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PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

M I N U T E S

TIME: 3:01 P.M.

Held at
Honors Suite
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

December 18, 2023

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Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
December 18, 2023

COMMISSIONERS:

Joel Bolstein, Esquire, Chair
Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst, Vice Chair
Mayur Patel, Esquire, Secretary - (Via telephone)
Dr. Rad Agrawal - Excused
Michael Hardiman, Esquire
Curtis Jones - Absent
Aleena Sorathia - (Via telephone)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW (Via telephone)

CHIEF COUNSEL

Meredith Millard, Esquire

COMMISSION COUNSEL

Vacant

STAFF PRESENT:

Amanda Brothman, Director of Communications
Desiree Chang, Director of Education
Lauren Daman, Director of Human Resources
Caroline Eister, Director of Fair Housing and
Commercial Property
Darlene Hemerka, Esquire, Hearing Examiner
(Via telephone)
Heather Roth, Regional Office Director, Harrisburg
Tamara Shehadeh-Cope, Hearing Examiner
Ashley Walkowiak, Director of Policy,
Intergovernmental Affairs and Mediation
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ruby Mundok, Executive Director, Governor's Advisory

1 Commission on Next Generation Engagement
2 Moriah Hathaway, Executive Director, Commission on
3 Women
4 Katie Merritt, Governor's Office
5
6
7

8 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

9 December 18, 2023

10 ***

11 MEETING CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING STATEMENT

12 [Joel Bolstein, Esquire, Chair, called the meeting to
13 order at 3:01 p.m.

14 Pursuant to Section 711 (a) of the Sunshine Act,
15 this Commission meeting may be recorded by attendees.
16 Voluntary participation in the meeting constitutes
17 consent to be recorded. The meeting was advertised
18 in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine
19 Act. Prior to the meeting and in keeping with the
20 confidentiality requirements of the Sunshine Act, we
21 had a closed session was held to discuss compliance
22 matters, management updates, and adjudicative case
23 deliberations.

24 After concluding the business portion of the
25 meeting, any guests present will be invited to

1 introduce themselves and any organizations that they
2 represent. Guests will have an opportunity to
3 briefly address the Commission. All comments are
4 welcomed regarding equal opportunity and Civil Rights
5 issues and problems with discrimination. We value
6 everyone's partnership; however, the Commission
7 cannot hear any facts relating to any specific cases
8 or open investigations that the Commission may have
9 to rule on in the future.

10 Mr. Bolstein convened the monthly meeting of the
11 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. He noted
12 the presence of a quorum.]

13 ***

14 [Chair Bolstein identified those in attendance.]

15 ***

16 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

17 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

18 The first item is a motion to adopt the
19 agenda.

20 Is there a motion?

21 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

22 So moved.

1 Item Nos. 5, Case No. 202002389, and 7,
2 Case No. 202101895, on the agenda.

3 Is there a motion to deny the
4 requests for a preliminary hearing?

5 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

6 So moved.

7 CHAIRMAN BOLSTEIN:

8 I heard a motion. Is there a second?

9 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

10 Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BOLSTEIN:

12 Any discussion? Not hearing any. All
13 in favor of the motion to deny the
14 request for a preliminary hearing at
15 Items 5 and 7 on the agenda, please say
16 aye. Any opposed?

17 [The motion carried unanimously.]

18 ***

19 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

20 Is there a motion to deny the request
21 for a preliminary hearing at Item 6,
22 Case No. 202201751, on the agenda?

1 ***

2 [Those in attendance were requested to identify
3 themselves for Ms. Mundok.]

4 ***

5 PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - NONE

6 ***

7 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - NONE

8 ***

9 OLD BUSINESS - NONE

10 ***

11 NEW BUSINESS- NONE

12 ***

13 PUBLIC COMMENT - Ruby Mundok

14 [Rudy Mundok, Executive Director, Commission on Next
15 Generation Engagement, presented to the Commission to
16 discuss the focus of the Commission and its goals.
17 She explained that the Commission focuses on young
18 people in Pennsylvania ages 16 to 26 to uplift youth
19 voices in the state to make sure the next generation
20 has a seat at the table in Pennsylvania. She stated
21 the Commission on Next Generation Engagement
22 represents high school students, undergraduate

1 students, graduate students, entrepreneurs, and those
2 who went through vocational-technical programs, to
3 portray all of the different kind of paths young
4 people can take in the Commonwealth to make sure that
5 everybody is represented.

