

Vermont Commission on Women

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2013

4th Floor Conference Room, Pavilion Office Building, Montpelier, VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey,
Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl,
Laine Dunham, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey,
Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson, Nancy LaVarnway,
Danielle Martel, Marion Milne, Shambulia
Gadsden Sams, and Ariel Wengroff

Commissioners absent:

Susie Hudson

Advisors present: Diane Derby representing Senator Leahy's Office, Becky Raymond representing Building Bright Futures, Abigail Kiablick representing Bernie Sanders' office, and Kelly Walsh representing Vermont Works for Women.

Staff: Cary Brown and Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Lilly Talbert

1. Welcome/Introductions

Marcia welcomed and requested introductions and for each person to address the question, "Which women's issues are you most concerned about and why?"

2. Approval of June 2013 meeting minutes

MOTION made by Carol Buchdahl and seconded by Eileen Boland:

To approve the minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED

3. Discussion of Paid Leave

Paid Sick Days

Commissioners discussed the bill H208 which will be taken up in the House General, Housing, & Military Affairs committee when the legislature reconvenes. Several issues were raised:

- a new version is slated to be introduced in the Senate, which addresses per diem health care workers – some commissioners felt that this language is too industry-specific, not covering substitute teachers, food service, construction, hospitality, child care, and other on-call workers
- some commissioners stressed the importance of having business support for the bill, and it was noted that Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility is supportive, as are a number of other individual businesses
- a straw poll was taken in answer to the question of whether commissioners support requiring paid sick days in a manner that is fair to employees and employers, and all commissioners present were in favor

Paid Family Leave Study Committee

Cary has been representing VCW on the Paid Family Leave Study Committee that was instituted as part of Act 31 (the Equal Pay law). The first meeting took place in late August, although not all of the members have been appointed yet. This group will issue a report to the legislature in January 2014.

4. Staff Update

Women's Economic Opportunity Conference

Saturday, October 19th at Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center.

Women Can Do event Kelly Walsh, Vermont Works for Women

Thursday, October 17, 2013.

Kelly passed around a volunteer sign-up sheet and explained the event.

Financial Literacy, Enough Said, Vermont Works for Women

Cary chairs the Financial Literacy education group of the Enough Said Task Force. They have been looking at what's happening in Vermont and other states. They are currently focusing their development of recommendations in three areas: bringing financial literacy to light as an issue; integration into schools – common core curriculum; education outside of school (when most relevant/useful). Cary invited the commissioners to respond to the work of the group.

5. Agenda Planning

Commissioners identified issues for possible consideration by VCW during the coming year:

- equal pay education
- team up is career/role models with VWW/ Enough Said
- leadership for girls
- women in prison/ financial literacy for that population
- probation and parole officers provide classes
- health concerns, disparity of health concerns
- research producing document that assist people accessing the health care system. Women in Obama Care. Be vigilant – inform about how access women's health care has been impacted, dislocation in health care. Ex. UPS no longer covering spouses. IBM
- Speaking about leadership, financial literacy, committee brand activities for 50th Anniversary – big event as official celebration. Big event involving Carol, Shambulia, Ruth, Eileen, Laine, Nancy, Ruth Ari. – Advisors invited and welcomed.

6. Announcements

Ari spoke about Emerge Vermont, a new initiative designed to encourage more women to run for public office and take leadership roles, with a focus on Democratic candidates.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.