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PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

M I N U T E S

TIME: 3:02 P.M.

Monthly Meeting

Held

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

February 24, 2025

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
February 24, 2025

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COMMISSIONERS:

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW

DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

Morgan Williams, Esquire

COMMISSION COUNSEL

Vacant

STAFF PRESENT:

Amanda Brothman, Director of Communications
Alana Burman, Director of Policy,
Intergovernmental Affairs and Mediation
Desiree Chang, Director of Education
Caroline Eister, Director of Fair Housing and
Commercial Property
Darlene Martin, Esquire, Hearing Examiner
Sheryl Meck, Supervisor, Civil Rights Division
La Dawn Robinson, Regional Office Director, Pittsburgh
Heather Roth, Regional Office Director, Harrisburg
Tamara Shehadeh-Cope, Hearing Examiner
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Joshua Nix, Intake Supervisor, Philadelphia
Moira Crowe, Compliance Supervisor, Philadelphia

1 ***

2 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

3 February 24, 2025

4 ***

5 MEETING CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING STATEMENT

6 The time is now 3:02 p.m.

7 [Joel Bolstein, Chairperson of the Pennsylvania Human
8 Relations Commission, welcome to the public meeting
9 of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

10 Pursuant to Section 711 (a) of the Sunshine Act,
11 65 P.S. § 711(a), this Commission meeting may be
12 recorded by attendees. Voluntary participation in
13 the meeting constituted consent to be recorded.

14 The meeting was advertised in accordance with the
15 provisions of the Sunshine Act. Prior to the meeting
16 and in keeping with the confidentiality requirements
17 of the Sunshine Act, an Executive Session and a
18 Compliance Session were held to conduct business,
19 including compliance matters, management updates, and
20 adjudicative case deliberations.

21 After concluding with the business portion of the
22 meeting, guests will be invited to introduce
23 themselves and their organizations. Guests will have
24 an opportunity to briefly address the Commission.
25 The Commission welcomed comments about equal

1 opportunity and Civil Rights issues or problems of
2 discrimination. Any statements expressed during the
3 public session by members of the public represent the
4 opinions and beliefs of the speaker and not the
5 opinions and beliefs of the Commission.

6 The Commission cannot hear specifics of open
7 investigations or cases it may have to rule on in the
8 future.

9 Joel Bolstein, Esquire, Chair, convened the
10 monthly meeting of the Pennsylvania Human Relations
11 Commission. The presence of a quorum was noted.]

12 ***

13 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

14 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

15 The first item of business is to adopt
16 the agenda. So I need a motion to adopt
17 the agenda.

18 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN

19 So moved.

20 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

21 Second.

22 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

23 It has been moved by Commissioner
24 Hardiman. Seconded by Commissioner
25 Yiengst.

1 Any discussion about the agenda?

2 Not hearing any, all those in favor
3 of adopting the agenda please say aye?

4 [The motion passed unanimously.]

5 ***

6 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

7 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

8 Another preliminary item is to approve
9 the minutes from the public meeting of
10 January 27, 2025.

11 I need a motion to approve those
12 minutes.

13 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

14 So moved.

15 COMMISSIONER PATEL:

16 Second.

17 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

18 It has been moved and seconded that we
19 approve the public meeting minutes from
20 January 27, 2025.

21 Is there any discussion?

22 Not hearing any, all those in favor,
23 please say aye?

24 [The motion passed unanimously.]

25 ***

1 [Chair Bolstein explained the Commission is scheduled
2 to vote on the disposition of a complaint for which a
3 public hearing has been held. In such cases, the
4 Pennsylvania Human Relations Act requires the
5 Commission to review the recommended findings,
6 conclusions and order made by the permanent hearing
7 examiner or hearing panel and to approve or reverse
8 the findings, conclusions, and order before service
9 of such order on the parties to the complaint.

10 Each Commissioner signifies by his or her vote
11 that he or she has reviewed the entire record in
12 these matters to determine whether the recommended
13 findings are supported by substantial evidence.

14 Furthermore, because it is for the Commission, as
15 the adjudicative body to determine whether the
16 respondent has engaged in or is engaging in an
17 unlawful discriminatory practice as defined by the
18 Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, any findings,
19 conclusions and order approved are so approved only
20 after the Commission itself has determined that the
21 evidence upon which it is based has been resolved
22 correctly; and that any credibility determinations
23 have been decided correctly.

24 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

25 We have one adjudication today, which is

1 Item 3 on the Agenda. It is Case No.
2 202200982, River Robbins Vs.
3 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

4 I am going to turn it over to our
5 Hearing Examiner to provide a summary of
6 that adjudication and her recommendation
7 and proposed final order.

8 [Darlene Martin, Esquire, Hearing Examiner, explained
9 the Complainant filed her complaint on or about
10 November 1, 2022, alleging that the Respondent
11 discriminated against Ms. Robbins on the basis of her
12 disabilities in two ways. First, by failing to
13 provide a reasonable accommodation - full-time
14 telework; and second, by constructively discharging
15 her. Respondent filed a timely answer denying the
16 allegations set forth in the complaint.