6 Ms. Mundok reported working directly with the
7 Governor's other advisory commissions as the
8 centralized hub that can work closely with all of the
9 other communities. She reported having 22
10 commissioners and noted she is grateful for the
11 opportunity.

12 Ms. Mundok addressed the three priorities set for
13 the two-year term including creation of a safe and
14 healthy Commonwealth and to focus on anything
15 affecting the quality of life in Pennsylvania such as
16 mental health, physical health, gun violence, and
17 climate control or climate change. She noted a
18 strong focus will be on mental health issues in 2024
19 and developing solutions for the next generation.

20 The second priority is to create an educated
21 Commonwealth from kindergarten through grade 12
22 education, college education, apprenticeship programs

1 and vocational-technical schools. She also noted the
2 importance of assuring that young people are educated
3 on the upcoming 2024 election and know how to
4 register to vote.

5 Ms. Mundok indicated the third priority is to
6 create an economically empowered Commonwealth with
7 the focus on providing financial literacy skills for
8 young people in the Commonwealth and hopefully adding
9 that to curriculums in schools. She also mentioned
10 looking really deep into workforce development and
11 preparing young people to enter the workforce and to
12 thrive in Pennsylvania.

13 She mentioned working closely with the Governor
14 and his policy team and is looking forward to making
15 changes and having fun events with the community in
16 2024.]

17

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18 [Chair Bolstein provided a brief description of the
19 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, and it
20 handles complaints alleging discrimination in the
21 areas of employment, housing, education, and public
22 accommodations. He explained that someone would need

1 to be in a protected class to be able to file a
2 complaint and would not apply to everybody who is in
3 the 16-to-26-year-old category.

4 Chair Bolstein noted the agency is also tasked
5 with reducing racial tensions in the Commonwealth,
6 and it provides educational outreach and training on
7 a variety of topics. He informed Ms. Mundok that the
8 PHRC would be looking for ways to interact with her
9 group and commissioners on common areas.

10 Chair Bolstein stated the agency would like to
11 partner with all of the Governor's advisory groups,
12 especially this one because education is part of its
13 mandate. He noted the agency is still trying to
14 figure out the best policy for addressing harassment,
15 including online bullying, and asked whether that
16 falls within the priorities of Next Generation.

17 Ms. Mundok stated harassment would fall within
18 the education section and noted the commissioners
19 would love to have a discussion with the agency on
20 combating that issue. She suggested members from the
21 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission attend one of
22 their meetings at some point. She mentioned

1 different presenters will be attending their meetings
2 in 2024, and it would be a great opportunity to
3 explain what PHRC does and maybe have an educational
4 training session.

5 Executive Director Lassiter commented that it is
6 very innovative and great for young people to have a
7 voice. He noted Director Walkowiak would take the
8 lead and to contact her regarding the matter. He
9 stated the Commission is always in a space of
10 listening and learning and suggested Ms. Mundok send
11 information that is germane to this population.

12 Ms. Mundok thanked the Commission and asked them
13 to reach out to her in the future with any questions
14 or ideas.]

15 ***

16 PUBLIC COMMENT - Moriah Hathaway

17 [Moriah Hathaway, Executive Director, Pennsylvania
18 Commission for Women, mentioned working with the
19 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in October
20 and hosting a Trigger film screening at the State
21 Museum of Pennsylvania. She stated black maternal
22 health is one of the Women's Commission's priorities

1 because black women are three times more likely to
2 die in childbirth and beyond.

3 Ms. Hathaway noted the Commission for Women is
4 hoping to host a screening in January called
5 Aftershock, which is a documentary on Hulu about the
6 black maternal health crisis in the United States,
7 honing in on Pennsylvania.

8 Ms. Hathaway reported having leadership from the
9 Black Maternal Health Caucus; Dr. Livingston, who is
10 an OB/GYN on the Commission; and Annette Nance, who
11 oversees the Commission on African-American Affairs,
12 and would be joining them to moderate the panel,
13 along with Dr. Debra Bogen from the Department of
14 Health. She mentioned the Commission for Women would
15 also schedule something during Black Maternal Health
16 Week, April 11-17, 2024.

