

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

The meeting convened at 1:13 PM, Monday, October 23, 2017 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Commissioners:

Joel Bolstein, Interim Chair (excused)  
Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst, Vice Chair  
Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal (absent)  
George Dawson (phone)  
Kathleen Dormer-Carusone  
Michael Hardiman  
Curtis Jones  
Mayur Patel  
Gerald S. Robinson (absent)

Staff:

JoAnn Edwards, Executive Director  
Tammy McElfresh, Special Assistant to the Executive Director  
Kathy Morrison, Chief Counsel  
Jinada Rochelle, Assistant Director of Enforcement  
Heather Roth, Harrisburg Regional Office Director  
Geoffrey Biringier, Director of Education and Community Services  
Christine Reese, Press Secretary  
Carl Summerson, Hearing Examiner  
Lyle Wood, Pittsburgh Regional Office Director  
Diana Medley, Philadelphia Regional Office Director  
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer  
Katie Petruczok, Mediation Coordinator

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Yiengst called the meeting to order at 1:50 PM. She further announced that the meeting had been advertised and was open to the public, in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Act. She 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.

Vice Chair Yiengst announced the meeting was being recorded.

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

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

There were no guests in attendance.

**APPROVAL OF COMPLIANCE MINUTES**

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Jones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Carusone to approve the minutes of the September Commission Meeting. With all in favor, the motion carried to approve the minutes as written.

**CHIEF COUNSEL'S LITIGATION STATUS REPORT**

Chief Counsel Morrison reviewed of her status report and a copy was provided. Chief Counsel 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 update of the PHRC budget and reviewed the current budget. A copy of the budget summary is included in the meeting records.

**Report on Mediation**

An overview of the monthly report was provided. Commissioner Yiengst requested a higher level review of the mediation report.

**Taskforce**

Education Director Geoffrey Biringer noted monthly meetings are the third Thursday of each month and Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson provided a presented.

**Advisory Councils**

Director Biringer noted there are ten councils in place. Director Biringer will be attending the Hazleton Council's first meeting to assist with getting them focused on what they need to be focused on.

Commissioner Jones requested a list of advisory council contacts' info with meeting dates and times.

**REPORT OF PRESS SECRETARY**

Press Secretary Christina Reese highlighted her report provided in advance of the meeting. Also provided was a briefing on a current issue and police involvement. An inquiry with police whether charges would be filed against students at both schools and a Spirit Program offered.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A discussion ensued regarding the Philadelphia restaurant ordinance and the unequal enforcement. Commissioner Jones offered to have the Director of Licenses respond directly to Press Secretary, Christina Reese regarding the ordinance.

Commissioner Jones and Director Biringer discussed having Tameka Hatcher work with the commissioner to provide training to the Philadelphia Police Academy.

Executive Director Edwards noted that she, Commissioners Hardiman and Jones, and Director Rochelle attended the IAOHRA Conference. Edwards discussed how partnerships are necessary for sharing information and providing support during an incident; how the NYC commission reorganized due to decreased staff in order to increase education and outreach, which included adding social media and an aggressive marketing campaign, which in turn increased cases filed.

Commissioner Hardiman noted that PHRC is not alone with decreased funding and decreased staffing and how this overwhelms agencies given the increase of hate

and bias.

Commissioner Jones noted the reaffirmation that the School to Prison Pipeline is real; gentrification is real; and how important it is for agencies to use studies to identify patterns of discrimination.

Director Rochelle noted how she learned that PHRC is not alone in their frustrations; how others do things and what has changed with community policing i.e. Columbus Day changing to Indigenous People's Day.

Commissioner Yiengst provided an update on the situation in Puerto Rico and how Reading is seeing an influx of people from Puerto Rico. They are the poorest of the poor, destitute. There are 3.5 million people looking to move out of Puerto Rico.

### **Policy Approvals**

There were two policies for commissioners to review and discuss. Commissioner Hardiman noted he had a conference with Chief Counsel Morrison and asked to postpone the review and discussion of the Dual File Policy due to legal issues which may require additional discussion and edits.

UVISA Certification Policy, a copy of which was provided to commissioners in their meeting packet was presented for approval.

### **MOTION:**

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve as written the UVISA Certification Policy. With all in favor, motion carried.

### **NEXT SESSION**

The November Commission meeting will be held on Monday, November 27, 2017 at 1:00 PM at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

S\Joel Bolstein

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Joel Bolstein  
Interim Chairman

S\Radheshyam Agrawal

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Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal  
Commissioner