

# Vermont Commission on Women

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Center for Achievement in Public Service, VT Department of Human Resources

32 College St, Montpelier VT

### Commissioners present:

Lisa Senecal (Chair), Kellie Campbell, Lisa Carlson, Mary Daly, Erica Hare (by phone), Marcia Merrill, Lisa Ryan, Kerry Secrest, Heidi Tringe

### Commissioners absent:

Ed Adrian, Nancy Brooks, Charlotte Dennett, Emilie Kornheiser, Kim Nolan, Marybeth Christie Redmond

### Advisors present:

Meredith Roberts of ANA-Vermont  
Katherine Vose of Burlington Women's International League For Peace and Freedom  
Rhoni Basden, of Vermont Works for Women

**Guests:** Edisa Muller; Aly Johnson-Kurts, Change The Story VT; Brynn Connell, VCW Intern

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

**Presiding:** Lisa Senecal

**Recording:** Hannah Lane

## 1. Welcome/Introductions

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Lisa welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

## 2. Approval of January 2020 Meeting Minutes

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Postponed to March as a quorum was not present.

## 3. VCW group norms and procedures

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We want to have a conversation about how we decide to take up issues and what we spend our time on in meetings. The group discussed VCW's policy on considering public policy and legislative positions, which reads:

- The issue must be closely related to the Commission's mission, strategic plan, or existing public policy and legislative positions
- The issue in question must have a direct and broad impact on women in Vermont
- At least one Commissioner must be willing to take the public lead and collaborate with staff and others on the issue
- The Commission must have the resources to effectively make an impact.

Kellie Campbell lead a discussion about group norms:

What are group norms?

An agreed set of guidelines about behavior.

Why are they important?

So everyone is on the same page.

To work through difficulties with the goal of still being able to work together. Conflict that's unresolved can impact the efficacy of the Commission.

Developed collaboratively.

VCW Group Norms suggestions:

- Clear agenda with goals and action items
  - Agenda items with intention. What is the purpose?
  - Who does what by when?
  - This should be reflected in the minutes. Who is assigned each task, what is the deadline?
    - Agreed response if not working:
      - In the moment, someone can speak up and say the time is up, it's time to move on
      - Bring up concern with Lisa, Cary, staff
      - Empower chair to keep us on track
      - Some groups have a guardian to support the chair
      - At the end of a meeting, can we do a plus delta? i.e. what went well, where do we need to get better?
- Parking lot issues – 5 minutes at end for parking lot issues, and decision about whether to consider in future
- Active listening & hearing all voices
- When someone says something that seems disrespectful, the wording was concerning, how do we as a group want to address this?
  - Ouch – can be an effective group norm
    - Situationally dependent. Some things can be sidebar vs addressing in the group
    - Chair can make decisions
- Hearing all voices
  - Going around the room
  - Calling on folks who haven't spoken, especially during a debate or important discussion
  - Put a time limit on people speaking
  - Space for group to decide to alter the agenda

These group norms will be revisited and revised in future meetings.

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#### 4. Listening Project report – discussion of recommendations

Anna has finished a draft of our Listening Project report, and we'd like to review it and see what kind of questions you have, what jumps out at you? What might be missing? There is a lot of information that isn't reflected here. At the end, we have a recommendations section. The ones that are here are broad. We would appreciate thoughts about recommendations, how specific we want to get, and what direction to go in. The structure is up for change, and the report may be rearranged.

Points raised included:

- Are there threads that tie to other reports? Change The Story? Qualitative data we have here compliments the quantitative data from Change The Story VT. It would be nice to tie together how these issues are surfacing as priorities among many groups – it's coming from many places.
  - Connecting data with real stories from Vermonters.
- Expected more stories, and less quantitative data.
- We need to be really clear about what's significant and what isn't?
- A lot of what's in this report is mirrored by other scientific data. Now many inconsistencies.
- Very interested in concern about mental health and health care.
- Where can we connect this with the Change The Story data, social media, writing about that? What could be produced to tie these things together?
- More humanistic way to talk about valuable information beyond "not scientific". Less emphasis on numerical data.
- Momentum from CTS report, great time to overlay this.
- More emphasis on the stories – visually.
- Can we incorporate more CTS data into this report – discuss the mirroring.
- Maybe marrying these in the recommendations section, to back up the recommendations, which match the CTS recommendations in large part.
- This is a small sample, selection bias, etc.
- Who is the audience?
  - Legislators?
  - Public?
  - Non-profit staff/advocates?
  - Let's look at our minutes from the conceptualization of the project regarding goals.
- Concern about undermining ourselves by the perception that we're sharing unscientific data as data.
- Bringing some demographics to the quotes for context.
- How do the statistics change in the regions of the state?
- Can we pull some of this out in the next month to capitalize on the momentum that the Change The Story data is experiencing? Are there legislative goals to support?
- Graphics should be smaller, take up less space. Not have pages that are all text. Less emphasis on the numbers.
- Name the CTS relationship, look collaborative and not competitive.
- Three topics, three one-pagers, have them ready for Lead the Way.
- Big takeaway is health care being a top concern for everyone, as well as housing.

