

Commissioners Present: Marcia Merrill, Chair; Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Cary Brown, Carol Buchdahl, Laine Dunham, Ruth Finn, Susie Hudson, Peg Martin, and Shambulia Gadsden-Sams.

Commissioners Absent: Ann Cardinal, Cathy Frey, Jennie Gartner, Karen Henry, Anne McLaughry, and Marion Milne.

Advisors Present: Sandy Bettis representing Central Vermont Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Dr. Felicia Kornbluh representing Women's and Gender Studies at UVM, and Jenna Tofferi from Senator Leahy's office.

Staff: Janet Bullard, Wendy Love, and Lilly Talbert.

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

Marcia called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Commissioners shared their thoughts on Equal Pay day.

Minutes

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2012 meeting as submitted. Seconded by Laine Dunham and voted unanimously.

Current Topics of Interest

Reproductive Health

As Chair of the Commission's Health, Safety and Civil Rights Committee, Carol Buchdahl gave an update on the various issues surrounding women's reproductive health issues that have been happening nationally lately. Discussion ensued. Carol agreed to keep her attention tuned to these issues and update the Commission as necessary.

Bennington Forum

Laine Dunham reported that she, Lilly and Janet met with the Director of Child and Maternal Health late last month to plan a jointly sponsored listening forum on Wednesday, September 12th in Bennington. Plan is to have a commission meeting in the morning – we may adjust the starting time due to travel – and then a listening forum from 1-3 p.m. Carol has graciously agreed to facilitate the forum. Details will be forthcoming as the date gets closer.

Equal Rights Amendment

Marcia reported that there is a Joint Resolution (S.J. Res. 39) before the 112th Congress to remove the deadline for ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. She has been in touch with the sponsor of the resolution as well as Vermont's congressional delegation urging the passage of the resolution. She said that she doesn't see any particular Commission action at this point, but wants everyone to be aware of the resolution and what the equal rights amendment means to women's equality – unless women's equality is in the

constitution, any right of ours can be taken away with legislation. Marcia urged us all to educate others about the importance of the equal rights amendment.

Prison Update

Wendy reported that the population at the Chittenden County Correctional facility is now at 122 inmates. The commission is working with the Defender General's office to respond to issues raised by inmates in letters to the commission. Women's Legislative Caucus met recently to be briefed on the followup to the white paper. H.765 continues to move along in the legislative process and she noted that the request that gender-specific data has been heard and at a minimum reporting will be done on a facility basis. Our language about gender-specific, trauma informed training for correctional officers did make it into the bill. She noted that the bill would have to go to a conference committee since the Senate version differed from the house version.

Executive Session

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl to go into executive session. Seconded by Laine Dunham and voted unanimously.

Motion made by Laine Dunham to come out of executive session. Seconded by Carol Buchdahl and voted unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.