

Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 11, 2018 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
32 College St, Montpelier VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Carol Buchdahl, Mary Daly, Ruth Finn, Emilie Kornheiser (by phone), Danielle Martel, Melinda Moulton, Marybeth Christie Redmond, Kerry Secrest, Lisa Senecal

Commissioners absent:

Eileen Boland, Deborah Bucknam, Charlotte Dennett, Nancy LaVarnway, Colin Ryan,

Advisors present:

Ashley Michelle Fowler of Mercy Connections
Diane Derby of U.S. Senator Leahy's Office
Amy Caldwell of Vermont Works for Women

Guests: Edisa Muller, Tiffany Bluemle of Change The Story Vermont, and Jessica Nordhaus of Change The Story Vermont

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Lane, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Hannah Lane

1. Call to order and approval of agenda

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Agenda Approval Process:

MOTION made by Carol and seconded by Gretchen:

To approve the meeting agenda, giving discretion to the chair to deviate from the agenda as necessary.

MOTION APPROVED. Agenda adopted.

2. Welcome/Introductions

Marcia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

Marcia acknowledged Commissioners for their contributions in the last month:

Ruth for judging the Vermont History Day and awarding the Deborah Pickman Clifford prize to the most outstanding entry related to Vermont women who have contributed to our state, or to the role that women have played in Vermont's history. The Commission's Education and

Research Foundation funds this cash prize. The winning project was by Kali Adams about Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Emilie for being the first Commissioner to conduct a listening project activity. She dovetailed her event as part of Strolling of the Heifers' noontime Brown Bag Lunch series on March 23rd.

Colin and Marybeth for providing hours of voice work at a studio in Burlington for our new workplace pregnancy accommodations videos.

Gretchen, Marybeth, Lisa, Mary and Kerry for attending Equal Pay Day yesterday.

Lisa for participating as a panelist on the Greater Burlington Women's Forum Brown Bag Lunch event, Beyond #MeToo: Reckoning with Workplace Sexual Harassment.

Eileen who serves on the Steering Committee for Change The Story Vt and also is helping us promote the St. Johnsbury Salary Negotiation event.

3. Approval of March 2018 Meeting Minutes

Approval of March 2018 Minutes

MOTION made by Carol, seconded by Ruth:

To approve the March 2018 minutes as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.

4. Staff and Legislative Updates

Last evening the Senate Economic Affairs Committee held a public hearing on H.196, Paid Family, and Medical Leave Hearing. No one spoke in opposition to the bill.

Senate Economic Affairs is taking testimony on H.294, the Salary History Ban bill, tomorrow, in addition to H.707 about Sexual Harassment. Lisa and Cary will both testify on H.707 tomorrow.

Equal Pay Day was yesterday, it went very well and speaker Dr. Wanda Heading-Grant from UVM was amazing.

VCW is hosting Salary Negotiation workshops in April and May in Rutland, St. Johnsbury, and Newport.

Legislative Lunch planning call will be held Tuesday, April 17th at noon, please join us.

Lisa announced that if anyone has a sexual harassment story they are willing to share, she would like to compile and submit stories to the Senate Economic Development Committee. Stories can be anonymous.

Save the Date for Senator Leahy's Women's Economic Opportunities Conference on Saturday, October 13, 2018. They will partner with Change The Story Vermont again this year.

5. Conversation Cards Activity/Orientation

Tiffany Blumele and Jessica Nordhaus of Change The Story Vermont introduced their latest project: Conversation Cards. The idea is to facilitate groups having a high-level conversation about what's fair and equitable and to get people talking. The cards were modeled after a similar project in Ohio and were released early February. So far, they have been received well. CTS has distributed them far and wide, including to Business Peer Exchange businesses. It's a flexible product. They would like Commissioners to host conversations with family, friends, at work, book groups, church, schools, etc. and are looking for feedback. The goal is not about shaming or blaming, but about identifying our own internal biases that we all have.

Suggestions for facilitating successful conversations include providing snacks and drinks, giving time for introductions, and using icebreakers. Feel free to invite everyone, mixed gender conversations are great.

Jessica and Tiff divided Commissioners into groups and facilitated conversations using the cards.

6. VCW Listening Project

Marybeth facilitated a training about engaging in the VCW Listening Project. She discussed strategies and the importance of stories and storytelling, and then took some time to brainstorm what we intend to do and what's realistic to do.

The Listening Project is a year-long, qualitative data gathering to learn about:

- Financial Challenges
- Resource Gaps
- Opportunities for growth, improvement, innovation

Cary passed around Listening Project document. There are five components of the project:

1. Public Forums
2. Community Conversations
3. Survey
4. Story Gathering
5. Final Report

The listening phase of this project in swing April – September. In October – December we'll focus on data analysis and we'll issue a report by January 2019.

Why Story Matters

"The stories we tell literally make the world. If you want to change the world, you need to change the story."

It connects data to the human face. It helps to change attitudes. It motivates people to action. It fosters collaboration and community. It activates the brain.

Who are the central characters we need to reach out to in our communities? Commissioners should focus on including invisible, isolated voices.

Target

Encouraging Commissioners to:

- Distribute at least 25 surveys to individuals, via paper and on Survey Monkey (coming soon!)
 - Out in your community
 - Online to your colleagues, network
 - Table at events already happening in your community
 - Local Events
 - Farmers Markets
 - Book groups
 - Activist Groups
 - Churches, synagogues, temples
 - Community Centers
 - Recovery Centers
 - Community meals
 - Fairs
 - Make announcements at meetings
 - Front Porch Forum, Social Media, etc. Will send a blurb for use via e-mail.
- Plan to have 3-5 conversations or interviews before September
 - Meet friends/colleagues
 - Gather community leaders
 - Who's on your want-to-meet list?
 - Engage other community ambassadors
 - Engage folks from diverse communities
 - New high-school graduates
 - Seniors – Meal Sites Meals on Wheels Drivers
 - Homeless community
 - Folks in mobile home parks
 - Refugee community
 - Record conversations and, where appropriate, transcribe your takeaways onto the survey
 - Audio Record with permission (Voice Memo app on iPhone)
 - Take paper notes
 - Pay attention to soundbites
 - Use the survey as your interview guide or feel free to free range and go off script but write something up and send it to Cary

- Join at least one of the four public forum teams, and meet before our next VCW meeting in May.

Interviewing basics:

- Be transparent about your purpose
- Ask open-ended questions:
- Focus on experience and meaning
- Listen deeply and sincerely
- Ask follow-up questions

Public Forums:

- Bennington
- Brattleboro/Bellows Falls (Emilie, Kerry, Carol)
- St. Albans (Danielle, Marcia, Melinda, Gretchen)
- St. Johnsbury/Newport (Eileen, Lisa, Mary, Marybeth)

Commissioners shared their brainstorming about how to achieve these goals:

- Circulating Surveys:
 - School principals to teachers
 - Libraries
 - Community Health Centers
- Conversations:
 - School cafeteria staff
 - Law enforcement
 - Network program directors
- Diverse Voices
 - Corrections/Parole Officers
 - Law enforcement
 - Recovery programs
 - Community Action
 - Disabled community
 - Pride Center
 - Legal Aid Offices
 - Visiting nurses, Hospice
- Public Forums:
 - They can look different and will be designed by Commissioners. There is no prescriptive formula. Some sort of public event where people are gathering and discussing at one time. Can be a specific topic, broader, whatever your groups decide.

7. Executive Session

To Enter Executive Session

MOTION made by Gretchen, seconded by Danielle:

To enter executive session to discuss personnel matters.

MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.

Meeting Adjourned at **12:30** p.m.