

Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes
October 8th, 2014
2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
St. Albans, Vermont

Commissioners present:

Eileen Boland, Danielle Martel
Laine Dunham, Melinda Moulton
Carol Buchdahl, Nancy LaVarnway
Kerry Secrest,
Charlotte Dennett

Commissioners absent:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Carol Buchdahl
Shambulia Gadsden Sams, Ruth Finn
Dr. Felicia Kornbluh, Gretchen Bailey
Lynn Batchelor, Jennie Gartner
Susie Hudson

Staff: Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert, Claire Greene

Presiding: Carol Buchdahl

Recording: Claire Greene

Welcome/Introductions: Carol welcomed everyone and introduced VCW's newest commissioner, Kerry Secrest.

Advisory Council

Cary reviewed the changes to VCW's advisory council protocol. Ideally, the process of adding advisory council members will cultivate a healthy and ongoing discussion around the direction and mission of the Commission. Cary also reviewed a document outlining potential new advisory council members. Without quorum there will be no voting this meeting, but commissioners discussed the suggestions.

Organizations discussed include:

- Mercy Connections
- Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
- Women's Business Owner's Network
- Vermont Women's Fund
- Vermont Women in Higher Education

Currently, all the above organizations are already working in partnership with VCW. The objective of the new advisory council structure is to not only formalize these relationships, but become explicitly more inclusive and diverse. Moreover, for work happening around common issues, this process will help create a united front between the commission and the greater women's community.

Commissioners suggested that staff find some sort of way to ensure these decisions are being made consistently and objectively.

Planning Discussion Follow Up

Last meeting, quite a bit of time was devoted to what VCW would like focus on in the coming year. Cary passed around some notes and reiterated how the brainstorming process unfolded. Questions around the planning notes were answered.

Cary also passed around a sheet outlining possible edits to VCW's priority issues.

Commissioner questions and thoughts:

- Spring and fall advisory council meetings were clarified. The fall meeting functions as a review of the 5 VCW issue areas for advisory council members as well as an opportunity for members to share their (primarily legislative) goals. The spring meeting is open to all members to discuss programmatic priorities.
- Proposal for VCW to make a booklet on despair and suicide. Research is needed to provide information on what Vermont women need to know and where to get help. Geography and immediacy matters therefore regional resources are a must. The small commissioner group that volunteered to spearhead this initiative is hoping to have something substantial produced within the year. Stay tuned for opportunities to join the conversation within the next month.

Staff/Event Updates

- Next meeting we will begin getting staff updates in writing.
- Events from the past month and for the upcoming month were discussed.
- Melinda and Cary recapped their meeting with the governor. Topics included: the budget, member diversity, the commission's current work, ways create a stronger partnership, and opportunities for greater collaboration.
- VCW's FY2016 budget was reviewed

Cary and Melinda are attending a two day meeting on paid sick days in Burlington tomorrow and Friday.

Announcements

- Nancy LaVarnway has been reappointed.
- Alex Miller, the new VCW intern from Norwich University, will be attending the panel following the meeting.
- Danielle gave a quick overview of what to expect at the re-entry panel.

Meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.