

**PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
OF JUNE 27, 2016**

The meeting convened at 1:00 PM, Monday, June 27, 2016 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners present:

Joel Bolstein, Interim Chair
Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal (phone)
George Dawson (phone)
Kathleen Dormer-Carusone (excused)
Gerald S. Robinson

Commissioners Absent:

Hon. Terence Farrell (excused)
Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst, Vice Chairperson (excused)

Staff present:

JoAnn Edwards, Executive Director
Tammy McElfresh, Special Assistant to the Executive Director
Kathy Morrison, Chief Counsel
Geoffrey Biringer, Director of Education and Community Services
Heather Roth, Harrisburg Regional Office Director
Carl Summerson, Hearing Examiner
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer
Morgan Williams, Acting Pittsburgh Regional Office Director

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 guests, Howard Reid and Tiffany Chang Lawson, Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian American Affairs

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Public Commission held on May 23, 2016 were presented for approval.

MOTION:

Commissioner Robinson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Carusone 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.

Chief Counsel Morrison also provided an update on LGBT protections. The Pennsylvania legislature is moving forward with updates to the PHRA to include Housing, Employment and Public Accommodation protections against LGBT discrimination.

Senate Bill 1307 will add the protected class of LGBT.

Commissioner Michael Hardiman recommended the commissioners take vote in support of Senate Bill 1307.

MOTION:

Commissioner Joel Bolstein made a Motion, seconded by Commissioner Radheshyam Agrawal to advise the General Assembly that the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission supports Senate Bill 1307 and that when they adopt legislation that adds additional protected classes to consider additional funding to support the anticipated increase in complaints.

A vote on the Motion was taken by roll call with Commissioners Agrawal, Bolstein, Carusone, Dawson and Hardiman indicating their yay vote and Commissioner Robinson abstained. With majority of votes, the motion passed.

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 closing year's budget indicating a small surplus is anticipated. It is also anticipated that the 2016 budget will restore complement to 101 plus three. At a recent press conference Senator Folmer expressed his support of PHRC's restored budget.

Report of Education and Community Services Division

Commissioner Carusone requested herself due to a conflict prior to the director's report.

Director Biringer provided an update stating the Education Division and an overview of the division as well as a current status report on cases within the division.

A summary update was provided from a recent meeting with Montgomery County

Advisory Council and that they are happy with the working relationship. It was asked if PHRC could provide a link on our webpage to the Montgomery County Advisory Council's web page.

Report on EEOC and HUD Contracts

The monthly and year-to-date reports contain specifics and are attached. The performance of each office toward meeting its MTD goal for the EEOC contract is as follows:

Pittsburgh - 28 cases submitted for a target of 28 = 100% toward satisfying goal

Harrisburg - 68 cases submitted for a target of 45 = 151% toward satisfying goal

Philadelphia - 32 cases submitted for a target of 40 = 80% toward satisfying goal

Year to date, Pittsburgh has submitted 129, Harrisburg 364 and Philadelphia 177 cases for credit. 791 cases or 58% remain to reach the goal of 1,356. The monthly and year-to-date reports are attached. The 169 contract deficit will relate to be a projected \$118K decrease in contract value.

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

Mediation Program Update:

The program is welcoming new volunteers and has partnered with Good Shepherd. The details are ongoing and the program is expected to meet the goal of 50 successfully mediated cases for the year.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Executive Director Edwards extended a thank you to staff for a lot of hard work to keep this updated and will be meeting with the chair to work on 16-17 goals.

NEXT SESSION

The July Commission meeting will be held Monday, July 25, 2016, at 1:00 PM in Harrisburg, PA.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Director Biringer provided the resume of William Wilson for Commission approval as a member of the Cumberland/Perry/Dauphin Advisory Council.

MOTION:

Commissioner Agrawal made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve Cumberland/Perry/Dauphin Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

ADJUDICATION

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MOTION

Commissioner Agrawal made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dawson to adopt the recommendation of the hearing examiner and find liability awarding damages. With all in favor, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

In conjunction with the YWCA, a brochure was developed regarding police activity. Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson reviewed the brochure and provided recommendations on changes which were shared with the YWCA and also requested they include PHRC on the brochure.

GUEST COMMENTS

Tiffany. Lawson, Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian American Affairs discussed Language Access Policy. Ms. Lawson explained that when complaints can only be filed in English and forms are only available in English the significant barrier this creates for limited English proficient complainants.

Executive Director Edwards shared that our offices do work with Intrepretalk and are looking into translation software for our website. Currently PHRC is working with Representative Acosta to have our Employment Questionnaire translated to Spanish.

Ms. Lawson cautioned PHRC to not use translation software because it does not take into consideration context and that the Governor's office is working on a policy regarding limited English Proficiency.

Ms. Lawson pledged her assistance to PHRC and Executive Director Edwards thanked Ms. Lawson for being a true partner.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Commissioner Carusone made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Agrawal to adjourn. With all in favor, Chairman Dawson adjourned the Public Session.

Respectfully submitted,

S\Joel Bolstein

Joel Bolstein
Interim Chairman

S\Radheshyam Agrawal

Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal
Commissioner