**Louisiana Commission on Human Rights (LCHR)**

**Minutes**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2017**

**11:30 a.m.**

**Louisiana Workforce Commission**

**1001 North 23rd Street**

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

**Members Present: Members Absent:**

**Angela Faulk Tamara K. Jacobson, Chairwoman**

**Courtney Hunt Terry L. Jackson**

**F. Clayton Latimer**

**Julia Mendez**

**Richard Perque**

**Staff Present:** Dr. Leah Raby, Desha Gay, April White, Iriane Lee

Commissioner Angela Faulk (ad hoc chairwoman) called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. and requested a roll call. There was a quorum.

Commissioner Angela Faulk requests all to read the minutes from the October 25, 2016, meeting. Commissioner Latimer requested that a couple of corrections be made regarding the wording of two paragraphs. The first correction was in the fifth paragraph of page two wherein Commissioner Latimer moved instead of motioned to have Dr. Raby serve as final authority administratively and on case investigations adjudicated by LCHR. The second correction was in the fourth paragraph of page four replacing the word motion with moved in the approval of the October 16, 2016, Executive Director’s report.

Thereafter, Commissioner Faulk motioned for acceptance of the Executive Director's report with pending corrections. It was moved by Commissioner Perque and seconded by Commissioner Latimer. Motion passed.

Next order of business was the Chairwoman’s remarks.

Commissioner Faulk informed everyone that Chairwoman Jacobson had a schedule conflict on the day of the meeting, requested lapel pins for the new commissioners, and concluded the Chairwoman’s remarks by welcoming Commissioner Mendez.

Next on the agenda was the Executive Director’s report. Dr. Raby began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year and welcoming Commissioner Mendez. Dr. Raby continued by thanking the Commissioners for submitting their ethics information required by the Governor’s office and informed them that the ethics information is required yearly.

Dr. Raby explained that the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) is a Fair Employment Practice Agency (FEPA) office for the state of Louisiana. LCHR is also the designated FEPA for the Federal level with the EEOC. Dr. Raby further explained that LCHR now reports to the New Orleans Field Office and not the Houston District Office. She stated that LCHR has a long-standing wonderful relationship with the New Orleans Field Office.

Dr. Raby further enlightened the Commissioners that case investigations were progressing, but at a slow rate. LCHR has six (6) closed and approved cases, twelve (12) cases pending closures, thirty-three (33) assigned and open cases, and ten (10) intakes awaiting return documents from the Complainant and/or Respondent. It was recognized that this was almost where LCHR was this time last year. Dr. Raby further informed the Commissioners that LCHR had requested that the EEOC provide approximately forty (40) cases to help meet the goal. Dr. Raby stated she requested the forty (40) cases the previous week with the FEPA Coordinator, Attorney Marvis Hicks, who is also the Outreach Coordinator. Dr. Raby also informed the Commissioners that the EEOC and LCHR have partnered on Outreach events in the past.

Dr. Raby then discussed several speaking engagements scheduled with the Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) around the state on topics such as diversity and LGBT issues.

Dr. Raby continued by sharing that LCHR had the pleasure of hosting Women Leaders of Africa, who are affiliated with the International Visitor Leadership Program through the New Orleans Citizen Development Council at the Old State Capitol. Women's Policy in the Governor’s Office also participated. There were between 15 and 18 leaders from Africa. They came to ascertain more knowledge about human rights. They enjoyed a hearty lunch that reminded them of home and had a wealth of questions regarding human rights, how the organization was started, how the laws are enforced, who they seek as proponents, intake and investigative processes, jurisdiction and more. Attorneys Gay and Lee presented cases in addition to Investigator Erin Sanders. Commissioner Hunt was present. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Johnny Anderson, provided greetings. The visitors also toured the Old State Capitol. Interpreters were provided to ensure communication was no barrier.

Dr. Raby proceeded to discuss outreach events such as participating in Gov Talks with the Office of Community Programs. LCHR has engaged in discussions regarding Foster Care, the GOLD awards where the disabled community is honored and celebrated for their efforts in the community, and Opiate Abuse. Also, LCHR personnel attended the Inaugural events for Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, the first African American woman to become elected in this capacity. Dr. Raby also had the opportunity to serve as a chaperone for the Mayor’s first outreach initiative by taking young ladies who showed an interest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), to see Hidden Figures. Attorneys Gay and Lee participated in a job fair with the Louisiana Workforce Commission. LCHR has produced a quarterly newsletter, which the Governor’s Office reviews before uploading it on the Governor’s website. A rough draft was provided to the Commissioners.

