

# **COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, November 26, 2018**  
Regular Meeting of the  
Prince George's County  
Human Relations Commission

## **ATTENDEES:**

**Commissioners:**  
**Merrill Smith, Jr. (Chairman)**  
**Janelle Johnson (Vice-Chair)**  
**Katrina Burson**  
**Gerald Folsom**  
**Johnathan Medlock**

**Kim Kendrick, Counsel to the Commission**

## **STAFF:**

**Jose M. Villegas**  
**Acting Executive Director**

**Kyla Hanington**  
**Clerk to the Commission**

## **ABSENT:**

**Nora Eidelman (Secretary)**  
**E. Anthony Langbehn**  
**MaKelia Mitchell**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Call to Order -- Chairman Merrill Smith Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:47 pm.
2. Adopt Agenda -- the agenda was adopted as written by unanimous vote.
3. Approval of Minutes -- the minutes from the October 29, 2018 Commission meeting were adopted by unanimous vote.

## **4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

**Chair Smith** noted that the November meeting would be the last meeting under the current administration. When the Commission next meets it will be under the new administration. The Chair has reached out to the current Chief of Staff and is looking forward to working with the transition team.

Reflecting on the previous year, he said that while the year began slowly we have been busy recently, particularly with the two recent public hearings. He sees the next year keeping the Commission busy, and while currently there are only eight Commissioners

he hopes to get our need for more Commissioners on the radar screen of the incoming administration. He hopes to have new Commissioners in place by late May or early June.

## **5. REPORT OF THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Acting Executive Director Jose M. Villegas** reported that interviews were held last week for the position of Language Access Coordinator. He foresees the new employee beginning the second week of December.

**Mr. Villegas** had not yet heard from County Executive-elect Alsobrooks' transition team about the new Executive Director so could not speak to who that might be.

There are currently forty-four open cases in the office and Mr. Villegas has reached out to EEOC to enquire about getting more cases transferred to our office. Fifteen new cases were begun in our office in October. Mr. Villegas noted that November typically has lower numbers due to the holidays.

## **6. NOTICE OF INTENT TO CERTIFY – NONE**

## **7. CASES SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

**HRC Case No.: HRC17-0809**

**EEOC Case No.: 531-2017-00390**

**Henry Lewis V Board of Education of Prince George's County**  
**(Investigator Langston Clay)**

**Panel Members: Commissioner Johnson as Chair, Commissioner Langbehn, Commissioner Folsom; and Chairperson Merrill Smith Jr. replaces Commissioner Jackson as the alternate.**

A public hearing in this matter was held on Tuesday, October 30, 2018. During that hearing the parties agreed two additional dates were needed. Those dates have been set for Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Panel Chair Johnson** thanked Commissioners Langbehn, Folsom, and Chair Smith as alternate for their flexibility in rescheduling the matter, and said the hearing is proceeding as scheduled.

**HRC Case No: HRC17-0804**

**EEOC Case No.: 12H-2017-00049**

**Darryl Green vs. Verizon Communications, Inc.**  
**(Investigator V'Hesspa Glenn)**

**Panel Members: Chairperson Merrill Smith Jr. replaces Commissioner Jackson as Chair; Commissioner Eidelman; Commissioner Medlock. Commissioner Burson as alternate.**

The Public Hearing in this matter was held on November 13<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**Panel Chair Smith** noted the hearing was concluded and the panel is now waiting the transcript and the closing statements, which are due on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Once those are received, deliberations will begin.

## 8. APPEAL HEARING

CAL18-29515 Petition for Judicial Review Filed by Mr. Onwuka in the matter of:  
**Iheukwumere Onwuka vs Laurel Racquet and Health Club, Inc dba SportFit**  
**HRC17-0703**

Oral arguments scheduled for January 31, 2019 at 9:00 am.

CAL18-23171 Petition for Judicial Review Filed by Ms. Steele in the matter of:  
**Crystal Steele vs Equity Solutions Group, Ltd.**  
**HRC15-0302**

Oral arguments scheduled for December 14, 2018 at 9:00 am.

Chair Smith reminded Commissioners these matters are on the agenda for informational purposes only. The Clerk will be in attendance at both of these circuit court hearings and will bring information back to the Commission.

## 9. CASES READY FOR DECISION - NONE

## 10. HEARING PANEL UPDATES - NONE

## 11. CASE UPDATE – NONE

## 12. ATTENDANCE RECORD – attached.

## 13. OLD BUSINESS – (outreach calendar, TBD for FY19)

## 14. NEW BUSINESS

**Chair Smith** hoped everyone had a good Thanksgiving. He reminded the Commissioners about their upcoming event on Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Country Club at Woodmore.

**Commissioner Burson** explained that she would have to miss some upcoming meetings for medical reasons. **Chair Smith** explained that medical absences are excluded from normal attendance policies and extended the Commission's best wishes to Commissioner Burson for her health and encouraged her to take as much time as needed.

**Clerk Hanington** has been working on getting the Commissioner's County email addresses re-activated and explained to the Commissioners the status of her requests and efforts at this time. Once the email addresses are re-activated, the Commissioners will need to log in using a County computer at least every thirty days to keep the email accounts active.

## **15. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Next Commission Meeting **January 28, 2019** at 6:30 pm.

## **16. CLOSED SESSION**

The Commission went into Closed Session by unanimous vote to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

Upon return from Closed Session Chair Smith noted that in one matter no decision was made and more information was requested from HRC staff in the second matter. The two issues will be held over to the next Commission meeting.

## **17. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting officially adjourned at 8:30 pm.

  
**Commissioner Nora Eidelman**  
Secretary  
**Kyla Hanington**  
Clerk to the Commission