

## COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 14, 2005

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Present** Thomas Owen, Roberto Allen, Barbara Dezmon, Norman Gelman, Peter Lee and Pamela Scarbro.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** Commissioner Gelman would like the word “other” on page 2 paragraph 4 line 2, to be replaced with the word “local”.

The Assistant Director would like the following words added after the word and on page 4, paragraph 6, line 3, “anticipate no problems in closing in the black”.

The minutes of the May meeting were accepted with the above-mentioned changes.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT** Chairperson Owen had nothing to report this month other than what was in his written report.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director’s Report (See attached).

Commissioner Training The Executive Director inquired as to whether there is any interest in Commissioner training. Chairperson Owen stated that the Commission should wait until the second appointee is on board to conduct Commissioner training.

Commissioner Dezmon would like the Executive Director’s Report to include the outcome of activities and meetings. The Executive Director agreed to do so.

Legislation

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that now is the time for MCHR to think about how to approach legislation for the next session.

MCHR has to submit the legislative packet by early September. MCHR needs to decide if we are going to submit the same remedies bill again or something else.

Commissioner Gelman recommended that the legislative agenda be presented during the July meeting and also at that time Commissioners should discuss and approve the legislative agenda.

The Public Affairs Coordinator suggested that Laurie Valentine be invited to meet with Commissioners. The Executive Director will make contact with Ms. Valentine to see what she thinks is the best approach. Ms. Valentine may need to attend the August Commission meeting. Chairperson Owen would like MCHR be more proactive in reference to its legislation.

#### Mediation Unit

Chairperson Owen introduced Bobette Watts, who has a lot of experience as a Legislative Liaison, and may be stepping in to perform some of the legislative liaison duties previously carried out by the Public Affairs Coordinator. Ms. Watts may be asked to handle these duties to the extent that her workload in the Mediation Unit allows her time to do so. Ms. Watts informed Commissioners of her responsibilities when she previously worked for the Commission and also what her responsibilities were when she worked for the Governor's Office on Individuals with Disabilities.

Commissioner Gelman inquired as to the progress of the Mediation Program.

The Mediation Coordinator informed Commissioners that the program processes a large amount of the cases entering the agency. Mediation offers parties a chance to voluntarily mediate. Throughout the fiscal year Mediation tries to get in as many cases as possible. Currently, the Mediation Unit schedules approximately 10 cases a week. Mediation is very active in the field offices as well. Mediations are being held in Salisbury and Hagerstown and in other locations in Talbot and Montgomery counties. The Mediation Unit is in a partnership with the new Mid Shore Community Mediation Center in Easton and is pursuing a similar partnership with a Mediation Center in Salisbury.

The Mediation Unit does more advanced training than any state program in the State. Trainers are brought in from other programs. Mediation is also planning a 40-hour basic Mediation course for the month of August. MCHR will have new mediators after this training course. Mediators sign a contract for one year. The mediators who conduct mediations in Salisbury and on the shore tend to be local mediators. There are over a hundred mediations during the year.

Commissioner Gelman inquired as to whether the mediation unit is processing more cases than the investigative units. The Mediation

Coordinator informed Commissioners that she did not know if mediation numbers are higher than investigative units. The Mediation unit mediated almost 200 cases last year. Over 50% of the cases were resolved through settlement agreements. Cases are also closed for other reasons as well.

Commissioner Gelman also inquired as to whether cases are mediated prior to certification for public hearing. The Mediation Coordinator stated yes. Cases may go to mediation at any time if appropriate and parties agree.

**Budget**

Chairperson Owen stated that MCHR should be more proactive in reference to its budget. The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that the Budget Instruction meeting has been changed. There is another meeting for agency staff around the end of June to talk about the Governor's strategy for the budget for fiscal year 2007.

**Community Outreach/  
Education Unit**

Commissioners received copies of the Community Outreach/Education Unit Report (See attached).

**Annual Report**

The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that the Annual Report has been started. The Information Technology Manager has agreed to use last year's report and input current data and information.

**Publications**

The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that Christine Stanley, who was the agency's Publication Specialist, would do the publications on a free-lance basis for a reduced cost.

The Executive Director commended Martha Dickey for her outstanding work with the Commission during her tenure here. The Public Affairs Coordinator has been trying to finish up things, and get affairs in order for others to take over. The Executive Director also stated that the Public Affairs Coordinator has done a really great job in the almost six years that she has been employed with the Commission. Chairperson Owen commended the Public Affairs Coordinator and wished her well.

Commissioner Gelman moved that MCHR pass a resolution thanking the Public Affairs Coordinator for her service. The motion was seconded and passed by all Commissioners.

Commissioner Gelman and the Executive Director will work together in preparing the resolution.

**DEPUTY  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

**Case Processing  
Contracts**

Commissioners received copies of the Case Processing Report (See attached).

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that MCHR has one month left in the fiscal year for intake. MCHR is on target with the HUD contract and ahead on the EEOC contract. MCHR still does not have the contract from HUD yet.

**ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Assistant Director's Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is closing out the fiscal year 2005 budget and does not anticipate any problems. The Assistant Director also informed Commissioners that the agency's Budget Analyst, James Gleason, passed. MCHR has not received any notice as to which the new Budget Analyst will be.

Information Technology  
Unit

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the roll out of the new web based case tracking system has been postponed. There were design issues that had not been addressed.

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that during his tracking visitors to the agency's web page we are receiving more requests for other language brochures.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). Commissioner Dezmon would also like to see a report of the outcome of activities added to the General Counsel's report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that Commissioner Pamela Scarbro would be leaving the Commission as of today. Commissioner Scarbro informed Commissioners that she will be taking a yearlong course in leadership and may also be appointed to a Commission for the Governor working on women veteran issues. Chairperson Owen thanked Commissioner Scarbro, for all Commissioners, for the two years that she has been on the Commission. The Executive Director stated that he would miss Commissioner Scarbro.

Commissioner Dezmon would like the Executive Director to get a citation from the Governor's office. Commissioner Dezmon stated that there should be some kind of resolution, from the Governor's office that all Commissioners receive for serving on the Commission.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Dezmon inquired as to the status of the proposal regarding hiring and discrimination in state agencies that was started some years ago and never completed. The Executive Director stated that this was one of the projects that the Systemic Unit was working on. The systemic unit was dissolved and the analyses of the reports were never done. Commissioner Dezmon would like to know how many staff people would be needed to complete this task. The General Counsel stated that MCHR would need three or four full-time people to complete this task.

Guest Speaker

As a continuation of the Commission's ongoing study of conditions of immigrants, Chairperson Owen introduced Carmen Pratt, Executive Coordinator for the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific Americans Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, Migratory and Seasonal Farm Labor and Maryland Commission for Women. (See attached Governor's Commission

on Hispanic Affairs).

Ms. Pratt shared much valuable information regarding the status of immigrants in our state. She expressed her willingness to continue working in partnership with MCHR on the problems facing immigrants.

Commission meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Barbara Wilson