

Commissioners Present: Marcia Merrill, Chair; Eileen Boland, Cary Brown, Carol Buchdahl, Laine Dunham, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Karen Henry, Susie Hudson, Marion Milne, and Shambulia Gadsden-Sams.

Commissioners Absent: Gretchen Bailey, Ann Cardinal, Jennie Gartner, Anne McClaughry, and Peg Martin.

Advisors Present: Sandra Bettis representing Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Joanna Cole representing the League of Women Voters, and Cecile Johnston representing the Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council.

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

Meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

### Welcome/Introductions/Minutes of June 8, 2011 Meeting

Marcia welcomed new Commissioner Shambulia Gadsden-Sams and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

Motion made by Laine Dunham to accept the minutes of the June 8, 2011 Commission meeting as submitted. Seconded by Eileen Boland and voted unanimously.

Continuation of June Commission Meeting planning session – Review data from June. Marcia turned the meeting over to Carol and Laine to lead us through the planning session.

Carol reviewed the work from the June Commission meeting. Laine then explained that she was going to break us into 3 small groups to do some group work. Small groups worked on Essential Messages and Success Indicators.

### **Essential Messages:**

1. Reduce discrimination against and encourage opportunities for women.
2. Advocate for those issues affecting Vermont's women and girls which leads to the well-being of all Vermonters.
3. Educate about the Vermont Commission on Women and our resources, data, research and issues affecting Vermont's women and girls.

**Success Indicators:**

1. Active participation in Commission meetings and events and being informed about the issues, our policies and publications.
2. Positive feedback from our constituents, event sponsors, press and legislators.
3. Acting as an ambassador for the Commission and Vermont's women and girls to our legislators, our communities, our local press, and within our personal and professional circles.

**Women Can Do Update**

Janet informed everyone that the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Women Can Do! Conference is a full day of hands-on workshops in trades, technology, and other fields non-traditional to women. The day is designed both to support high school girls who are enrolled in non-traditional programs in technical and career centers as well as to introduce all girls to the opportunities in these non-traditional fields. Nearly 400 girls from all over Vermont attend the conference. Last year the Commission – commissioners, advisors, and staff volunteered at the conference in lieu of our October commission meeting.

Janet is once again looking for volunteers to help with various tasks throughout the day. The conference will be held on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center. The Commission is planning on having a commission meeting at some point during the day on campus.

**Prison Move Update**

Wendy gave an update on the move of women inmates from Northwestern State Correctional Facility to Chittenden Correctional Facility. The move happened on August 5<sup>th</sup>. Needed changes to the physical plant are still underway and may not be finished for many months. The facility is too small for the number of inmates. Currently 2-4 women are sleeping in each cell and some women are sleeping in the gym. . Not enough gender-responsive, trauma-informed training for staff. Physical contact between mothers and children during regular visiting hours is much more limited than it was at Northwest Correctional Facility. However the space for individual mother-child visits is much improved. No crochet hooks and no yarn unless it comes through the commissary. The Community High School of Vermont program is much better than before, the Kids-A-Part program is now happening on weekends as well; the Mercy Connections Mentoring Program is blossoming. However, programming and jobs are virtually non-existent within the facility. There are currently 30 jobs for 165 women. Also the pay for work has been cut from 85 to 25 cents per hour to bring it in line with pay at men's facilities. The big unknown remains to be the programming and how many women will be eligible for work crews or other programming outside of the correctional facility. If women do elect to go out of the facility for programs or work they will be totally segregated from the rest of the inmates.

**Executive Session**

Carol Buchdahl made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel issues. Seconded by Ruth Finn. After discussion the commission came out of executive session.

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl to accept the plan presented by Eileen Boland to evaluate the Executive Director and to direct the Commission Chair and the Chair's Committee to proceed with the plan. Seconded by Marion Milne and motion carried.

Announcements/Other Business

Marcia asked if there were any announcements or other business. Hearing none, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.