

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

NOVEMBER 29, 2007

A regular meeting of the Commission for Human Rights was held in the agency conference room on Thursday, October 25, 2007. Present at the meeting were Dr. John B. Susa, Nancy Kolman Ventrone, Alton W. Wiley, Jr., Iraida Williams and Rochelle Lee. Absent were Commissioners Camille Vella-Wilkinson and Alberto Aponte Cardona. The meeting was called to order at 9:12 a.m.

The minutes of September 27, 2007, the special minutes of August 23rd and the special minutes of September 10th , October 16 and October 25th were approved by Commissioner Lee. The motion to move was made by Commissioner Williams and carried.

Status Report: Michael D. Évora, Executive Director

A written report was handed out. All new information was in bold print.

The Director reported that the holiday party will be on December 28th at Jewel. The Director also reported that the Commission has just purchased a scanner. The scanner will be used to scan Decisions and Orders and other related work for which the scanner is needed.

Case Production Report – Attached –

Aged Case Report - Attached

Outreach Report - Attached

STATUS REPORT - COMMISSIONERS-

GENERAL STATUS: Commissioner meetings will be changed from the last Thursday of the month to the last Friday of the month starting after the New Year.

OUTREACH: Commissioner Lee reported that she is on the Rosa Parks Committee. RIPTA has decided to have free bus rides to honor Rosa Parks. The buses will be free on December 1st all day.

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STATUS REPORT - LEGAL COUNSEL, Cynthia M. Hiatt and Francis Gaschen

LITIGATION: report attached.

LEGISLATION: report attached

REGULATIONS: No discussion at this time.

HEARING SCHEDULE: Discussed

DECISIONS: Commissioner Ventrone moved to have a public hearing for Rhode Island College and hear their request for a BFOQ. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lee and carried. Commissioner Susa, Williams and Ventrone discussed the Zeigler case and attorney fees.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Friday, December 28, 2007 at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Michael D. Évora
Executive Director**

Notes taken by: B. Ross

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 29, 2007**

I. BUDGET

The Commission formally submitted its FY 2008 Revised and FY 2009 Budget Requests to the Governor on September 14. The particulars are as follows:

S = State/General Revenue; F = Federal (EEOC/HUD)

	FY 2008	FY 2008	FY 2009
	(Enacted)	(Rev. Req.)	(Request*)
S	984,197	984,197	885,777
F	404,743	379,190	395,049
T	1,388,940	1,363,387	1,280,826

***The Commission's FY 2009 Budget Request contains a 10% general (state) revenue reduction, as required by the Governor. The anticipated impact of this reduction, if it is implemented, is the loss of 2 investigative positions effective July 1, 2008, leaving the Commission at 12.5 FTEs. I incorporated into the budget submission impact statements attesting to the devastating effect such a loss would have on the Commission's ability to carry out its mission. We**

must now wait and see how the Governor and General Assembly will act on the submitted budgets. After reviewing our submission, the Budget Office has decided not to recommend the 10% reduction/FTE loss. The Budget Office will forward its recommendations to the Governor.

II. FEDERAL CONTRACTS

EEOC – For federal FY 2008, according to EEOC Project Director Marlene Toribio, we have closed 30 co-filed cases. We likely will not receive official word on our contract until February 2008.

HUD – For FY 08, according to HUD Project Director Angela Lovegrove, we have taken in 22 new housing charges, 21 of which are co-filed with HUD. Within this same time period, we have processed 17 housing charges, 16 of which were co-filed with HUD.

III. PERSONNEL

None of the positions at the Commission was on the Governor's list of positions targeted for elimination on November 30 ("A List"); similarly, no Commission positions were on the list of positions potentially subject to elimination by the end of the fiscal year ("B List"). The Commission now awaits the completion of the "bumping" process to find out if any staff members will be adversely affected by

union employees outside of the agency with more seniority.

IV. OUTREACH – Refer to attached report

V. GENERAL STATUS

●Meetings with staff members – I continue to meet with individual investigative staff members on a monthly basis to monitor case production.

●Case Closures – Refer to attached report.

●Aged Cases – Refer to attached report. Progress continues to be made on decreasing the aged caseload. The Commission successfully reduced the aged caseload by 63% in federal FY 2007 (from 8 to 3 cases).

●Overall Case Inventory – The Commission had over 1000 cases in its inventory at the end of FY 98. We ended FY 07 with approx. 355 cases in inventory. As of 11/16/07, we had a total of 346 cases in inventory.

●National Fair Housing Training Academy (NFHTA) –Frank Gaschen (Housing Supervisor) and Susan Gardner (Housing Backup) have successfully completed Week Four of this five-week course. Frank is scheduled to attend Week 5 in January; Susan will attend

during the Spring. Susan Pracht (Housing Backup/Housing Outreach), Jason Flanders (Housing Outreach) and Zaida Rivera (Housing Outreach) successfully completed Week One. Susan and Zaida are scheduled to attend Week Two in January; Jason will attend Week Two in February.

•Mediation – Stephen Strycharz recently completed mediation training through the Community Mediation Center of RI and joins those members of the Commission staff who are mediation-certified.

•Annual Report – A draft of the Commission’s FY 07 Annual Report is expected to be completed by next week, with the goal of sending it to the printer by mid-December. Susan Pracht is working with me to complete the report.

•Commissioner Photographs – Commissioners Lee and Ventrone had their photographs taken in September and have selected from among the proofs. The photographs have been ordered and will soon be available for presentation in the Hearing Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Évora

Executive Director

Attachments