



**Vermont Commission on Women
Health Equity Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2024
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. via teleconference
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Hazel Brewster, Sarah Mell, Alex Hilliard, Karen Cygnarowicz

Absent: Nancy Kaplan

Recording: Karen Cygnarowicz

Meeting began at 3:35pm.

Sarah motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 11, 2024. Alex seconded.

- No announcements or updates.
- Discussed what's next to do about menstrual products in public bathrooms, acknowledged H.699, the new bill with language addendum (has not moved since being introduced this year). Alex asks what is our role? Is it to guide the research done by Not a Luxury, Inc. and/or facilitating/coordinating the project in house? The intersection between this kind of project and youth engagement was identified when discussing the results of our attendance at the Women Can Do conference in 2023.
- Karen brought up the need for in person engagement.
- Debriefed the freestanding birthing center presentation to the full commission. While an engaging presentation, the next steps are not clear. Concerns from the perspective of the UVM Health Network. We hope to address at the next full commission meeting, or this might be a matter of making a policy statement or not. Hazel asked if we used the DEI framework. Does legislation meet those standards? Did we find an issue that we might not all agree on? Health Equity Committee could gather more data and more perspectives, but how do we find out more?

- Sarah mentioned that the Committee's agenda is usually determined by who/what approaches us, but what do we want to focus on?
 - o Alex: substance abuse (what is the scope of the work?)
 - o Hazel: "I wish we could save the world" but what is our dream list?
 - o Alex reminds us that research is slow.
 - o Karen asked if we could come to the next Health Equity Committee meeting with 3-4 issues.
 - o Look into donut economics theory! What are those items that a community needs to thrive, and what threatens access to those needs? Sarah asks, what would make a healthy Vermont?
 - o Alex suggested looking back at old minutes and look for patterns.

- We did not decide on the next meeting date and time – Karen will email to include Nancy.

Meeting adjourned at 4:21pm.