

**Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 3, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm. Present: Sridhar Kadaba, Kevin Kuzia, David O'Connor (Chairman), Leslie Ohta, Isabel Rolfe (Secretary), and Human Resources Director, Sherri Tanguay.

Also present for the meeting was Town Attorney, Kevin Greene of Halloran & Sage.

1. Hearing of Betty Anane complaint of discrimination by Glastonbury Health Care Center

Attorney Greene introduced himself for the record and explained the hearing process. The Claimant, Ms. Betty Anane, and Respondent, Attorney Lyke, representing Glastonbury Health, were both present. Copies of the original complaint, the Respondent's answer, and other documents were distributed. Attorney Greene briefly went over Exhibits A-E.

Attorney Greene called Ms. Anane to testify and placed the witness under oath. Ms. Anane explained that her complaint of discrimination is outlined in Exhibit A. She stated that she worked for Glastonbury Health since 2016 and added that her coworkers know her dedication and good attendance record. Ms. Anane stated that she reported an incident of termites in a patient's room. She stated that she had to report the termite problem to her supervisor a second time because the situation was getting worse. Ms. Anane stated that she cares about the residents of the facility and wanted to transfer them to a different room. She explained that some coworkers were afraid of the insects and did not want to help because of fears that the bugs will cause an infestation in their homes. Ms. Anane explained that the termite infestation at the facility was getting worse and added that she saw termites crawling all over the room. She noted that Lysol and Clorox would be needed to control the infestation. Attorney Greene asked the witness to explain what occurred with the coworker. Ms. Anane stated that she asked her coworker, Sharitta, for help with moving the patients to another room and was met with yelling. Ms. Anane stated that she told Sharitta to forget about it and was met with more yelling. Ms. Anane stated that she asked Sharitta to stop arguing and added that the situation escalated. Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta was yelling very loudly, insulted her, and called her a "fucking African" and told her to "go back to her country." Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta insulted her family, including her deceased ex-husband and children. Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta threatened to wait for her in the parking lot and beat her up. Ms. Anane stated that she went back to her floor, continued her work and heard Sharitta arguing with nurse Tanisha. Ms. Anane stated that she heard Sharitta tell nurse Tanisha that she has a gun in her car. Ms. Anane stated that nurse Tanisha called the police when she heard Sharitta threaten gun violence.

Ms. Anane stated that she was not the aggressor in the situation. She stated that no warning was given prior to her termination. Ms. Anane stated that her coworkers noted that Sharitta was high and smelled like weed. Ms. Anane explained that she was a dedicated employee and worked during the pandemic when no one else wanted to work. She stated that she has made so many sacrifices and feels discriminated against and hurt. Chairman O'Connor asked Ms. Anane to

detail the meeting with the supervisor that led to the termination. Ms. Anane stated that the administrator she spoke with is Patrick and added that he does not know her. Ms. Anane stated that she asked Patrick for the reason for the termination and was told it was for saying “kiss my ass.” Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if her claim is based on race. Ms. Anane replied “yes” and stated that she is a quiet person and her English is not as good as the other employees. Ms. Anane stated that the people at Glastonbury Health are afraid of loud people and people who were born in the United States. Chairman O’Connor asked the witness if she received a letter of termination. Ms. Anane replied “no” and explained that it was just a phone call from Patrick. Ms. Anane stated that it was Marlene, the Director of Nursing, who wrongly accused her of saying “kiss my ass,” which was the reason for the termination. Ms. Anane reiterated that Sharitta was the aggressor threatening to use the gun to “blow her head” in the parking lot. Commissioner Ohta asked if there were any other people involved who were fired. Ms. Anane stated that the nurse who called the police is still working there. Ms. Anane reiterated that the nurse called the police because of Sharitta’s threat of a gun in the car.

Attorney Greene asked Ms. Anane if her claim is that race is the basis of the discrimination. Ms. Anane stated that she is African and Black and that English is her second language. Ms. Anane reiterated that the people who work at Glastonbury Health are scared of people who are born here, who are loud and speak English well. Ms. Anane stated that she had perfect attendance and asked the Commission to check her file. Ms. Anane stated that there are no complaints in her records. Attorney Greene asked the witness if she had any prior disputes with Sharitta. Ms. Anane replied “no”. Attorney Green asked the witness if she worked with Sharitta frequently. Ms. Anane replied “no” and added that Sharitta does not help when asked. Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta called her “Betty Mae”, a “slave name.” Ms. Anane explained that Sharitta called her “Betty Mae” because of her African ancestry and treated her with disrespect, comparing her to a slave. Attorney Greene asked the witness if any managers witnessed Sharitta arguing and threatening. Ms. Anane stated that the night shift supervisor, Sandra, was there. Attorney Greene asked the witness to confirm the testimony given that there had been no prior warnings or complaints. Ms. Anane stated that there were no warnings or complaints and explained that she expected a verbal warning or a suspension and not termination. Chairman O’Connor asked the witness why she would expect suspension. Ms. Anane stated that she does not know and explained that she did not expect to be terminated. Ms. Anane stated that she does not speak in a vulgar way and explained that her children do not speak that way either. Ms. Anane swore under oath that she did not say “kiss my ass.”

