



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 12, 2019 | 9:30 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

32 College St, Montpelier Vt

In response to adverse driving conditions, meeting switched to Skype conference call

Commissioners present (by phone/Skype):

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Ed Adrian, Carol Buchdahl, Deborah Bucknam, Kellie Campbell, Lisa Carlson, Mary Daly, Ruth Finn, Emilie Kornheiser, Kim Nolan, Lisa Ryan, Lisa Senecal, Heidi Tringe

Commissioners absent:

Kerry Secrest, Marybeth Christie Redmond, Charlotte Dennett

Advisors present (by phone/Skype):

Karen Tronsgard-Scott

Guest: Elise Jackson, Social work student from UVM

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Lane (by phone/Skype), Lilly Talbert (by phone/Skype)

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Lilly Talbert

1. Welcome and introductions

Meeting called to order at 9:36 a.m.

Marcia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

Approval of Amended Agenda, sent 2/12/19 at 10:42

MOTION made by Carol, seconded by Lisa S.

By roll call vote, all vote yes.

Approval of January 2019 Minutes:

MOTION made by Lisa S., seconded by Ruth:

To approve the January 2019 minutes as submitted.

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Ed Adrian(Y), Carol Buchdahl (Y), Kellie Campbell (Y), Lisa Carlson(Y), Mary Daly(Y), Ruth Finn (Y), Emilie Kornheiser (ABSTAINS), Kim Nolan (Y), Lisa Senecal (Y), Heidi Tringe (Y)

MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.

2. Staff Updates

Cary reviewed the following staff updates:

VERMONT COMMISSION ON WOMEN STAFF NOTES FEBRUARY 2019

WEBSITE REDESIGN

This May Lilly will start the process of migrating our material to a new state government website template. This is an opportunity to rethink, reorganize and redesign our content. In preparation, she's seeking input from Commissioners and Advisors about what works and doesn't work with the current site. She would welcome new ideas, or thoughts about specific things like navigation, menus, and content prioritization. Contact Lilly directly with your thoughts.

CHANGE THE STORY

Change The Story's Breakfast of Champions event with Ted Bunch of [A Call to Men](#) on February 5 sold out with 450 people, including at least 50% men. Lisa Senecal did a masterful job speaking about her experiences and Vermont's ground-breaking sexual harassment legislation, as well as introducing Ted Bunch. CTS and partners will now focus on following up to extend and expand engagement from those participants. Lisa was a guest on several radio shows, addressing the Ted Bunch event and issues around sexual harassment. She relayed that radio hosts were "blown away" by the volume of quality work completed with just three staff, and 16 Commissioners (and 27 Advisory Council organizations).

Aly Johnson-Kurts has been hired as CTS's Communications Director, joining the team of Tiffany Bluemle and Jessica Nordhaus.

Marybeth Redmond is serving as the VCW commissioner member of the CTS Steering Committee, which is a return to the Steering Committee for her from her days working at Vermont Works for Women.

VERMONT SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL ALLIANCE (VSCA)

Lilly is the VCW representative to this alliance to mark the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment in 2020.

Over the last 6 meetings there have been many discussions regarding the history of racism in the suffrage movement, as well as the fact that, while not targeting gender, disenfranchising practices blocked access to the vote for women of color, low-income women, and women with disabilities. These obstacles included poll taxes, literacy tests, stringent voter ID requirements, including those excluding tribal members, polling places inaccessible to those with disabilities, lack of availability of polling locations, intimidation and violence. The Alliance is committed to communicating and educating about these conditions and the history of racism in the suffrage movement, addressing the work yet to be done for access to full voting rights, while commemorating the protracted, courageous, and hard-won victory that is the 19th Amendment. The group would welcome expertise in leading discussions and working on communications.

Work has commenced in subcommittees: History & Research, Outreach, Event Planning, and Fundraising. Alliance logo and Facebook page are in the works. The Alliance now seeks a volunteer to work on establishing and maintaining a website. VCW's statewide event calendar will be the venue for sharing Alliance-related events. Former VCW Commissioner Melinda Moulton volunteered to head up the Fundraising subcommittee.

Saturday, 8/22/2020 is the tentatively scheduled event date, likely a parade ending in a State House lawn event.

INTERNS

Linden Montague is our legislative intern, in the state house on Tuesdays and Fridays. She will be attending Women's Caucus meetings and taking notes. Cary recently met with two Montpelier High School students who will be spending some time in the state house for us as part of their Community Based Learning course, and this summer we'll be joined by a summer intern from UVM, Brynn Connell.

