

**Vermont Commission on Women  
Meeting Minutes**

December 9, 2015

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

**Commissioners present:**

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle Martel, Melinda Moulton, Colin Ryan, Kerry Secrest

**Commissioners absent:**

Lynn Batchelor, Charlotte Dennett, Laine Dunham, Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson

**Advisors present:**

Becky Raymond of Building Bright Futures  
Anne Burmeister of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England  
Kevin Veller of U.S. Congressman Welch's Office

Auburn Watersong of Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

**Staff:** Hannah Myers, Lilly Talbert

**Presiding:** Marcia Merrill

**Recording:** Hannah Myers

**Meeting called to order at 9:37 a.m.**

**Welcome/Introductions:** Marcia welcomed everyone.

**Approval of November 2015 minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted

Motion made by Melinda Moulton, seconded by Carol Buchdahl

**MOTION APPROVED**

**Marcia facilitated a large group discussion of the Poverty Council Report.**

**The group broke out into committees for discussion, one addressing Economic Equity & Security, one addressing Health & Safety and Civil & Legal Rights, and one addressing Education & Human Development. The committees considered the legislative priorities list from November's VCW meeting of Advisory Council members.**

**Afterwards, committee chairs shared information from the discussions with the large group:**

**Carol Buchdahl on Health & Safety and Civil & Legal Rights:**

PPNNE is having an event for Roe v. Wade day on January 22 at the State House in Room 10 at 9 am, a press conference in Cedar Creek at 10 am, and then return to Room 10, and would love the commission to attend.

There is a Parental Notification for abortion bill in committee; PPNNE hopes it will stay there.

The following Network Against Domestic & Violence priorities are inactive; Disclosure of Sexually Explicit Images without Consent; Clarify Sexual Assault Statute; Victim Privacy and Law Enforcement Videos; Supervised Visitation Funding and Certification; The Coercive Control Relief from Abuse bill died last year and is not expected this year.

LARC – PPNNE is working on that, not sure what it will look like

Paid Family Leave & Sick days – There is active support, bills are changing

Dental Therapists – The opposition comes from dentists

Universal Background checks – Want more clarification

Support banning the box, just for the initial application

Victim Notification – when a perpetrator ends state custody in mental health, ensure notification

Stalking Statute – eliminate need to prove physical threat

Watching funding for Victims

Protection orders for minors is in draft. Presently, a legal guardian has to apply for the order. The Judicial Caucus of the DV council is considering reducing to age 16.

Community Based DV intervention, perpetrators, funding cut, this is a budget ask. Carol would like to see the research demonstrating effectiveness of these programs.

Compliance and Monitoring Study –Presently up to victim to ensure compliance with restraining orders, this is a budget ask.

Batterer Accountability – good idea

Culture of kindness – comes from top down, educational effort

**Melinda Moulton on Economic Equity & Security:**

Group rated priorities on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being most important.

Increasing Economic Assistance – 5, Need more clarity, could be expensive

Publicly funded housing owners dedicating space to homeless – 5, Need more info. , where are we at now?

Financial loans and literacy – 2, VCW already involved

Implementing uniform driver restoration policy – more data, we should keep our eye on this.

Reach Up extension – need more data

Fund VT housing board – 5

Income sensitive fines - 5, how much money?

Transportation Study – 2, other groups are looking at this

AHS computer systems, at \$150 million pricetag, group is overwhelmed, this is important but need a better understanding of where we are now and see info on loss of efficiency and ROI

Affordable housing / homelessness for incarcerated women – 5, group suggests Hal Cohen as a meeting speaker. Suggests VCW issue a follow up White Paper on work that's been done, changes made, recommendations, and needs at CRCF now. Group spoke about out of box ideas: a foster program for women/families; a program like Airbnb program started by German couple for refugees.

Safe affordable housing for victims – 5

Oppose cuts to budgets - 5, Want guests to come discuss this, secretary Cohen again strongly suggested

Economic Development reframing - on our radar, not high up on our list

### **Nancy LaVarnway on Education & Human Development:**

Molly Stark elementary school in Bennington - they describe themselves as a full service, community school, they have education goals, on site pediatric, day care, after school, nutrition, dental, mental health, many other services on site. Maybe we could do a Skype call with them.

Elementary school and education is the heart of the community, we should look at a full service model; having services on site instead of families having to go out to secure services, thinking about food and safety, focused on Afterschool and Summer programs, address food security issues, Building Bright Futures, days care, kindergarten, moving through to high school, college credit partnerships and utilizing that human resource. Perhaps psychology and human development programs, adult education, dental hygiene, bringing in CCV, VTC, addressing STEM & male dominated, looking at full service education centers to address these issues.

### **Announcements**

Ruth Finn announced that she heard from Lynn Blackwell who is fundraising for a book by Sara Rath about Achsa Sprague, and passed out an information sheet.

Melinda Moulton mentioned the new initiative, Click!

Becky Raymond handed out the Early Childhood Alliance's most updated agenda, which she received from Matt Levin.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.**