17 A public hearing was held in this matter,
18 following a finding of probable cause and the failure
19 to conciliate, in Dauphin County on October 16th and
20 17th, 2024. Based on the record, the Hearing Examiner
21 finds that the Respondent discriminated against Ms.
22 Robbins in Violation of Section 5A of the PHRA
23 Pennsylvania Human Relations act on both of her claims
24 and recommends the following:

25 1. That the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

1 or Respondent shall pay River Robbins the lump sum
2 amount of \$71,560.42, which represents mitigated lost
3 earnings, lost retirement benefits and 6% interest.

4 2. That Respondent shall pay Ms. Robbins lost
5 wages at the rate of \$930 per week less gross income
6 earnings reported by Ms. Robbins from the date of this
7 order and continuing for a period of one year.

8 3. Beginning six months after the date of this
9 order and for a period of one year, Ms. Robbins shall
10 file semi-annual reports to the Respondent indicating
11 the gross amount of earnings made during the previous
12 six-month period. Upon receipt of these reports and
13 if the amount Ms. Robbins earned is less than what she
14 would have earned as an employee of Respondent,
15 Respondent shall pay to Ms. Robbins the amount of
16 gross earnings she would have earned with the
17 Respondent minus her gross earnings during that
18 period.

19 4. Ms. Robbins shall continue from make good
20 faith efforts to secure employment in mitigation of
21 her damages.

22 5. That Respondent shall pay Ms. Robbins all
23 damages as computed in this Order within 30 days of
24 the date of this Order.

25 6. That payment of all amounts due to Ms. Robbins

1 under this Order shall be made by cashier check
2 payable to River Robbins and delivered in the care of
3 Adrian Garcia, Director of Enforcement of the
4 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, at 333 Market
5 Street, 8th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101.

6 7. That Respondent shall cease and desist from
7 denying reasonable accommodations to employees with
8 disabilities and from otherwise discriminating against
9 employees with disabilities.

10 8. That the Respondent shall attend mandatory
11 training provided by the PHRC or by an entity approved
12 by the PHRC regarding its obligations under the
13 Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.

14 9. That Respondent shall implement policies
15 requiring individualized assessments of the essential
16 functions of a position prior to denying request for
17 reasonable accommodations.

18 10. That within 30 days of the effective date of
19 this order, Respondent shall report to the PHRC on the
20 matter of its compliance with the terms of this order
21 by letter addressed to Adrian Garcia, Director of
22 Enforcement.

23 11. And finally, that should an issue arise
24 concerning any of the remedies provided herein or
25 should any further information or documentation be

1 needed to determine or apply the appropriate remedy
2 that shall not delay implementation of any other
3 remedy required under this Order.]

4 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

5 Is there a motion from any of the
6 Commissioners?

7 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

8 I move that we approve the
9 recommendation of the Hearing Examiner.

10 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

11 Is that a second on your part, Michael?

12 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

13 That is correct, yes.

14 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

15 It has been moved and seconded that we
16 accept the Findings of Fact, Conclusions
17 of Law, Opinion of the Permanent Hearing
18 Examiner, and adopt the Proposed Final
19 Order in Case No. 202200982, River
20 Robbins Vs. Pennsylvania Public Utility
21 Commission.

22 Is there any discussion? Not
23 hearing any, all those in favor of the
24 motion, please say aye?

25 [The motion carried unanimously.]

1 ***

2 CONCILIATION AGREEMENTS/CONSENT ORDERS - None.

3 ***

4 REQUESTS FOR PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

5 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

6 Next order of business is agenda items 4
7 through 8, which are requests for
8 preliminary hearing.

9 Is there a motion?

10 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

11 I move that we deny the requests for a
12 preliminary hearing and review of the
13 adjustment.

14 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

15 So that would be a motion to deny the
16 requests for preliminary hearing.

17 Is there a second?

18 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

19 Second.

20 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

21 It has been moved and seconded that we
22 deny the request for preliminary
23 hearings at items 4 through 8 on the
24 agenda.

25 Is there any discussion? Not

1 hearing any, all those in favor of the
2 motion, please say aye? Any opposed?

3 [The motion passed unanimously.]

4 ***

5 MOTIONS AND OTHER ACTIONS - None.

6 ***

7 APPROVED FOR PUBLIC HEARING DOCKET

8 [Chair Bolstein noted one matter, agenda item 10,
9 approved for public hearing.]

10 ***

11 [Executive Director Lassiter thanked all
12 Commissioners for their presence. He thanked senior
13 management for their high productivity.

14 The March meeting will be in person. Ms. Walters
15 will provide the location.]

16 ***

17 ADJOURNMENT

18 COMMISSIONER YIENGST:

19 Motion to adjourn.

20

21 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

22 Second.

23

24

25 CHAIR BOLSTEIN:

1 I just want to close by saying thank you
2 to the staff and for continuing to work
3 very hard, very diligently. There's a
4 lot of things going on at the federal
5 level that clearly could have an impact
6 on us. I'm hoping everybody can just
7 stay focused on the mission that we have
8 and try and tune out the noise and any
9 distractions if possible. All right.

10 Thank you very much.

11 ***

12 [The meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.]

13 ***

14 [The next meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2025.]

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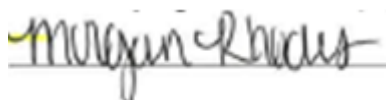
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CERTIFICATE

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.




Morgan Rhodes,

Court Reporter

Sargent's Court Reporting
Service, Inc.

M. Joel Bolstein, Chairman



o/b/o Commissioner Mayur Patel

o/b/o Commissioner Mayur Patel
Mayur Patel, Secretary