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**VERMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**June 8, 2018**

PRESENT: Commissioners: Kevin Christie, Chair, Donald Vickers, Dawn Ellis and Mary Brodsky. Commissioner Besio- absent. Staff: Karen Richards, Executive Director (ED), (minutes).

Chair Christie called the meeting to order 9:25 at a.m.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

MINUTES: Vickers moved to accept the minutes of the May 24, 2018 as written. The motion was seconded by Brodsky. Ellis suggested that language related to the proposed contract with the former chair be changed to “explore hiring” and that the reference to Facebook efforts be described as “complicated by the site location.” Vickers amended his motion to accept the minutes with the proposed changes. The motion was again seconded by Brodsky. **Vote 4-0.**

EXECUTIVE ORDER: Systemic racism panel appointment discussion between Commissioners and ED Richards. Governor Scott vetoed bill S.281, instead creating an Executive Order (E.O.). S. 281 was an historic piece of legislation. Bill created a cabinet level position that would oversee working on systemic racism across all agencies. In its evolution, it shifted from an independent person to the panel sending qualified candidates to the Governor. Bill as it came out of the House was acceptable to the Administration; the Senate wanted to give the executive director more autonomy and gave the panel approval of any termination of the ED. This resulted in a veto of the bill and the issuance of the E.O.

Under the E.O., the HRC Chair is tasked with working with the Governor and other entities to appoint the five panel members. Several Commissioners expressed concerns that this person was not independent of the Governor and questioned whether the individual would really work collaboratively with the HRC. As an example of how HRC sees this potentially working, HRC could recommend that the executive director of racial equity look at issues that we see in our employment or public accommodations cases involving state government. This would ensure that HRC and the new E.D. are not working at cross purposes and are engaging in collaborative efforts to resolve issues. Ellis pointed out that we can view this as a “pilot project,” that could be tweaked by the Legislature after some experience.

The Commissioners examined the language of the E.O. and identified criteria they believe is needed for panel members so that the people have the skills that HRC believes are needed to do

this job. This will help to ensure that all candidates submitted to the Governor are qualified to do the work required by the E.O. We also want someone who will work collaboratively with the HRC.

ALE HIRING: ED Richards provided an update to Commissioners regarding the current interviewing schedule for the vacant ALE position. There were twelve candidates for the position. First interviews are scheduled for June 11 and 12, 2018.

ED HIRING: Further discussion surrounding ED hiring process and roles/responsibilities of Commissioners. Tentative hire date of November 1, 2018.

Suggestions were made for revisions to the job description, advertisement and task list. Staff will be invited to give their input at the June 28, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Brodsky agreed to create the questions for the staff input.

CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT: ED Richards reported to Commissioners on her meeting with former Chair Marzec-Gerrior regarding entering a contract to hire her for assistance with ED hiring process. ED Richards presented Commissioners with a Contractual Agreement requiring their approval prior to submitting to the Agency of Administration for final approval. Vickers moved that the executive director be authorized to submit the contract and waiver request with the changes suggested by Ellis. Seconded by Brodsky. Vote 4-0.

A motion to adjourn was made by Vickers and seconded by Brodsky. Vote 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. with Commissioners, staff and former Chair, Marzec-Gerrior meeting at Hubbard Park for a barbeque and a thank you to the former Chair for her many years of service with the HRC. No further Commission business was discussed.

**NEXT MEETING June 28, 2018.**

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June 2018.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Karen L. Richards  
Executive Director