Dr. Raby informed the Commissioners that LCHR was currently working on website improvements, hoping to make it more user-friendly by allowing potential complainants to file their complaints online. Upon completion on the online complaint, it is sent to Christa’s email.

Dr. Raby continued by introducing the Commissioners to April White, LCHR’s new law clerk. Ms. White is a second-year law student at Southern University Law Center. She has a background in Criminal Justice, investigations and as a private detective. Dr. Raby reiterated to the Commissioners that LCHR also had an intern, Ahmed Soussi, who is a second-year law student at LSU and sought our office to conduct his internship. He currently works on Fridays and collaborates with Erin Sanders, Investigator, on Immigration Outreach.

Dr. Raby shared with the Commissioners her attendance to the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Leadership Conference on January 25-28, 2017, in Washington D.C. Dr. Raby acknowledged that she serves as the Public Policy Chair for the local chapter.

Dr. Raby concluded her Executive Director’s report by informing the Commissioners that LCHR has agreed to champion the Equal Pay legislation as one of the issues we are supporting this legislative session. Equal Pay Day was scheduled to take place on March 10, 2017. In support of Equal Pay Day, all the women wore red. As mentioned, Ahmed and Erin are working on immigration rights, cultural sensitivity, and interaction. LCHR hopes to engage with the EEOC, Department of Justice, Diversity and Inclusion representatives from the universities and community organizations. LCHR plans to begin the forums in April.

Next, Attorney Gay presented two cases.

Thereafter, Commissioner Hunt inquired about immigration outreach. Dr. Raby shared that LCHR is doing immigration outreach and that the Governor’s Office is involved. Dr. Raby requested updates and informed the Commissioners that LCHR was currently going through the process and planning stage. Dr. Raby further informed the Commissioners of the plan to have an open forum where we talk and allow people to ask us questions.

Commissioner Mendez inquired as to whether LCHR would keep them updated on the forum dates as she wanted to attend the New Orleans forum. Commissioner Mendez asked about the issue of immigration rights, and if we have taken an official position on immigration from the White House. Dr. Raby informed her that we did not, and stated that a discussion regarding that issue should be held with Chairwoman Jacobson. Dr. Raby said she would mention it. Commissioner Mendez communicated that it would be rescinded by the end of the month due to being blocked by appeals, and then a new one will be issued.

Commissioner Latimer informed everyone that she was going to have an immigration roundtable on behalf of the organization Louisiana Courts Matter. The purpose of the organization is to connect with leaders in the New Orleans community to discuss Supreme Court cases and the legalities for special categorized immigrants. Commissioner Latimer further informed everyone that she had been representing children who are undocumented and are affected by the recent Supreme Court decision. Commissioner Latimer stated that she would send out information to everyone.

Commissioner Faulk motioned for acceptance of the Executive Director’s report. It was moved by Commissioner Latimer and seconded by Commissioner Hunt.

Commissioner Faulk then discussed the importance of timely completion of the Ethic’s Board documents completing the ethics information timely and inquired with Commissioner Latimer regarding how other Commissions operated and were compensated. Commissioner Latimer stated that she spoke someone on another Commission board and that the issue of forfeiting the per diem and travel allowance was not brought up to them. Commissioner Faulk stated for the record that the staff always provided the travel expense paperwork and that the financing for LCHR is so minimal, Commissioners should consider helping the entire situation.

Commissioner Latimer inquired as to what the Commission needed so that they can advocate for them during session. Dr. Raby mentioned that LCHR will be involved in the Equal Pay legislation for the 2017 Legislative Session, and went on to explain the process of a fiscal note, which was requested and completed.

Commissioner Latimer stated the Legislative Agenda for Women Coalition worked with her this year and was trying to find a Republican to file the Equal Pay bill.

Dr. Raby discussed last year’s committee hearing with the Commission.

Commissioner Latimer mentioned paid disclosure protection, which is enforceable.

Commissioner Faulk requested updates regarding the bills that can be tracked and provided to the Commissioners. Dr. Raby stated that Desha Gay or April White would keep them updated.

Commissioner Faulk welcomed New Business and asked if there was a need for Executive Session. There was none.

Commissioner Faulk discussed the next meeting date, June 12, 2017.

Dr. Raby stated she would discuss the change of meeting time with Chairwoman Jacobson.

Commissioner Hunt moved for the meeting to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Latimer.

The meeting concluded at 12:35 p.m.