

Vermont Commission on Women

Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2013

Vermont Technical College, Administration Building, Room 226
Randolph Center, VT

Commissioners present:

Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Ruth Finn,
Shambulia Gadsden Sams, Nancy E. LaVarnway,
Ariel Wengroff, Jennie Gartner, Charlotte
Dennett

Commissioners absent:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Laine Dunham, Gretchen
Bailey, Cathy Frey, Susie Hudson, Marion Milne
(one vacancy)

Advisors present: Traci Sawyers representing Building Bright Futures, Becky Raymond representing Building Bright Futures

Guests: Governor Peter Shumlin, Martha Mathis

Staff: Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert, Claire Greene

Presiding: Eileen Boland

Recording: Claire Greene

Welcome/Introductions

Eileen welcomed Claire to her first meeting and asked Commissioners to introduce themselves and explain why or how they became involved with VCW.

Approval of September 2013 minutes

MOTION made by Carol Buchdahl, seconded by Ruth Finn:

To approve the minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED

Staff Update:

Cary briefly discussed the Enough Said financial literacy working group, the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance, the Paid Family Leave Study Committee, the Governor's Anti-Poverty work group, and Act 31. She informed the Commission that she was asked to present at the Vermont Bar Association's Young Lawyers' Division conference in January, and that the Commission has requested funding for staff professional development.

Lily requests that everyone look at their commissioner bio and email her updates, remember to read VIEW, and contribute to this newsletter. She is currently updating the Legal Rights of Women in Vermont. She reminded commissioners and advisors that VCW staff is presenting an informal orientation at the office to discuss our tasks/work in progress in greater detail at 8:30 a.m. on December 11, 2013, right before the December VCW meeting. All commissioners and advisors are invited. Lilly passed around the new Human Trafficking Task Force's response protocol document for

Vermont that will soon be found on our website. New and updated Equal Pay, Workforce Rights for Women, and VCW agency brochures and pamphlets are out.

Discussion of Governor's anti-poverty work group

Cary introduced the work of the governor's anti-poverty group and asked for commissioner contributions to bring to the governor:

Some of the points raised included:

- watch the money very carefully; don't want to let the poor bear the brunt esp. poor children
- discussions around poverty have not really been in the public sphere, it has become invisible and we are too often ignoring it, hoping the group does not monitor, self-select, or dilute their qualitative findings, needs to be raw and unvarnished
- questions around criteria for homelessness
- the elephant in the room is the tax issue /unfairness of taxes, encourages this to be loud and clear, not fair to live in an inequality of sacrifice
- concerned about veteran representation and their families, need to directly involve this population or have meaningful representatives to speak on their behalf
- job training and education, bring the voices of those that are living in poverty to the table, we must find the pathways to poverty in order to provide meaningful and adequate resources/services
- make sure that this effort is basic needs focused (housing, security, food)
- women need to have more of a say in what peace/security/safety looks like as they are disproportionately affected by violence and war

Agenda Planning:

Eileen asked commissioners to share thoughts on areas of focus in the coming year that were identified at the September 2013 meeting:

Act 31 Equal Pay Act

Enough Said: financial literacy and mentoring for young girls

50th Anniversary: leadership theme, big event(s), linking with Vermont Women's History Month

Women in Corrections: best practices, poverty report, housing, joint oversight committee update

Healthcare/A.C.A: research and access

There was widespread agreement that all of these are important areas of focus, and in particular women in corrections and the work with the Enough Said report.

50th anniversary

A committee will meet within the next month to begin planning for VCW's 50th anniversary in 2014. Several ideas were shared for the committee to start considering:

- Taking Your Place at the Table: localized and regional discussions throughout the state, celebration and promotion, asking us to think about the geography when planning these events
- requested the Taking Your Place at the Table event in the Franklin County Region happen before Franklin County Women's Exposition
- one big bash in the fall of 2014 that includes and recognizes as many people as possible who have been involved over the course of VCW's history
- compose a historical perspective to thread throughout the celebrations, deep reflection on success and areas that still need improvement, perhaps inspecting past failures to develop more effective future solutions.

Announcements:

Meeting adjourned at 11:31.