Commissioner Kadaba asked Ms. Anane if she had any interaction with Patrick. Ms. Anane replied that she had only met him twice and added that he is polite. Chairman O’Connor asked the witness if there was any physical altercation with her and Sharitta. Ms. Anane replied “no” and stated that Sharitta was high and smelled like weed. Ms. Anane stated that she is not the only one who observed this and stated that the staff smelled and noticed it too. Attorney Greene asked the witness if Glastonbury Health asked her to write a statement. Ms. Anane stated that they told her to write a statement and Patrick was the one who terminated her. Ms. Anane stated that it seemed like other people were listening in on the phone call, and added that there were others telling him what to say in response to the question regarding the reason for termination. Ms. Anane reiterated that she did not say what they accuse her of saying. Attorney Greene asked the witness if she was ever subjected to name calling or someone referring to her African

ancestry and race. Ms. Anane replied yes and stated that the workers that speak better English have their jobs. Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if she had ever said anything to intimidate an employee. Ms. Anane replied “never”. Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if she ever threatened violence. Ms. Anane replied “no”. Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if she ever threw an object. Ms. Anane replied “no”. Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if she had ever yelled or raised her voice. Ms. Anane replied “no”. Commissioner Kadaba asked the witness about Sharitta’s race. Ms. Anane replied “Black American”. Commissioner Kadaba asked the witness if she was employed as an independent contractor. Ms. Anane replied “no”. Commissioner Ohta asked the witness if she cooperated with the management following the altercation. Ms. Anane replied “yes”.

Attorney Greene asked the Commission members if they had any other questions. Ms. Tanguay asked the witness to detail what she said to Sharitta. Ms. Anane stated that she asked Sharitta to give her a hand to help put the resident, Josephine, to bed in another room, away from the insects. Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta replied “no” and added that she told Sharitta she only asked because she was not doing anything. Ms. Anane stated that she told Sharitta that she does not have to assist, and added that it was then that the vulgar language and threatening had started. Ms. Anane stated that she tried to deescalate the situation and told Sharitta to act mature and stop with the insulting and disrespectful language. Ms. Anane stated that Sharitta kept following her and added that another nurse tried to calm the situation and Sharitta stated that she has a gun in the car. Attorney Greene asked Attorney Lyke if he had any questions. Attorney Lyke asked the witness about Sharitta’s ancestry. Ms. Anane replied “Black American”. Attorney Lyke asked the witness if she spoke with a loud voice. Ms. Anane replied “no” and stated that Sharitta followed her, threatened her, and another nurse told her to stop. Ms. Anane stated that the nurse called the police when she heard Sharitta threaten by stating that she had a gun in her car. Attorney Lyke asked the witness where she was when the police arrived. Ms. Anane stated that she was on her floor and stated that nurse Tanisha called the police when Sharitta threatened gun violence. Ms. Anane stated that nurse Tanisha still has her job. Attorney Lyke asked the witness if she acknowledges that, during the call from the Director of Nursing, she was informed about the reason for the termination. Ms. Anane stated that she spoke with Patrick. Chairman O’Connor asked for more clarification on the Director of Nursing. Ms. Anane explained that the Director of Nursing, Marlene, was the one who told Patrick what to say. Ms. Anane explained that the other employees often call out sick on the same day and get to keep their jobs, whereas she had perfect attendance and was terminated because of something she did not do. Ms. Anane reiterated that nurse Tanisha called the police and added that she was not the aggressor and it is documented in the police report (Exhibit C).

Attorney Greene asked Ms. Anane if she had any witnesses. Ms. Anane responded that Tanisha is her witness. Attorney Greene asked why the witness was not present. Ms. Anane stated that she does not have Tanisha’s contact information. Attorney Greene stated that the contact information is listed in the police report. Attorney Greene asked Attorney Lyke if he had any witnesses. Attorney Lyke stated that he would like to present the employee handbook and asked the witness to identify her signature (Exhibit E, last page). Attorney Greene asked the witness if that is her signature and asked if she was familiar with the rules and policies. Ms. Anane replied “yes” and stated that she did not do any of the things she is accused of. Ms. Anane stated that it would be helpful if Marlene was a witness and added that she feels that she was discriminated

against. Attorney Greene asked Attorney Lyke if he had any other evidence to present. Attorney Lyke replied no. Attorney Greene asked the witness why she feels race is a reason. Ms. Anane stated that she is African, not born here, and her English is not good. Chairman O'Connor noted that country of origin might be the reason the witness is describing. Ms. Anane stated that she was called "African" by Black American employees and added that she saw coworkers mistreat a Hispanic woman who did not speak good English. Ms. Anane stated that she comforted her Hispanic coworker and told her to stick with the position because of the paycheck. Chairman O'Connor asked Attorney Lyke for the reason the termination letter was not given. Attorney Lyke stated that there is significant turnaround and added that sometimes a letter is not given. Attorney Greene asked the witness if there was anything else she would like to add. Ms. Anane stated that she feels hurt and discriminated against. Ms. Anane stated that she asked the Director of Nursing for two days off because her ex-husband had passed away. Ms. Anane stated that other people found out that her ex-husband had died and would bring it up in an insulting way. Ms. Anane stated that she feels her privacy was violated.

Commissioner Kadaba directed Attorney Lyke to page 58 of the employee handbook (Exhibit E). Commissioner Kadaba noted that there is a clear process outlined and added that it is the question to ask. Attorney Greene explained that Attorney Lyke is not a witness and asked Commissioners to direct questions to him. Attorney Greene asked Attorney Lyke to answer the question. Attorney Lyke stated that a reason does not need to be given for at-will employees and added that Glastonbury Health determined that shouting, racist language, and violence puts nursing home residents at risk. Attorney Lyke stated that all the employees who were terminated were Black individuals and added that he does not feel this matter should go any further. Attorney Greene closed the hearing and explained that the Commission will deliberate during the Executive Session portion of the meeting. Attorney Greene explained that a written decision will be sent to all of the parties and will be reflected in the minutes. Commissioner Ohta left the meeting at 6:50pm.

The Human Relations Commission entered into Executive Session at 6:50pm.

2. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev
Recording Secretary