- How can we use this to elevate women’s issues in the discussion.
- Use this to drive our agendas.

Cary will share these thoughts with Anna, they will follow-up with Aly about ways to marry the CTS data and the VCW report, within our report and maybe additional products.

## **5. Equal Pay Compact Event planning**

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Kerry Secrest updated the group about our upcoming event, Lead the Way on Equal Pay, March 19<sup>th</sup> in Randolph Center, for Equal Pay Compact signers. The goal is to bring together existing Equal Pay Compact signers. Leaving with an action item for their company. This could become an annual event, and to focus on different aspects of (un)equal pay.

We need people to attend. Lilly put together a list of the Compact Signers, and has assigned Commissioners 3 to follow-up with. Kerry offered an example of how that can go. Temptation bundling. Give yourself a reward for doing this boring task, by Monday at 10:00 a.m.

Forward Lilly’s 1/28 email to the company, following up.

Call the company.

Lilly will resend the Google Sheet.

The next priority is recruiting for new Compact signers. Next week, Kerry will send an email about using this event to recruit new Equal Pay Compact signers. In your own network, who do you know that you could reach out to?

Kellie sent this out to her whole network.

The final piece is, that we’re in need of food and beverages for the event. We are going to do coffee ourselves, but we are looking for muffins, other 9 a.m. foods. Does anyone have access to donations for this?

Hunger Mountain Food Coop, City Market, Mascoma and Community National Bank are good places to request funds from.

## **6. Staff and committee updates**

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Kellie mentioned she’s held a few Education & Human Development Committee meetings. The Committee spent a few minutes talking about the CTS data, and suggests that it would be a good idea for other Committees to do this. How does our committee focus on things we’re hearing in reports, and from advisory council organizations? A piece of our conversations are missing are around early childhood. We’re not defining early childhood as an education topic, and Kellie is not sure we’re focusing enough on this. She suggested this be a whole Commission agenda item. They could use our support in advancing their policy proposals.

Lisa Ryan and Cary are discussing the idea of scheduling a visit to the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) on March 9<sup>th</sup>, and is working to get that scheduled. She will be in touch. Lisa also shared that BROCC Community Action is pairing with Change The Story to do a report launch in Rutland. They are looking at a Monday in April or May.

Mary updated VCW about her and Lisa Carlson's project about obesity and school meals. They visited with **Broc Miller** in Cabot Schools and **Ken Sear**, for Caledonia County schools. They are focused on nutrition education in the schools. Mary is distressed that home economics are not in the schools anymore – children need to learn how to feed themselves and their families. She would like to get in touch with the Department of Education to discuss this with them. They have not defined a lot at this point, they are feeling their way through this. At their last meeting, they discussed the bills on the universal school lunch program, Lisa C. will be following up with Hunger Free Vermont. They also discussed the bill to revise the Maternal Mortality Review panel. Lisa S. is going to follow-up on that topic. The Committee has had some advisory attendance, including VECAA & Dept. of Health.

The Economic Equity & Security committee has been looking at our VCW policies and is integrating CTS recommendations, and the policy areas in our Committee, and how they link up.

Cary offered some quick updates. She had a meeting with the Governor recently, with Rhoni, Meg, and Tiff to discuss ways to put the new Women, Work & Wages report recommendations into action.

We have three interns, Alex (Montpelier High School), Brynn (University of Vermont), and Celia (Middlebury College) this semester.

Cary is testifying on our budget in Senate Appropriations this afternoon, just after this meeting.

Equal Pay Day is Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> this year! We will be gathering at the State House, with our traditional partners BPW and LWWVT, and we're incorporating CTS as a partner this year. The Burlington High School girls soccer team will join us to be celebrated in the House Resolution, and then at 11:00 a.m., we'll gather in the Governor's ceremonial office for a proclamation signing.

Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, the Vermont Commission on Women Education & Research Foundation will sponsor a prize at Vermont History Day, with a suffrage theme.

March is Women's History Month. VSCA & the Vermont Historical Society is presenting a talk in Burlington, featuring Lyn Blackwell and Rachel Onuff, talking about the fascinating stories they've uncovered around suffrage in Vermont, at noon in the Waterman building at UVM.

## **7. Announcements**

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Cary will be speaking at the next ElevateHer event on March 11<sup>th</sup>; Senator Becca Balint and Representative Patty McCoy will also be speaking, from 5-7 pm. It will be focused on a legislative update.

Katherine Vose – On March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30, at Capital City Grange, WILPF is sponsoring **Rickey Gard Diamond**, launching what they hope to develop another organization, an Economy of our Own.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:27 p.m.**