

Commission Minutes
June 13, 2007

Commissioners Present: Vicky Young, Chair; Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Cary Brown, Carol Buchdahl, Mary Claire Carroll, Retta Dunlap, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Anne McClaughry, Marcia Merrill, and Marion Milne.

Commissioners Absent: Sharon Baade and Karen Henry.

Advisory Council Members Present: Joanne Brooking representing Central Vermont Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Joanna Cole representing the Vermont League of Women Voters, Lindy Hatcher representing Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women, Margaret Luce representing Vermont State Nurses' Association, Tracy Phillips representing the Office of Women's Health at the Vermont Department of Health, Jayne Sheridan representing Vermont Works for Women, and Carol Story representing Girl Scout Council of Vermont.

Staff: Janet Bullard, Wendy Love, and Lilly Talbert.

Presiding: Vicky Young/Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

Guest: Barbara Morrow

Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Introductions/Announcements

Vicky welcomed everyone to the meeting. Vicky congratulated Mary Claire Carroll as the recipient of this year's U.S. Small Business Administration Vermont Women in Business champion. Everyone congratulated Mary Claire.

Wendy reported that she received notice yesterday that Sandy Mayo from Castleton has been appointed to the Commission by Governor Douglas to fill out Joyce Barbieri's unexpired term ending in June 2009. Wendy also informed everyone that Ruth Finn has been re-appointed to a second four-year term.

Minutes

Motion made by Marion Milne to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2007 Commission Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Ruth Finn and voted unanimously.

Proposed Meeting Schedule September 2007-June 2008

Vicky called everyone's attention to the proposed commission meeting schedule and stated that with the exception of the September meeting, which will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, all meetings will be the second Wednesday of the month as usual. Commissioners expressed concern with the lack of adequate parking in Montpelier and requested that alternate meeting locations be investigated. Meeting schedule approved by consensus.

Election of Commission Chair

Vicky reported that according to the Commission's Operating Rules it is time to elect a Commission Chair. Marcia Merrill had put her name in nomination for the chair's position by the May meeting. Motion made by Carol Buchdahl to cast one ballot for Marcia Merrill as Chair of the Commission for a two-year term ending June 2009. Seconded by Marion Milne and voted unanimously. Congratulations Marcia! Vicky then turned the meeting over to Marcia. Marcia thanked Vicky for her dedicated service to the Commission.

New Business

Marcia reminded everyone that the Vermont History EXPO would be held at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds on Saturday and Sunday June 23 and 24. The Vermont Women's History Project will be exhibiting at the EXPO.

Marcia then paid tribute to Vicky and thanked her for her steadfast commitment and dedication to the Commission. Folk chimed in expressing their gratitude to Vicky. Vicky was presented with a beautiful flower bouquet, with flowers from people's gardens, in a maple sap bucket decorated with the Commission's logo and the names and towns of commissioners who served during Vicky's tenure as Chair.

Planning Meeting

Marcia introduced Barbara Morrow, a former Commissioner, and the facilitator for our annual planning process. Please see attached planning meeting results.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Vermont Commission on Women
Annual Strategic Planning Meeting 2007-2008
Notes
Facilitated by Barbara Morrow, Equilibrium

The session opened with a brief review of the Commission's mission. Morrow checked to ensure that all Commissioners were aware and approving of the change in committee structure from 4 to 3 committees, and they concurred.

Images

As a way to invite discussion and open thinking, Morrow asked the Commissioners and advisors for their ideas of how they would like the Commission and its work to be viewed by others; "What is the image you would like the Commission to have?" The group offered the following, which Morrow suggested as a context for prioritizing their work:

- Awareness of the Commission's work; the relevancy of that work
- The Commission's work is for ALL Vermont women and families
- The Commission is a source of depth and breadth of accurate information
- The Commission has its finger on the pulse
- It is a source for credible perspective on issues
- That members are passionate in their belief in women, including the unique abilities of women.

Opportunities Ahead

Morrow asked for a brainstorming session to provide further context of the Commission Committees work, and because there are new Commissioners on board. What opportunities are available now for the important work of the Commission and its unique abilities to bridge constituencies, agenda and interests?

- Advocacy for women & kids in the education system, particularly for families of kids with "special needs"
- Support for parent-child, life skills
- HPV issue – facts and research
- H.433 Next Generation Bill, as it relates to child care and retraining money
- Child care subsidy issues for both parents and providers
- Domestic violence, as it relates to returning veterans. (Ref. to Senator Sears' bill)
- Incarcerated women and mental illness
- Osteoporosis and elder health, also elder workforce development
- Bullying and harassment – continued work
- Universal health care, and education about differences among Medicare, Medicaid, and reimbursement for both
- Substance abuse treatment

Groups Convene by Committee

The group divided into pre-decided committees to identify tasks, recommit to what is carried over from current year, what new angle might be attempted, and discuss what task or project would take the group forward. A “cynic” was appointed for each group to raise questions about

- Is it is feasible? (Can staff resources handle it? Is there time & other resources? Will committee members commit? Is someone else already doing it and well?)
- Prioritize it
- Will this lead to legislative initiatives?

The Committees developed and reported the following strategies, which must be further refined over the summer by committee chairs:

Education & Human Development – Chair, Eileen Boland

Harassment & Bullying Project – continue with advising, increasing awareness, continue peer education/awareness in conjunction with Girl Scouts, inventory and bring to light models throughout the state.

Civics Education – collaborate with Girl Scout initiative “Girls Rock the Capital” giving access to political process;

Next Generation Act – monitor rulemaking to ensure gender equity, livable wages are taken into consideration, and that woman are represented on the advisory group. Follow career education piece to ensure that girls are encouraged to explore non-traditional, high paying, careers.

Parenting Support – inventory initiatives. Consider professional development for teachers. Increase awareness/improve connectivity of programs, support funding through legislative action.

Financial Literacy Education – Revisit with the State Treasurer’s office – are we getting to the right people? Is the delivery system effective? Inventory programs. Funding programs with foundation \$.

Health, Safety & Civil Rights – Chair, Carol Buchdahl

This group broadly outlined its work over the next year, to include

Awareness – getting commissioners involved.

Legislative Agenda – to include civil rights and prison issues, post-divorce health insurance, senior issues like osteoporosis, HPV vaccine , lactation – what’s going on with that right now, civil confinement of known pedophiles, and women and diversity

Economic Equity & Security – Chair, Mary Claire Carroll

Continue monitoring Boys in the Dust issues

Paid Sick Leave – Develop strategies to strengthen existing bill, educate folk about the importance of the bill and work in coalition with other organizations to get the Legislature to take up and pass the bill.

Work-Family Council -- Respond to interest by some legislators in forming a work-family council modeled on legislation proposed in Massachusetts. May be a necessary precursor to paid sick leave and other family friendly initiatives. Explore the role of the Commission in such a Council-staff?

Vermont.Child Care subsidy – Continue to educate the public and legislators on the link between subsidy rates and provider/parent wages. Monitor and review output and reports from the newly created Vermont Child Poverty Council and the forthcoming report on child care subsidies by the Department for Children and Families.

Adjournment

After presenting their discussions to the full group, the Commissioners and advisors acknowledge the fine work of the Commission staff over the previous year, and adjourned.