

**Vermont Commission on Women  
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

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

**Commissioners present:**

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Charlotte Dennett,  
Laine Dunham (by phone), Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Danielle  
Martel, Melinda Moulton, Colin Ryan, Kerry Secrest

**Commissioners absent:**

Lynn Batchelor, Carol Buchdahl  
Eileen Boland, Nancy LaVarnway,  
Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson

**Advisors present:**

Louise Luring of American Association of University Women  
Becky Raymond of Building Bright Futures  
Anne Gallivan (by phone) of Evolve Rutland  
Ashley Michelle Fowler of Mercy Connections  
Michelle Beam of Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains  
Anne Burmeister of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England  
Kevin Veller (by phone) of U.S. Congressman Welch's Office  
Katarina Lisaius of U.S. Senator Sanders' Office  
Danielle Martel of Vermont Federation of Business & Professional Women  
Auburn Watersong of Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Marybeth Redmond of Vermont Works for Women  
Laura Lind-Blum of Women Business Owners' Network

**Guests:**

Tiff Bluemle of Change The Story Vermont  
Caroline Keller, intern at the Vermont Department of Labor

**Staff:** Cary Brown, Hannah Myers, Lilly Talbert

**Presiding:** Marcia Merrill

**Recording:** Hannah Myers

**Meeting called to order at 9:40 a.m.**

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

**Approval of May 2016 Minutes**

**MOTION** made by Melinda Moulton, seconded by Ruth Finn:  
To approve the minutes as submitted.

**MOTION APPROVED**

**Pay equity data research project at VT Department of Labor:**

Caroline Keller, VT DOL intern

The Labor Market Division of the Vermont Department of Labor is taking on a project to do research on the gender wage gap. Intern Caroline Keller has been hired to work on this research. She has been looking at various databases' existing research, and is considering the comparison between the unadjusted wage gap and adjusted wage gap. The adjusted wage gap attempts to compare workers with other workers with the same educational background, work history, job, etc. in an effort to understand how much of the wage gap is due to discrimination or bias. Some reports still put the adjusted wage gap at 7-12%. Commissioners expressed interest in considering the data by age. Commissioners requested that Caroline share her analysis of what data is missing with the Commission so we don't lose her perspective and so the Commission can continue to work on that.

### **Staff/event updates:**

Cary gave the following updates:

VCW Priority Issues: Cary handed out a document reflecting proposed changes to the VCW Priority Issues compiled from the work commissioners did at the May meeting. The Commission can discuss and vote on these changes in the fall.

Women in Corrections: Cary committed the Commission to taking the lead on bringing people together to talk about women in corrections. We're having a meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup> in this room (the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room at the Pavilion Office Building) from 12:30 – 1:30 to have an initial conversation about priorities, and who else should be at the table. The direction of the group is not yet set. This is an opportunity for Commissioners to be involved, and all are welcome to attend this or future meetings.

Paid Family and Medical Leave: We are very close to signing a contract with a contractor to perform our Paid Family and Medical Leave Feasibility Study; we are waiting for final approval from the Attorney General's office. We will also be calling a meeting to get people together to discuss Paid Family Leave further. Cary will let Commissioners know when that meeting will take place and Commissioners are welcome to attend. This will likely be in July.

Equal Pay Compact: Kelly Walsh has been working on the Equal Pay Compact, reaching out to employers and signing them up. We have 90 businesses signed onto the compact. Kelly's work ends June 30<sup>th</sup>, and this is another opportunity for Commissioners to participate. We will need people to check back in with businesses who have signed on to discuss their progress, offer support and resources, and to get some information from businesses to go up on our website. Commissioners requested specific guidance about next steps, tasks to be done, and we could send those out to Commissioners who could pick a task or two to work on. Lilly noted that we are considering attending an HR Association event in the fall. Commissioners expressed the desire to re-convene the commissioner committee that Kerry and Colin have been heading. Melinda and Cathy will join them on this committee.

Events:

NEWPI Conference November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at UMASS Boston

The New England Women's Policy Initiative is a Consortium of Women's Commissions and Funds around New England. We had our first bi-annual conference in 2014, the second conference is this November. Cary passed out a draft proposal for workshops. Cary asked for thoughts about how we could feature work in Vermont in these categories.

Our next VCW meeting is September 14<sup>th</sup>. That day we will have our Gubernatorial Forum in the State House from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lilly passed out index cards for potential questions.

Hannah is working on our January Legislative Lunch, we're considering the theme of leadership, this will be the day of our January meeting (January 11, 2017).

Our October meeting will be at Vermont Tech for Women Can Do.

Marybeth added that about 500 high school girls come for a chance to try (hands on) different Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and technical trades. Participants have an opportunity to find out how to get into those trades, make connections, learn about earnings, etc. They usually feature a young woman keynote speaker. The goal is to expose young women to high-paying, high-growth careers.

Lilly is working with new interns on our leadership report data research.

The Women Business Owner's Network's fall conference will be in October at the state house. and we will keep you posted on coming details.

Gretchen mentioned that at the Business Expo and WEOC, Gretchen was at the VCW table, and she was happy to hear that people from other places have been so impressed by our publications and how much we have to offer.

**Advisory Council Members' Discussion Facilitated by Kerry Secret:**

Goals:

- To create synergy between organizations within the Advisory Council-learn more about one another.
- To provide an opportunity for VCW Commissioners to learn more about the work of Advisory Council organizations and their impact in Vermont.
- To offer an opportunity for greater learning by bringing diverse groups of people together to discuss important topics that face women in our state

Commissioners and advisors broke out into small groups of 5-7, and spent 45 minutes hearing from advisors about their organizations, when are good opportunities for the Commission and the public to

engage with them, what they have been doing that they are particularly proud of, key highlights about their work, and upcoming events. They rejoined as a large group and Commissioners each reported out to the large group about the work of one or two advisory organizations.

### **Announcements**

Danielle announced that two medical providers from her office went to a training last week about how to insert long-acting, reversible contraceptives (LARCs).

Danielle also announced that she was recently inducted as President of the Vermont and New York Federation of Business & Professional Women.

Colin announced that he has been working on directly inviting men to events with “Women” in the title. He attended Senator Leahy’s Women’s Economic Opportunity Conference (WEOC) last weekend, and he thought more men attended this year compared to last.

Laura Lind-Blum asked folks to Save the Date for the Women Business Owner’s Network conference, which will take place October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Statehouse and will focus on advocacy, both with local representatives and in marketing.

Michelle Beam announced that the Girl Scouts of White and Green Mountains will be hosting their first fundraising event in the State of Vermont since 2009, Cookies & Cocktails, which will take place September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Burlington Airport.

Auburn announced that Becca Stevens, founder of Thistle Farms, which supports women who have transitioned from human trafficking to making bath and body products, will be speaking in Vermont the first weekend in November, and she will give us further details when she has them.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.**