

**Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Pavilion Office Building, 4th floor conference room, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Carol Buchdahl, Laine Dunham, Ruth Finn, Nancy LaVarnway, Melinda Moulton, Colin Ryan, Kerry Secrest

Commissioners absent: Lynn Batchelor, Eileen Boland, Charlotte Dennett, Cathy Frey, Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson, Danielle Martel

Advisors present:

Diane Derby of U.S. Senator Leahy's Office
Katarina Lisaius of U.S. Senator Sanders' Office
Christine Ryan, Vermont State Nurses' Association
Rachel Jolly of Vermont Works for Women

Guests: Robyn Freedner-Maguire of Let's Grow Kids

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Myers, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Hannah Myers

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

Welcome/Introductions: Marcia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

Approval of April, 2016 Minutes

MOTION made by Carol, seconded by Laine:

To approve the minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED

Approval of March, 2016 Minutes

MOTION made by Carol, seconded by Laine:

To approve the minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED

Approval of the FY2017 Meeting Schedule

MOTION made by Melinda, seconded by Nancy

To approve the minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED

Staff/event updates:

Legislative:

Cary discussed S.247 which was introduced by Senator Bray to increase the record keeping around the state on pay data to help us understand whether equal pay laws are being followed, which did not pass this session. Cary reported that she has discussed this matter with Senator Bray and Annie Noonan, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor to learn what else we might be able to do to encourage data collection outside of passing another law. Cary would love Commissioner help and participation with this, if you're interested, please let her know.

H.620 passed, providing increased access to contraception by extending the federal birth control benefit to cover vasectomies at no cost; allowing women with private or public insurance to obtain up to twelve months of hormonal contraceptive methods during one visit; and increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rate for Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives, making it easier for providers to stock.

Domestic Violence Accountability funding was cut and the Vermont Domestic Violence Council will no longer have funds to have a Domestic Violence Accountability Coordinator to support the accountability programs.

Change The Story:

Commissioners watched the [new Change the Story VT video](#). The Change the Story Steering Committee had a meeting on Monday with 40 stakeholders to ask for feedback about the research done so far. A few highlights were that several folks wanted to know more about how many people have benefits like paid time off and about how that gets used. People wanted to learn more about assets and savings, as well as more about female independent contractors and their motivations behind working in that capacity. People are interested to learn what the return on investment is for women going to college, and the effect of college debt, both on women and on our economy, and to look further into K-12 education. The next Change the Story report will be issued in October and will focus on Women's Business Ownership.

Some comments during the discussion which followed:

- At the CTS stakeholder meeting, there was a great interest in stories, and it might be good to highlight a statistic, and then tell the story of women who have been successful to provide pathways for young women to success.
- Is CTS reaching out to high school guidance counselors?
- most teachers don't have time to introduce something very long and maybe we could come up with 10-15 minute programs that educators could introduce over time.
- An advisor shared that her son is a student in middle school and they recently had a career program. She was impressed as there were more women at the table, there was more science and IT, she heard non-traditional storytelling, and a lot of new possibilities were being opened up for students. She thinks this was part of a new curriculum, and would be happy to explore that further.

Staff Updates:

The Equal Pay Compact is doing well, over 70 have signed on. Keep talking it up, we'd love to have hundreds on there. It is on the agenda for the Montpelier City Council tonight.

Lilly will be tabling and signing employers up for the Equal Pay Compact at the upcoming VBSR Conference thanks to the generosity of Melinda Moulton and Main Street Landing and at the Chamber of Commerce's Business Expo on May 25th and 26th in Burlington.

Lilly invited commissioners to join us at Senator Leahy's Women's Economic Opportunity Conference (WEOC) on **June 4th** at Vermont Tech. Attorney General Loretta Lynch will be the keynote speaker.

September 14th will be VCW's Gubernatorial Forum, which will feature major party candidates, and all who are running now have it on their calendars. The event will be moderated by Anne Galloway of vtdigger.

Our next business meeting on **June 8, 2016** is our Advisory Council meeting, and Kerry Secret has graciously agreed to facilitate that meeting.

We are working on a Summit in **September** with the Women's Caucus, more details to come.

Finally, our Legislative Lunch will be on our normal business meeting day on **January 11, 2016**. We will be discussing this event in more detail later.

Thank you to Gretchen for her amazing work on the Legal Rights of Women Handbook update!

Committee and full group discussion:

Commissioners broke out into committees to revisit the Commission's priority issue areas, and to think about what kind of updates are needed, and to take a look at the outcomes. Do things need to be updated, deleted, or added? Small groups reviewed the document, discussed updates, and reconvened as a large group at 11:07 a.m.

Staff will compile these changes, send them out to Commissioners, and take response e-mails with further thoughts. We will discuss this again at the next meeting.

Gubernatorial Forum:

Lilly is working with Business and Professional Women and the League of Women Voters of Vermont, to plan a gubernatorial forum in the fall. Last time VCW did this was in 2002. The moderator asked each candidate the same 5-6 questions. She would love Commissioners to help formulate possible questions for the candidates.

Commissioners worked in groups of 3 to come up with 2 questions that are essential to hear from the candidates about their position on issues that impact Vermont women, based on the priorities

document and that are specific and not easily dismissed by candidates, and reconvened to share in a large group at 11:50 a.m. Lilly will continue to seek input from commissioners and advisory organizations in an ongoing process to finalize the questions.

Legislative Lunch:

Carol led discussion about the Legislative Lunch, focusing on fundraising, and the desired outcomes.

The Vermont Commission on Women Education & Research Foundation sponsors this event each year. In the past, the budget has been approximately \$3,000, but lunch costs have gone up, this needs to be increased. In the past, commissioners have often contributed by paying for their own lunch, but Commissioners should come without worry if paying is a burden.

Marcia and Melinda will head up fundraising together with Nancy and Colin. Commissioners offered fundraising suggestions including finding sponsoring organizations and Colin has a fundraising model to be discussed with the fundraising Committee.

Legislative Luncheon Planning Committee: Carol, Melinda, Marcia, Nancy, Laine, Colin and Christine. Hannah is the staffer on this.

Announcements

Rachel Jolly announced the VWW summer camp programs for middle school girls (Rosie's Girls and Dirt Divas).

Melinda announced that the legislature approved a study on expanding Dr. Dynosaur coverage to age 26, and that the Women's Leadership County of United Way is doing an event to collect clothing, food, etc. for older women, called "Leading from the Heart".

Kerry announced that the Women's Leadership Circle will be in Windham County in Fall 2016 and the application period is open. They are considering Addison County, and requests suggestions about potential participants.

Colin watched and recommended Michael Moore's newest film, *Where to Invade Next*. One thing he noted that the film covered was that in Iceland the male run banks created the economic disaster, and the female run bank survived because they hadn't taken stupid risks. This is another strong argument for gender diversity.

Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.