

# Vermont Commission on Women

## Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2014

Pavilion Office Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room  
Montpelier, VT

### Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Eileen Boland,  
Laine Dunham, Melinda Moulton  
Ruth Finn, Jennie Gartner  
Nancy LaVarnway, Gretchen Bailey  
Charlotte Dennett, Susie Hudson  
Lynn Batchelor

### Commissioners absent:

Carol Buchdahl, Danielle Martel  
Shambulia Gadsden Sams,  
Dr. Felicia Kornbluh

**Advisors present:** Diane Derby representing Senator Leahy's Office, Kim Swartz representing the Vermont Department of Health, Becky Raymond representing Building Bright Futures, and Dr. Sanjukta Ghosh representing Women's and Gender Studies Program at Castleton State College.

**Staff:** Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert, Claire Greene

**Presiding:** Marcia Merrill

**Recording:** Claire Greene

### Welcome/Introductions

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Marcia welcomed everyone and introduced new commissioner Lynn Batchelor, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

### Remembrances

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This summer brought us the deaths of two people that are very close to the commission: Cheryl Hanna and Marion Milne. Those present shared stories of Marion. An envelope was passed around to donate money to the Calef Memorial Library on behalf of the Commission in memory of Marion. A discussion arose around how to celebrate and honor the life of Cheryl. Does the commission have a role in helping other women at risk of making this same choice?

Jennie, Melinda, Charlotte, Kim, and Lynn offered to be in a group to get data & find ways the commission can make a difference with helping women in the state who are struggling with depression. Melinda would like to spearhead this group. Some possible ideas discussed included:

- Not only focus on depression, also need to do something to honor and celebrate her.
- Solidify an internship program in her name, mentoring young women and maintaining the valuable link between Cheryl, VLS and the Commission.
- An annual event with the law school, for example "Cheryl Hanna memorial lecture"
- Lilly will coordinate an email with those who would like to work on VLS/Commission forms of commemorating Cheryl

### **Approval of June 2014 minutes**

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**MOTION** made by Eileen Boland, seconded by Ruth Finn:  
To approve the minutes as submitted.

**MOTION APPROVED**

### **Advisory Council Process**

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Last meeting the Commission made changes to the AC structure to make it more useful and meaningful for both advisors. From here on, there will be two meetings specifically for advisory council members: one in the fall on legislative priorities and one in the spring around programming issues.

The commission discussed possible processes for determining membership on the advisory council. Some ideas discussed included:

- Members can be nominated
- Operating guidelines—members have no set time, no expiration date. Members can be admitted on a rolling basis.
- Primary focus: here to keep us informed about what is happening on the ground in their work with women. AC will hopefully be able to connect and learn from one another more easily.
- Trying to run a meeting with 50+ voices gets hectic and tricky.
- Like the idea of revisiting this--- perhaps an AC council report given with the minutes for the monthly meeting—prevent/curb any potential chaos
- Ultimate vision: to refine the relationship of knitting us all together.
- AC members: enjoy maintaining a sense of VCW priorities as they evolve throughout the year

Additional input: send to Cary to revisit at the next meeting.

### **Events Updates**

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Incarcerated Women's Initiative conference: lots of interest -- about 100 attendees so far  
Unfinished Agenda Women's Policy Conference: Marcia, Lynn and Melinda are going to try and attend. Cary will be presenting about the equal pay law.  
November Meeting: Jennie would like topic suggestions for the panel she is hosting @ Rutland High School. Eileen and Nancy offered to help answer this question. Forward all topic recommendations to staff and/or Jennie within the next week.

### **VCW Planning**

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Commissioners had a discussion about work within VCW's five priority issues.

Meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m.