

**PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
OF FEBRUARY 27, 2017**

The meeting convened at 1:04 PM, Monday, February 27, 2017 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)
Kathleen Dormer-Carusone
Michael Hardiman
Curtis Jones
Mayur Patel
Gerald S. Robinson

Commissioners Absent:

Hon. Terence Farrell

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
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 1:04 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 January 23, 2017 meeting were tabled due to a clerical error in printing. Corrected copies were provided to the commissioners and will be acted upon at the March meeting.

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 provided an overview of the PHRC budget history as background for guests in attendance and reviewed the current budget summary. A copy of the budget summary is included in the meeting records.

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.

Performance reports for both the EEOC and HUD contracts were reviewed and reports are attached with meeting records.

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 outlined his current activities within the monthly 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. A copy is included with meeting records.

NEW BUSINESS

Resumes were presented for proposed membership to multiple advisory councils.

MOTION:

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion seconded by Commissioner Patel to accept Mara Otero for membership in the Lehigh County Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

MOTION:

Commissioner Carusone made a motion seconded by Commissioner Patel to accept Borja Gutierrez for membership in the Centre County Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

MOTION:

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion seconded by Commissioner Patel to accept Timothy Havener for membership in the Centre County Advisory Council. With all in favor, motion carried.

Discussion of Senate Bills 303, 241 and amendment to 241 were tabled to the March Commission meeting to allow for additional time for discussion.

Education Equity Panel Discussion

A panel discussion was conducted, moderated by Commissioner Hardiman who posed questions to the panel members on how agencies including PHRC can work more collaboratively by sharing resources and data to bridge the achievement gap, disparate discipline, and fair funding. The Panel consisted of Ben Lieu, Regional Director, Community Relations Service, US Department of Justice; Pedro Rivera, Secretary of Education, PA Department of Education, Commonwealth of PA; Felicia Hurewitz, PhD, BCBA, Educational Consultant, EDMent Consulting, LLC; David J. Berney, Esquire, Law Offices of David J. Berney; Bradley Hull, Director of Education Services, PA State Education Association; Dan Urevick-Ackelsberg, Staff Attorney, The Public Interest Law Center.

Commissioner Bolstein thanked the panel members for coming, noting PHRC wants to help even though PHRC has been reduced to core functions due to the budget situation. PHRC recognizes the need to talk among ourselves and with the panel members again.

Executive Director Edwards thanked panelists noting everyone did a great job. Commissioners are studying the statutes and effectively monitoring the situation in Education. Executive Director Edwards suggested forming a joint committee between PHRC and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In closing, we cherish your partnership and look forward to working on this going forward said Executive Director Edwards.

ADJUDICATION

None

NEXT SESSION

The March Commission meeting will be held Monday, March 27, 2016, at 1:00 PM in Harrisburg, PA. .

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