

**WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
RETREAT AND COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
October 25, 2018 AT 9:00 AM
TACOMA RHODES CENTER**

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Charlene Strong, Clarence Henderson, Skylee Sahlstrom, Guadalupe Gamboa, and Deborah Cook.

Staff: Sharon Ortiz, Executive Director; Cheryl Strobert, Deputy Director; Susan DanPullo, Assistant Attorney General, Jed Van Krieken

OPENING AND WELCOME

Commissioner Strong chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order at 9:37 AM.

PRESENTATION BY KEITH SWENSON

Mr. Swenson is the Director of Boards and Commissions for the Office of the Governor. He shared the Governor's priorities for board members and commissioners. He encouraged the Commission to share its success stories with him so that they could be shared with the Governor. He stated there is also room on the Governor's website to post information or successes. The Commissioners requested to speak with the Governor about the agency budget. He indicated that he would facilitate setting up a meeting with Commissioners and the right people in government to have a discussion regarding the Commissions budgetary issues.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive session started at 10:40 AM and ended at 10:54 AM to discuss employee performance.

MEETING MINUTES

The September 27, 2018 Minutes were approved. Commissioner Sahlstrom motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Gamboa seconded the motion.

CASE CLOSURES

Deputy Director Strobert identified two case findings that were pulled prior to the meeting:

Erin Lynn v. Northshore Aikido
Elizabeth Contreras v. Pacific Facility Services, LLC

Commissioner Sahlstrom made a motion to approve the remaining cases for closure; Commissioner Gamboa seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Ortiz distributed copies of the finalized Decision Packages to the Commissioners. The packages included requests for funding for: outreach and education, civil rights investigators, administrative support, and to maintain our Information Technology, including our case management system and website maintenance. Director Ortiz added that the proposed new case management system to replace the current system has been placed on hold because the allotted money will not cover the costs associated with the system that is needed. Director Ortiz, Deputy Director Strobert, and Policy Analyst Lindstrand have a meeting scheduled next week with the Governor's office to emphasize the need for additional funding for the agency.

On October 18, 2018, Investigators, Heidi O'Day, Jeremy Page, Agata Moges and Policy Analyst Lindstrand worked on the information gathered during the sexual harassment policy workgroups with a goal towards developing policies and best practices. Maggie Leland, Executive Policy Manager with the Department of Labor and Industries will be providing us with technical assistance in reaching out to various industries following a meeting with Senator Keiser.

Director Ortiz indicated that she has spoken with Toby Olson (Employment Security) and Jan Gee, Grocery Lobbyist, regarding the changes to the service animal law that takes effect in January 2019 and the need for a legislative fix because the legislation includes a provision making it a civil infraction for knowingly misrepresenting an animal as a service animal. For the Commission to itself enforce such a provision is in conflict with the agency's mission.

The agency is recruiting for several civil rights investigators. Idolina Reta is retiring at the end of 2018. A retirement event is being planned.

Director Ortiz provided a presentation to Department of Social and Health Services LGBT group meeting. She will be following up with them on some other topics.

The agency is in the process of finalizing a Commission initiated complaint involving a boutique in Spokane which denied equal access to try on a dress to a transgender woman.

Deputy Director Strobert attended the Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA) 2018 Summit held in Lacey, WA. The theme was "Together Everyone Achieves More: Putting Pieces Together for Effective Access Services". The event was very well attended. WASCLA provided the Washington State Human Rights Commission a table for sharing Commission brochures at no cost to our agency. She also attended The Interagency Equity Workgroup hosted by the Department of Health. Discussion centered around SB6245 which is focused on the procurement of statewide interpreter services, but also has provisions related to certification and collective bargaining of interpreters.

COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Commissioner Henderson spoke at a couple of community-based functions regarding the Commission and the law against discrimination.

Commissioner Cook indicated that she is looking forward to participation at the Governor's Committee on Disability in Employment meetings. She also described the issues faced by individuals of the blind and low vision community relating to prescription labeling.

Commissioner Gamboa attended the first in person meeting involving the Washington Coalition to Eliminate Farmworker Sexual Harassment. The work plan for the year has been established.

2018 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

November 29, 2018:	5:30 PM – Via phone conference
December 27, 2018:	5:30 PM – Via phone conference
January 24, 2019:	TBD

OVERVIEW OF CASE INVESTIGATIONS

Director Ortiz provided a PowerPoint presentation in which she outlined case processes and procedures for complaint intake and investigation.

PRESENTATION BY KATE REYNOLDS

Ms. Reynolds is the Executive Director of the Washington State Ethics Board. She provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the jurisdiction of the Board, including Boards and Commissions. She shared information about the responsibilities of the Ethics board and the specific expectations of state employees in conducting themselves with the highest ethical standards as they conduct the state's business.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50PM.