

State of Vermont
Vermont Commission on Women
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Vermont Commission on Women Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 12, 2023 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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

Commissioners present:

Nancy Kaplan, Sarah Mell, Lisa Senecal, Wendy Knight, Brenda Churchill, Alex Hilliard in person. Hazel Brewster, Sophia Rabe, Esther Charlestin online.

Commissioners absent:

Kellie Campbell, Heidi Tringe, Sarah Lang, Annie Mackin, Ashley Messier, and Kiah Morris.

Advisors present: Jessica Barquist, VT Network

Guests: Meg Polyte, Policy Director, Alzheimer's Association VT Chapter & Jordan Cotto, Program Manager, Alzheimer's Association VT Chapter

Staff: Cary Brown, Karen Cygnarowicz, Ellie Lane

Presiding: Lisa Senecal

Recording: Karen Cygnarowicz

1. Meeting Called to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:36am.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion made by Nancy, seconded by Sarah to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Unanimously approved, agenda approved.

3. Review Group Agreements

The group took a minute to review the group agreements. No comments.

4. Approval of meeting minutes of April 2023

Motion made by Brenda, seconded by Nancy to approve the April 2023 meeting minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved, minutes approved.

5. Introductions

The group introduced themselves by name and region.

6. Long term care and Women

The group heard from guests Meg Polyte and Jordan Cotto from the Alzheimer's Association VT Chapter, in which they presented data on those with Alzheimer's and caregivers.

Meg and Jordan shared the work of the Alzheimer's Association in Vermont, including educational programs, support groups (in person, telephone, and virtual options), and their main resource, a helpline. Meg and Jordan shared upcoming events, a rally, outreach opportunities, and asked for the support of VCW.

They shared their 2023 legislative priorities and concerns.

7. Staff Updates

Legislative updates from Cary:

- Paid Family and Medical Leave is officially on hold until next year
- H125 includes a change to our statute that would redefine a quorum for VCW from nine to a majority of the current members
- S. 103, which, among other things, removes the “severe or pervasive” standard from cases of harassment and discrimination, has passed, without an amendment to include students. Hopefully this will be taken up next year
- Jessica shared that H45 passed.

We will hold an election for VCW chair at the June meeting. Nominations have been received for Sarah Mell and Esther Charlestin.

The group discussed meeting times for FY2024. Staff suggested that we hold four in-person (hybrid) meetings, with the rest being fully remote. The idea of holding the hybrid meetings at different location in the state, with time for public participation, was discussed. Staff will propose a schedule at June meeting.

Sarah Mell updated the group on the developments made by the Health Equity Committee, specifically revisiting the transgender individuals policy.

10:55 – 11:06 am: Break

9. Racial Equity Work

Guest Shalini Surayanarayana presented “Moving Ideas Into Action.” The group participated in multiple activities as a DEI training.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:35 pm. Motion made by Nancy, seconded by Sarah Mell.