17 Ms. Hathaway mentioned that the next Commission
18 meeting is Friday, January 26 to discuss plans for
19 2024. She informed everyone that Women's History
20 Month is in March, and their Workforce Subcommittee
21 would be discussing women in the workforce. She
22 noted the importance of childcare and transportation

1 discussions, because those are issues that keep women
2 out of the workforce.

3 Ms. Hathaway noted the Workforce Subcommittee
4 would be having a panel discussion in March in the
5 Pittsburgh area for discussion regarding ways to
6 recruit and retain women in the workforce and will
7 highlight companies doing it right, including Sheetz
8 and Huntington Bank.

9 Ms. Hathaway addressed their newly formed Aging
10 Subcommittee to discuss women as they age and as
11 caregivers. She reported women are more likely to be
12 diagnosed with Alzheimer's and heart disease. She
13 noted comments have been submitted to the master plan
14 for older adults that the Department of Aging is
15 overseeing.]

16 ***

17 [Chair Bolstein commented that PHRC's jurisdiction
18 overlaps with Governor's Commission on Women and
19 suggested equal pay for women be added to the list.
20 He noted it as " pretty astonishing" that some
21 businesses are still paying women less, who have the
22 exact same job and credentials as a man. He

1 mentioned the importance of people understanding that
2 they could file a complaint with PHRC if being
3 treated unfairly.

4 Ms. Hathaway stated there had been discussion
5 about equal pay and wage transparency in companies,
6 noting Equal Pay Day is recognized in March during
7 Women's History Month. She discussed having a press
8 conference or social media post and tying it to Equal
9 Pay Day offering PHRC as the direct source of
10 contact, noting some women may not know they can
11 litigate.

12 Chair Bolstein addressed changes in the hiring
13 methods used by employers, noting a lot of it is
14 online and artificial intelligence-driven and
15 wondered whether the Commission on Women sees
16 anything part of that which looks discriminatory. He
17 noted the need to lay down some ground rules on that
18 but does not know where to begin.

19 Ms. Daman commented that the Pennsylvania state
20 government as a whole has staff who review resumes
21 during the hiring process and indicated the salary
22 range is listed on applications to make it an "even

1 playing field".

2 Ms. Walkowiak noted her recent attendance, along
3 with Ms. Hathaway, at the Gender Wealth Gap Summit in
4 Philadelphia. She noted the premise of the
5 conversation was around equal pay and the need to
6 expand beyond pay because women carry the majority of
7 debt in this country. She suggested having Director
8 Brothman discuss equal pay and incorporate other
9 topics during Women's History Month even if they are
10 matters that may not be directly jurisdictional to
11 PHRC.

12 Ms. Chang added that they only have three of the
13 four-week installments confirmed for Women's History
14 Month and asked Ms. Hathaway to send someone her way
15 to potentially discuss the fourth lunch and learn
16 topic.]

17 ***

18 [Chair Bolstein thanked everybody for their hard work
19 and wished everyone Happy Holidays and a wonderful
20 New Year.]

21 ***

22 ADJOURNMENT

1 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

2 Motion to adjourn.

3 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

4 So moved.

5 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

6 Second. All in favor, say aye.

7 [The motion carried unanimously.]

8 ***

9 [The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.]

10 ***

11 [The next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2024.]

12 ***

13

1 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2

3 MOTION: At the February 26, 2024, Public Meeting,
4 Commissioner Yiengst made a motion, seconded by
5 Commissioner Hardiman to approve the minutes of the
6 December 18, 2023, Public Meeting. With all in favor,
7 motion carried.

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10 M. Joel Bolstein, Chairman

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12 _____ o/b/o Commissioner Mayur Patel

13 Mayur Patel, Secretary

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing summary minutes of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, was reduced to writing by me or under my supervision, and that the minutes accurately summarize the substance of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission meeting.



Sophia Mahoney,
Minute Clerk
Sargent's Court Reporting
Service, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel Bolstein
Chairman



o/b/o Mayur Patel

Mayur Patel
Secretary