed their reconsideration of disbanding the local commission. Director Biringer is awaiting their decision.

Commissioner Robinson asked if PHRC will be discussing the Education Funding Formula or passing a resolution. Director Biringer offered to speak to Millersville University to do research on the Prison Pipeline; however this may not be timely.

Guest Howard Reid offered a partnership with North Penn YMCA. North Penn will be conducting a Fair Employment Training in October. He understands the school district is having issues with gender identity and asked that PHRC provide the training.

Report on EEOC and HUD Contracts

The monthly and year-to-date reports contain specifics and are attached.

The monthly HUD report was provided in the commission packet for review in advance of the meeting.

Mediation

The monthly Mediation report was provided in the commission packet for review. Of specific interest it was noted that referrals are increasing. The Mediation Office has been reaching out to the Office of General Counsel to get greater participation with more mediators. Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson will provide training to four attorneys in Pittsburgh and work continues with county Bar Associations.

The priority is to meet with LHRC's to ratify more MOUs.

Director Clark discussed the Delta Report comparison to current processes. Reviews with the regional office staff have been conducted and now is looking into the specific processes for intake, investigation, ROOT, ready-to-write and PC & Beyond.

The process maps of intake, investigation and closure processes will be used for developing the new CMS.

Director Clark discussed the survey previously distributed electronically to commissioners and directors. It was asked that these surveys be completed as soon as possible to be able to provide results from the survey at the next commission meeting.

Commissioner Robinson inquired about the status on data sharing of complaint information with LHRC's. Director Clark stated this will be discussed at the next meetings with the LHRCs that need to sign MOUs.

Report of Press Secretary

Press Secretary Christina Reese provided her report in the commission packet for review and noted she will continue to work on legislative visits, working with committees and the Education Division.

Secretary Reese noted that in November the York County Advisory Council began reforming and last month they were able to elect officers.

The Book Facilitator, a HUD Initiative, will be onboard by May 14th. There have been post cards printed and will be working with school districts and public libraries.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

An update on the Strategic Plan was provided by the Executive Director and current scorecards were distributed. Executive Director Edwards noted that at last week's meeting it was noted we are on target with most areas and she is proud of the work of the staff and thanks them for their hard work.

Commissioner Robinson asked about specific measurement goals and asked why there was no score for these sections. It was explained that certain sections need to have the goals revisited for a realistic expectation and some taken out that do not apply any longer. The Strategic Plan goals should be things we have control over for staff to focus on what is actually attainable.

NEXT SESSION

The May Commission meeting will be held Monday, May 23, 2016, at 1:00 PM in Harrisburg, PA.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resumes were presented for approval by the commission for membership with advisory councils.

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve the applicants, Crystal Fox, Tawanda Hunter and Brandon Flood to the Cumberland- Dauphin-Perry Counties Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Agrawal made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst to approve the applicants Marakay Rogers and Koko Enomoto for the York County Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

ADJUDICATION

Donald Jackson v. Legion Home Association

MOTION:

Commissioner Robinson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst to accept the finding and recommendations of remedy of the Hearing Examiner. Motion carries with all in favor.

GUEST COMMENTS

Guest, Mr. Burgdoff of York asked the commission if there has been any response provided regarding the William Bender article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Chairman Bolstein shared that the Commission is preparing a response that would correct some of the inaccuracies within the article. It has not yet been determined if there will be a response to every item. Director Biringer stated that all of the Commission's staff is here because it is our job to fight illegal discrimination. We have told the governor and anyone else who will listen, that we will continue to push for additional funding.

Commissioner Robinson expressed the commission is appreciative of you coming to discuss this at the commission meeting.

Press Secretary Christina Reese stated that she was never contacted by Mr. Bender regarding the article and the discussion continued.

Executive Director Edwards expressed her thanks from staff to Commissioners Robinson and Yiengst for their time and dedication to the commission. All commissioners serve as volunteers.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was electronically recorded. The file will become part of the permanent record.

Commissioner Yemane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst to adjourn. With all in favor, Chairman Bolstein adjourned the Public Session.

Respectfully submitted,

S\Joel Bolstein

S\Radheshyam Agrawal

Joel Bolstein
Interim Chairman

Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal
Commissioner