

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

The meeting convened at 1:20 PM, Monday, November 27, 2017 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners:

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

Chairman Bolstein called the meeting to order at 1:20 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. 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.

Chairman Bolstein announced the meeting was being recorded.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Kell Wilkinson, Policy Director, Equality Pennsylvania
Kurt Weaver, PA Family institute

APPROVAL OF COMPLIANCE MINUTES**MOTION:**

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst to approve the minutes of the October 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. Chief Counsel Morrison highlighted the two cases in Commonwealth Court next week and Reading School District is on hold with the court.

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

Executive Director Edwards greeted the guests in attendance and presented a 20-year longevity award to Commissioner Bolstein since he was not able to attend last month's awards ceremony. Executive Director Edwards provided an update of the PHRC budget and reviewed the current budget showing an anticipated (\$13,000) balance. A copy of the budget summary is included in the meeting records.

PHRC is finally kicking off the new CMS2 today. It provides higher efficiency and better reporting. Thank you to everyone in the room for all your hard work.

Assistant Director of Enforcement Jinada Rochelle provided an update on the HUD contract. Director Rochelle noted making steady progress however there has been a slow down due to staff training for CMS.

Executive Director Edwards thanked Hearing Examiner Carl Summerson for providing training on Ethnic Intimidation to staff last week. This three-hour training and an outside training on working with persons with mental health challenges were set-up by Special Assistant Tammy McElfresh for staff, while the new and legacy CMS systems were unavailable due to a data transfer.

Philadelphia Regional Director Diana Medley said her staff felt the training on working with people with mental health challenges was very engaging and they enjoyed it. The training will be helpful when persons come in to file a complaint and have mental illness issues.

Pittsburgh Regional Director Lyle Wood said they spent a lot of time explaining to the trainers what PHRC actually does. The trainers were interested in partnering with PHRC.

Report on Mediation

An overview of the monthly report was provided. Mediation Coordinator Katie Petruczuk noted a follow-up was done in Pittsburgh via phone conference.

Taskforce

During the upcoming winter months, the Taskforce meetings will be held every other month.

Advisory Councils

Director Biringer noted there are new members and a council chair position for the commissioners' approval this month. The approvals will be addressed during the New Business section.

Hearing Examiner Summerson noted a new HRC for Stroudsburg was completed today.

REPORT OF PRESS SECRETARY

Press Secretary Christina Reese highlighted her report provided in advance of the meeting. It was noted that a new video has been released on YouTube to drive callers to the HUD toll free hotline for housing issues. Also discussed were the brochures and questionnaires are being finalized in an increased number of languages and the mass mailing has been sent out to the developmental disabilities group with PHRC literature.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Held over from last month's meeting was the discussion of the Dual File Policy. The discussions continue and the policy will be held over for another month to be discussed at the December meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

House Bill 505 and Senate Bill 96 relating to expanding the groups protected by unlawful intimidation and hate crimes statutes were discussed; it was recommended that PHRC support these amendments..

Chairman Bolstein noted the expansion of groups covered by the unlawful intimidation and hate crimes legislation had come before the commission previously, and the commission supported it. After the expansion was enacted, the court found the process by which it was enacted was unconstitutional and invalidated the expansion.

MOTION:

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Yiengst for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to support House Bill 505 and Senate Bill 96 and for Press Secretary Christina Reese to send notice to the General Assembly to announce PHRC's support. With all in favor, the motion carried.

House Bill 1410 and Senate Bill 613 related to LGBT issues would amend the PHRA.

MOTION:

Commissioner Hardiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Carusone to support House Bill 1410 and Senate Bill 613 and for Press Secretary Christina Reese to send notice to the General Assembly to announce PHRC's support. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Advisory Council Membership Approvals

The resumes for three prospective members, Dr. Robert Childs, Dr. Gary Lawler and Emmanuel Martinez, for the Hazleton Advisory Council were provided to commissioners in advance of the monthly meeting.

MOTION:

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hardiman to approve the memberships to the Hazleton Advisory Council and Elaine Maddon Curry as the chair. With all in favor, the motion carried.

ADJUDICATION

201100031 and 201102434

Nikki Ann Siebert v. City of Allentown/Department of EMS

MOTION:

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hardiman to accept the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner to find for the Respondent. With all in favor, the motion carried.

201500434

Jonathan Blaine v. Denniston Family Limited Partnership d/b/a Village Realty Associates, LTD

MOTION:

Commissioner Yiengst made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Carusone to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner to find for the Complainant in the listed case. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Chairman Bolstein advised staff and guests that the work continues on our guidance regarding LGBT guidelines. Having received 8,387 comments from the public on this topic, PHRC will continue to work on preparing responses to the comments received.

NEXT SESSION

The December Commission Meeting will be held on Monday, December 18, 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

Joel Bolstein
Interim Chairman

S\Radheshyam Agrawal

Dr. Radheshyam Agrawal
Commissioner