

**Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2013**

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

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill, Chair; Gretchen Bailey,
Eileen Boland, Cathy Frey,
Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle Martel,
and Shambulia Gadsden Sams.

Commissioners absent:

Carol Buchdahl, Charlotte
Dennett, Laine Dunham,
Ruth Finn, Jennie Gartner, Susie
Hudson, Dr. Felicia Kornbluh,
and Marion Milne.

Advisors present: Kim Bina representing Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women, Carrie Green representing Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains, Sarah Kenney representing the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and Kelly Walsh representing Vermont Works for Women.

Staff: Cary Brown, Janet Bullard, and Lilly Talbert.

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m.

1. Welcome/Introductions/photo orientation

Marcia welcomed everyone. Introductions were done. Lilly explained that former Commissioner Mary Claire Carroll would be taking Commissioner photos during the meeting.

2. Updates from advisors

Sarah Kenney from the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence reported that the Network consists of fourteen programs statewide that provide shelter, counseling and support to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Sarah reported that during 2012, a total of 1,527 victims of sexual assault and 8,778 victims of domestic violence sought services from the programs of the Vermont Network. In addition, 1,065 people were sheltered by programs in 2012 with a total of 32,390 shelter nights provided.

Kim Bina from the Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) informed everyone that BPW advocates for Equal Pay initiatives as well as better workplaces for women. Kim explained that she is President of BPW now and that Marcia served as state president in the past and noted that Danielle Martel is now a local president of the Franklin club. BPW is launching a member recruitment initiative.

Carrie Green, Director of Girl Leadership Experience for the Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains, reported that they serve 13,000 girls on an annual basis. In addition to the many troop activities that Girl Scouts is known for, new leadership programs are being developed every day in order for as many girls as possible to be involved. Carrie stated that the Girl Scouts is really looking forward to working with the Commission on an ongoing basis. There are currently 3 girls participating in the Girls Rock the Capitol Program.

Cary spoke about Vermont Works for Women in Kelly's absence. Vermont Works for Women offers opportunities for women and girls to receive training and explore their interests in non-traditional careers. Cary distributed a copy of an abstract of a report, *Enough Said: Young Women Talk about School, Work, and Becoming Adults: Why We Should Listen and What We Can Do*. This report is the result of the work done in nine listening sessions and written surveys, two hundred young women, ages 15-25 from Brattleboro to St. Johnsbury, the majority of families of limited financial means, articulated a host of concerns: minimal exposure to a broad range of careers and professional female role models, few personal allies to provide support, lack of practical skills related to personal finance, fears around how to live independently, relational aggression among their peers, and limited expectations for work that taps into talent and passion. Kelly announced a press conference on Tuesday, April 30th to release this report and the establishment of a new initiative entitled The 50% Solution.

3. Minutes of March 2013

Lacking a quorum a vote on the minutes was tabled to the next meeting.

4. Approval of meeting schedule for FY14

Lacking a quorum a vote on the meeting schedule was tabled to the next meeting.

5. Paid Sick Days event

Cary reported that the Commission is partnering with the UVM Center for Women and Gender Studies, as well as Professor Elaine McCrate to host a forum on Paid Sick Days at UVM on Monday, April 22nd from 9-11a.m., at the John Dewey Memorial Lounge in Old Mill. The Commission is planning to present a panel consisting of individuals representing health, business, legislators and administration folk to discuss paid sick days. What does paid sick days mean, what happens when folk don't have leave and what happens when employers don't offer paid sick time.

6. Legislative Updates

Cary gave updates on various pieces of legislation, including:

Reach Up as passed by the House includes increasing the supports for Reach Up clients to find employment and condensing the time limit to 5 consecutive years. The bill is before the Senate now. As part of this discussion, the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance, of which the Commission is a member, has asked member organizations to sign onto a letter regarding the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. Cary shared this letter with everyone and noted that the letter is in line with the Commission's position.

Equal Pay (H99) passed the House and is on its way to the Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee.

Child Care union bill (S52) has been brought back to life and looking like it's going to be an amendment to another education bill.

Paid Sick Days (H208) is still in House General Affairs Committee, public hearing on Thursday, April 18th 6-8 p.m. at the State House.

Budget and its impact on women was discussed. It was decided that the Commission will review state and federal budget information and analyze the impact the budgets have on women and girls.

7. Committees

Eileen as chair of the Education and Human Development Committee gave an overview of her committee's work in the past. Cary explained that the other two committees of the Commission are the Economic Equity and Security and the Health, Safety and Civil Rights. As well, the Commission has had a Leadership and Public Life Committee.

8. Announcements/Updates

Cary announced that she will be soliciting nominations to be the Commission Chair. Marcia's term as Chair is up on June 30th. The nominations will be made available two weeks prior to the June Commission meeting and an election for Commission Chair will be held at the June Commission meeting. The term for Chair is two years. Cary will email Commissioners regarding this process.

Shambulia announced that she has been asked by the American Association of University Women to be the keynote speaker at their annual convention to be held on May 7th. Shambulia's speech will be on the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement.

Staff Updates:

Lilly reported that the Commission has received a lot of press coverage lately, specifically the coverage of the Amicus Brief in USA Today as well as lots of local press coverage. Thanks and kudos to Cary for her press presence. Governor's Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Assault task force is winding down with a report to be issued soon. Lilly informed everyone that she will be working on that report for the task force. Norwich Intern, Baylee Annis, is mailing copies of *The Legal Rights of Women* out to organizations and updating the resource guide as necessary. The Department of Health asked the Commission for a letter of support for a breastfeeding grant they applied for. The Central Vermont chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has reserved window space at a local Montpelier business, Capitol Copy, for the month of May. They plan on displaying pictures of the "One Billion Rising" flash mob and pictures from our journalism event as well as other events. Lilly announced that she will be doing a website review in the next few months and welcomes feedback.

Janet announced that she is busy cleaning files and preparing items to leave for the new person. In addition to this, she has been busy with various audits and self-assessments that the administration requires be done and is also gearing up for the annual fiscal year end close. The state's fiscal year ends on June 30th. She reported on the very successful 4th Annual Central Vermont Job Fair that was held last

week at the Montpelier Lodge of Elks and Country Club. She reported that 785 job seekers attended the fair and networked with 47 vendors (the majority of them were employers) and that both the Agency of Transportation and Panera Bread conducted preliminary candidate interviews at the fair. Also, there were two Start Your Own Business workshops conducted for job fair participants. She noted that last year, the number of women job seekers outnumbered men and was anxious to see this year's demographic information. She also announced that she has begun recruitment for the American Legion Auxiliary Green Mountain Girls State session which will be held at Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center Campus from Sunday, June 16th to Thursday, June 20th. There are a number of ways in which commissioners and advisors can participate in Girls State and if anyone is interested, please contact Janet.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.