TITLE IX REGULATIONS

A working group consisting of Carol, Lisa Senecal, Kim, Deb, Ed, Cary, Catherine Welch of VT Women in Higher Education (and Title IX coordinator at St Michael's College), and Elizabeth Catlin (board member of Girls on the Run and attorney) drafted public comments on the proposed changes to regulations on the federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities receiving federal funding. The comments were submitted to the Department of Education and can be read [here](#). A number of other Vermonters and Vermont groups submitted comments as well.

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

VCW has provided testimony on several issues in the General Assembly:

Sexual harassment (update on our work on the law passed last year) [Act 183](#)

Minimum wage [S23](#)

Preserving the right to abortion [H57](#)

Paid family leave H107 (this testimony is not posted yet but should be soon)

LISTENING PROJECT

We are slowly working our way through tagging survey responses in preparation for drafting a report with results. This process needs many hands – all commissioners are encouraged to help out! Talk to Cary for more information.

EQUAL PAY DAY/LEGISLATIVE LUNCH

The VT Commission on Women Education and Research Foundation's biennial legislative lunch will be held on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. This is Equal Pay Day, the symbolic day chosen to represent the point in this year to which women must work to catch up to the earnings of men last year. We will work with the Governor and with legislators to draft a proclamation for the Governor to sign and a resolution for the General Assembly, and will appreciate any input regarding the content of those. Lilly can share previous years' proclamations and resolutions with anyone who is interested.

Commissioners will likely need to make follow-up calls to invitees again, once invitations go out. A suggestion was made to continue a focus on inclusivity and diversity that was the main theme from last year's materials and press conference.

H707 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND WORK-RELATED DISCRIMINATION EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

As part of the sexual harassment law passed last year, VCW received \$125,000 to conduct education and outreach regarding sexual harassment and work-related discrimination. RFPs for this work were issued, drawing high quality bids from both inside and outside the state. A committee of representatives from VCW, the Human Rights Commission, and the Attorney General's Civil Rights Unit reviewed the bids and made their choices. Contracts are currently working their way through the State of Vermont approval process and our hope is that they will be officially awarded in the next week, at which point the names can be made public.

VCW BUDGET

Our budget request was discussed in the House Committee on Appropriations on February 8. You can see our [budget documents here](#), and read VCW's [budget testimony here](#).

Marcia attended this as Chair and spoke about Cary's thorough and professional presentation + testimony. Marcia observed that the work of Commission is both well-respected, and well-regarded. Marcia reported that a legislator remarked to her how impactful it was for Marcia as Chair to be present.

Marcia requested a Skype lesson for all as we seem to be utilizing it more. Staff will work on that and follow up for the next meeting in March.

3. Vermont National Guard discussion

Public interest in conditions in the VT National Guard escalated with the VTDigger article series last fall. Four Adjutant General candidates are campaigning for this office. Cary was present when each addressed the Women's Caucus meetings at the legislature. One candidate expressed interest in working with VCW if elected, and spoke briefly with Cary.

Cary drew attention to the two National Guard reports she shared: an annual SH report and a gender report – context for this and links supplied.

Lisa Carlson spoke on this issue. She referred to the letter she sent. She felt that in the last 5 years there have been major improvements. There appears to be lots of check and balances in place. In the 2018 report, women are starting to come forward when incidents happen. In the past, they were afraid. She expressed concern that comments by officials may have been taken out of context in the reporting and that there may have been missing information, and information and quotes may have been taken out of context.

Cary would like ideas about follow up. Cary reported that the Candidate she spoke to had a desire to have a formal representation on the commission. Cary put forth some other ideas: perhaps working

with the new website, an event, a campaign. She referenced challenges in recruiting.

It was suggested that we may want to involve them in the SH project. Part of the problem is that they have a different culture. They use a different language. We need to learn more about that to work effectively with them.

It was suggested we work with them in a collaborative way to make progress, not to further old stories.

Marcia requested that Cary follow up with new Adj General after the election and figure out how we go forward.

5. Announcements

Carol announced a draft policy update on Youth Sexual Health and Education being considered by the Health, Safety, & Civil Rights Committee. The draft was written by Kim Swartz (Advisor VT Department of Health), Sharonlee Trefry, Andrea Nicoletta and Sara Chesbrough. The committee will review the draft and then bring it to the full Commission.

Deb asked if VCW might respond in some way to complaints of sexual violence and harassment in Sen. Sanders' presidential campaign.

Cary offers to have a conversation with the VCW Advisory Council representative from Sen. Sanders' office and get more info and report it.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:41 a.m.