

**PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
OF JANUARY 23, 2017**

The meeting convened at 1:00 PM, Monday, January 23, 2017 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners present:

Joel Bolstein, Interim Chair
Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst, Vice Chairperson
George Dawson
Michael Hardiman
Curtis Jones
Mayur Patel
Gerald S. Robinson

Commissioners Absent:

Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal (excused)
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
Geoffrey Biringier, Director of Education and Community Services
Heather Roth, Harrisburg Regional Office Director
Carl Summerson, Hearing Examiner
Christine Reese, Press Secretary
Jinada Rochelle, Acting Housing Coordinator
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer
Lyle Wood, Acting Pittsburgh Regional Office Director
Katie Petruczok, Mediation Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bolstein called the meeting to order 1:10 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.

Chairman Bolstein had staff introduce themselves to the guests in attendance

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chairman Bolstein had guests introduce themselves and a list of those in attendance is included as an attachment to the minutes.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Public Commission held on December 19, 2016 were presented for approval.

MOTION:

Commissioner Jones made a Motion, seconded by Commissioner Hardiman to approve the minutes. 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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**Report on the Budget**

Executive Director Edwards distributed a budget summary. A copy of which is included with the official minutes. Executive Director Edwards shared an update with the commissioners and staff noting that based on the 71 complement level, open investigator positions will need to be coordinated with the Office of Administration to see if any of those furloughed match open PHRC positions.

Chairman Bolstein said the decrease in staff and frozen complement at 71 is discouraging. He met with the Secretary of the Budget and had an honest and frank discussion. Unfortunately the Secretary said there is not much he can do. With the state deficit and given our lack of any additional revenue sources, PHRC's complement will not change.

Management will be evaluating procedures of Re-Engineering due to current staffing.

Chairman Bolstein asked if we have a decrease in federal revenue, will PHRC be able to sustain the 71 complement? Executive Director outlined the areas where we have worked to save money. Commissioner Jones asked if the budget crisis has caused any stress with staff. Executive Director explained her open meetings with staff for transparency.

Chairman Bolstein asked about regional office leasing arrangements and if we are able to use city real estate. Executive Director Edwards explained that we are able; however, PHRC would still be liable for lease payments until current contracts expire or find a tenant to take over the lease payments. Chairman Bolstein noted we are saving money by consolidating the Philadelphia Regional Office into a smaller space; however, as Tammy McElfresh explained, it does not mean the governor's office will not take any savings in the next budget.

Education Division Report

Director of Education Geoffrey Biringer provided an update to his report noting the department is working around the state with school districts and on the settlement with the Reading School District. Director Biringer noted an increase in racial incidents post-election at several school districts and is working on resolutions. Specific activities were provided within the attached report.

Report on EEOC and HUD Contracts

The performance of each office toward meeting its MTD goal for the EEOC contract is provided in the monthly reports.

Year to date, Pittsburgh has closed 28, Harrisburg 115 and Philadelphia 44 cases for a total of 187.

The performance report for Housing cases was included in the commission packet and shows that since July Pittsburgh has closed 10, Harrisburg 35, and Philadelphia 6 for a total of 51 cases toward our contract goal of 150 cases. Chairman Bolstein asked how we can ensure we meet the contract and discussion ensued regarding hopes we will be able to bring onboard annuitants to help meet contracts.

Report on Mediation

An overview was provided of the report contained within the commission packets as it contains new metrics on the Mediation Program.

Report of Director of Education and Community Service

Director Biringer provided updates on school districts noting the annual report was submitted from Reading and is under review and Pittsburgh is up for renewal. The division continues to provide SPIRIT Programs and has been attending community meetings. The Millersville University is looking for data to support the program and advocacy efforts on the School to Prison pipeline through the symposium.

An Education committee has been formed and the division continues drafting the Crisis Protocol.

Task Force Update

Director Biringer met with David Saunders, Harrisburg Police Department. Officer Saunders provided a presentation on the Opioid Epidemic and what is currently going on in Harrisburg.

Director Biringer provided an overview of the Task Force and its goals and objectives for the benefit of Commissioner Jones.

HRC/MOU Status Update

Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson noted he is working with Chief Counsel Morrison to tailor MOUs or Work-sharing Agreements to avoid duplicate investigations.

PRESS SECRETARY UPDATE

Press Secretary Christina Reese provided an update noting that during January an OP Ed was published on education, April is Fair Housing month, a video is being developed on what housing discrimination is, and the Spanish questionnaire has been posted on our website.

Chairman Bolstein asked Chief Counsel for an update on LGBT as a protected class. Chief Counsel Morrison noted there has been no movement.

Chairman Bolstein said any commissioners interested in attending meetings with legislators are welcomed.

NEW BUSINESS**ADJUDICATION**

201402479 – Scott v. Sales & Marketing

MOTION

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion seconded by Commissioner Hardiman to approve the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner to issue a finding of liability on the Respondent in the above referenced case. With all in favor, motion carried.

NEXT SESSION

The February Commission meeting will be held Monday, February 27, 2016, at 1:00 PM in Harrisburg, PA. This meeting will include a panel discussion on Education Equity with a question and answer session from 3:15 to 4:00 p.m. PowerPoints will be used to share updates from directors to allot time for the panel discussion. Commissioner Hardiman will serve as Moderator.

ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION:

Commissioner Jones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst to adjourn. With all in favor, the Public Session was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

S\Joel Bolstein

Joel Bolstein
Interim Chairman

S\Radheshyam Agrawal

Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal
Commissioner