

Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2013
4th Floor Conference Room, Pavilion Office Building, Montpelier, VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill, Chair; Gretchen Bailey
Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Charlotte Dennett,
Laine Dunham, Cathy Frey, Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson,
Dr. Felicia Kornbluh, Nancy LaVarnway,
Danielle Martel, Marion Milne, and Shambulia
Gadsden Sams.

Commissioners absent:

Ruth Finn

Advisors present: Diane Derby from Senator Leahy's Office, Margaret Luce representing Vermont State Nurses Association, Kate Radar and Sue Racanelli representing the Vermont League of Women Voters, and Kelly Walsh representing Vermont Works for Women.

Guest: Abigail Kiablick from Senator Sanders Office.

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

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Marcia welcomed everyone. Introductions were done.

2. Announcements/Updates from commissioners and advisors

Felicia announced that the Women's and Gender Studies Program is having a community partner brunch honoring Vermont Works for Women, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Hunger Free Vermont and the Vermont Commission on Women on Saturday, May 18th at her house in Williston from 11:00a.m. – 1:30p.m. All commissioners and advisors are invited to attend.

3. Minutes of March 2013

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl and seconded by Eileen Boland:

To approve the minutes as submitted. MOTION APPROVED

4. Minutes of April 2013

Motion made by Felicia Kornbluh and seconded by Nancy LaVarnway:

To approve the minutes as submitted. MOTION APPROVED

5. Approval of meeting schedule for FY'14

Motion made by Eileen Boland and seconded by Laine Dunham:

To approve the meeting schedule for FY'14 as submitted. MOTION APPROVED

6. Nominations for Chair of the Commission

Cary announced that nominations for chair are due by or on the day of the May Commission meeting. Carol Buchdahl nominated Marcia Merrill for chair. Marcia stated that she would be glad to continue on as chair if the Commission so desired. Cary reported that she would be sending an email out with nominees for the chair's position two weeks prior to the June Commission Meeting.

7. Legislative and Staff Updates

Cary reported that the Equal Pay bill has passed both the House and Senate and includes the provision for flex time and for a paid family leave summer study committee, among other items. Paid Sick Days panel discussion was held at UVM on April 22nd, the Women and Gender Studies Program partnered with the Commission. Cary thanked Felicia for helping make this happen.

Cary mentioned the possible formation of an ad hoc Leadership Committee to discuss getting more women involved in politics and leadership roles.

Cary announced that she has been attending meetings regarding women in corrections. The Department of Corrections has established an advisory committee with several subcommittees. Cary has been attending the advisory committee and two subcommittee meetings.

Janet announced that the Commission's budget passed both the House and Senate and hopefully will remain intact while the Legislature debates the budget. She also informed everyone that she has been busy with fiscal year end close deadlines and paperwork and will continue to be until the end of June. Janet reported that she is busy organizing Green Mountain Girls State and is in need of volunteers to serve as legislative chair mentors to help the girls state delegates learn the legislative committee process. She noted that she is also looking for volunteers to serve in the role of constitutional officer mentors working with our girls state constitutional officers as they learn the duties of their offices and meet with their real-life counterparts. The session will be held at Vermont Technical College June 16th – 20th including a visit to the State House on Wednesday. Lastly, Janet reported that she is busy cleaning files and preparing for her retirement.

Lilly announced that our 2010 intern Morgan Peele has been awarded a Fulbright scholarship. Lilly circulated the Commission's guiding statements and announced that the Commissioner photos are up on the website. Lilly announced that she would be working on updating the Commission's website over the summer and welcomes input. The Governor's Prevention of

Domestic and Sexual Violence Task Force work is done, all except the final report which Lilly will be designing in the next month.

8. “Enough Said” report and task force

Cary informed everyone that Vermont Works for Women has recently produced a report, *Enough Said: Young Women Talk about School, Work, and Becoming Adults: Why We Should Listen and What We Can Do*. She continued by saying that she brought this report to the Commission’s attention last month and that the 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. Vermont Works for Women has been really proactive and a task force has been established entitled, *The 50% Solution: The Task Force on Young Women and the Vermont Economy*.

9. Committee discussions

The three standing committees of the Commission met.

10. Report out from committee discussions

Carol Buchdahl, Chair of the Health, Safety and Civil Rights Committee, reported that the committee discussed the idea of having a panel of experts around the issues of women’s health and the various diseases women suffer from and what can be done to mitigate the causes of these diseases.

Eileen Boland, Chair of the Education Committee, reported that the committee discussed the details of the Vermont Works for Women *Enough Said* report and thanked Kelly for sharing the background information. Role for the Commission could be a resource for the issues mentioned in the report. Of specific note is the lack of post-secondary education opportunities for young women. Eileen said that the committee needs to read and digest the *Enough Said* report.

Laine Dunham, Chair of the Economic Security Committee, reported that the committee started with talking about what their charge is. Then the committee discussed the Equal Pay bill and what the public education campaign might look like. Each committee member has research that they need to do and get back to Cary. The committee talked about updating *Legal Rights of Women* as well as our equal pay brochure and the development of new materials to educate the public about the various aspects of the bill. The committee talked about working on financial literacy, education around the equal pay bill, and paid sick days.

Marcia asked about next steps and noted that the committee she participated in discussed the need to meet at the next Commission meeting and work on their respective priorities. Marcia also asked if Kelly Walsh would be willing to give everyone an overview of the *Enough Said* report at the June Commission meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.