

**Louisiana Commission on Human Rights**  
**Minutes**  
**Tuesday, April 17, 2012**  
**11:30 AM**  
**Louisiana Workforce Commission**  
**Baton Rouge, LA**

**Members Present:**

Angela Faulk  
Tamara Jacobson, Chairwoman  
Marshall Brumfield  
Eursla Hardy  
Rev. Willie Littleton  
Rev. Kirby Verret

**Staff Present:** Loyce Pierce Wright, Christa Davis, Dr. Leah Raby and Lauren Grundy

Chairwoman Jacobson called the meeting to order at 11:45 am and requested a roll call. There was a quorum.

Chairwoman Jacobson began the meeting by thanking the Commissioners for their attendance.

Chairwoman Jacobson then shared with the Commissioners that she had submitted a request to fill the vacant seats on the Board to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commission and Mr. Terrence Ginn, Director of Finance and Budget and liaison between LCHR and the Governor's Office last year. However, she indicated that there has been no response to date. Chairwoman Jacobson stated that she will be submitting a second request after the meeting.

Chairwoman Jacobson then requested that Mrs. Wright begin the executive director's report.

Mrs. Wright indicated that the 2010-2011 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) contract had been met, exceeding the contract amount of 91 cases by closing a total of 95 cases. In regards to the 2011-2012 contract, she stated, that the staff is on target for its goal to close 95 cases by May or before the FEPA conference. To date, Mrs. Wright stated that, 53 cases have been closed with monetary benefits awarded to Complainants in the amount of \$81,000. Mrs. Wright stated that on April 20, 2012, a strike team meeting will be held to examine cases that could be closed immediately to achieve the goal; noting, the significance of achieving the goal will allow, the Commission to request an upward modification, increasing the contract and monetary value.

Mrs. Wright reported that Attorney Stella Cziment has now joined the LCHR staff. Ms. Cziment, a graduate of Tulane Law, came highly recommended by Chairwoman Jacobson and the New Orleans EEOC, based on her previous volunteer experience with the EEOC. In addition, the contract with law clerk, Kim Persley, a third year Southern University law student, has been extended.

Mrs. Wright reported that there are currently two bills proposed by the Commission before the legislature for the 2011 Legislative Session. She provided an account that has led to the bills. Specifically, Attorney Pamela Jones, Shreveport, LA had brought to the attention of the Commission that the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law (LEDL) does not provide protection in state court against retaliation for those filing a complaint with the Commission. Meaning, if a claim is filed in state court relevant to the LEDL and retaliation, the retaliation portion of the claim cannot be heard. However, this omission does not impact LCHR's ability to issue a finding on retaliation because of our work sharing agreement with the EEOC complainants are protected in federal court. The second bill would provide the auspices of Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act to be moved from Louisiana Workforce Commission to the LCHR with adjudicating implications.

Mrs. Wright proceeded to discuss the Race exhibit. She explained that 2000 visitors attended the race exhibit. She also provided materials relevant to the exhibit and highlighted the sessions that were held.

Thereafter, Mrs. Wright proceeded to discuss the upcoming International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) conference hosted by LCHR in New Orleans August 5-8, 2012. Ms. Wright shared the responsibilities of the local host committee with the Commissioners and opened the floor for input regarding the conference. Mrs. Wright also shared that in December 2011 a meeting was held with the national president and the conference chair where tours were conducted of several hotels in New Orleans. Mrs. Wright stated LCHR will plan and host the conference on Tuesday, August 7, 2012 in the area of housing. She asked that all Commissioners avail themselves for sitting on the dais and introducing speakers during the conference.

Mrs. Wright shared that since LCHR does not have jurisdiction over housing, she met with James Perry, Executive Director of the New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, to prepare an agenda for Tuesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, she shared LCHR will host a reception Tuesday evening for the conference attendees at the Cabildo with a tour of the Katrina Exhibit at the Presbytere. Mrs. Wright has also developed partnerships with the Louisiana State Museum and Larry Bagneris, Executive Director, New Orleans Human Relations Commission to help sponsor the event. She stated that the Ritz Carlton will pay for the welcome reception on August 5.

Mrs. Wright also stated that LCHR will be responsible for printing the program booklet.

Commissioner Faulk inquired as to how many participants are anticipated in the conference. Mrs. Wright estimates 130. Commissioner Faulk indicated that she would speak to the owner of Sun Coast Land Services regarding producing the program booklet.

Mrs. Wright concluded the Executive Director's Report by presenting potential themes of the conference; polling the Commissioners' choice. She stated the themes were: Unity through Diversity, Connecting for Human Rights, and Linkages. The Commissioners voted for Unity through Diversity as their theme of choice. Mrs. Wright indicated that she would share the Commissioners' choice with the conference planning committee at the April 25, 2012 teleconference.

Chairwoman Jacobson and the Commissioners made several recommendations of dynamic speakers, dignitaries, and potential honorees. Chairwoman Jacobson also suggested that email communications be shared bi-weekly with ideas amongst the Commissioners.

Chairwoman Jacobson asked that the Executive Director's Report and the minutes from the August 16, 2011 meeting be accepted. The motion was adopted by Commissioner Faulk and seconded by Commissioner Verret.

The next item on the agenda was the next scheduled meeting and time. Commissioner Faulk suggested that the next meeting date be July 9, 2012.

Chairwoman Jacobson took a point of privilege in expressing her concern about the Commissioners understanding of their role because a previous Commissioner expressed disappointment about the roles of the Commissioners. She asked the Commissioners to review the information provided in their binders and explained that the Commissioners role is limited. She further explained that any concerns are welcome and encouraged. But, that no innuendos should be circulated that neither the staff nor the Commissioners are fulfilling their roles, as that would be untrue. Chairwoman Jacobson expressed that she will continue to work with the Governor's Office in determining who LCHR's liaison is and schedule a meeting because Commissioners had been receiving phone calls regarding their roles, but no one took the opportunity to contact her, as the Chairwoman via phone or email. She indicated that she was very disappointed in this and recent attempts to contact Mr. Ginn, to no avail, regarding the vacant seats that need to be filled.

Commissioner Littleton affirmed that the Commissioners were pleased with Chairwoman Jacobson's and the staff's capacity in fulfilling their roles for LCHR and Commissioner Faulk asked if there was anything that they could do to assist contacting the Governor's Office regarding the same.

Chairwoman Jacobson said she will reach out to Mr. Ginn again and email the Governor, copying the Commissioners on the communication regarding filling empty seats and the anonymous interrogatories occurring without speaking to her.

Ms. Wright announced that the Urban League's convention will be held in New Orleans from July 24-28.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.