

**Vermont Commission on Women  
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

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

**Commissioners present:**

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Charlotte Dennett, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Melinda Moulton, Kerry Secrest

**Commissioners absent:**

Lynn Batchelor, Laine Dunham, Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson, Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle Martel, Colin Ryan

**Advisors present:**

Anne Gallivan of Evolve Rutland  
Kevin Veller of U.S. Congressman Welch's Office  
Diane Derby of U.S. Senator Leahy's Office  
Katarina Lisaius and Sarah Wilkinson of U.S. Senator Sanders' Office  
Erin Post of Vermont Women in Higher Education

**Guests:** Matt Levin, Vermont Early Childhood Alliance

**Staff:** Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert

**Presiding:** Marcia Merrill

**Recording:** Lilly Talbert

**Meeting called to order at 9:33 a.m.**

**Welcome/Introductions:** Marcia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

**Staff/Event Updates:**

Melinda spoke of the special screening of the documentary Equal Means Equal taking place tomorrow evening (Thursday, November 10th: 6:00 p.m. reception, 7:00 p.m. screening) to benefit the VCW's Education and Research Foundation. Gretchen and Mariah Riggs are working together to promote. Main Street Landing donated film licensing fee (\$500). Suggested donation - \$5.00. Commissioners discussed other venues for this film: Catamount Arts (Eileen) and a theater in Bellows Falls (Carol). Melinda suggested those interested contact Mariah for details.

Tickets, including reduced cost (\$50) tickets for activists, students and government and not for profit employees are still available for the 2016 New England Women's Policy Conference on Friday, November 18th. This event features a keynote address by author, educator, and historian Dr. Mary Frances Berry. Other speakers include Women's Bureau Director Latifa Lyles, presenting on Equal Pay, and Women's Bureau Deputy Director Pronita Gupta presenting on the Bureau's state Paid Family Leave Analysis grants program, as well as the mayor of Boston. After the conference there is a reception for

women who ran for office. Eileen requested those who attend provide a debrief at the December meeting.

Champions for Change event is taking place Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> in space donated by Main Street Landing. Male business leaders will learn more about [Change The Story VT](#) (CTS) work and share successes and challenges in supporting women's advancement in the workplace.

Marcia reported that invitations would be going out to legislators and newly-elected officials for our Legislative Luncheon, 1/11/17 (Wed., our regularly scheduled meeting day). The foundation is accepting donations to help cover meal costs, payable to Vermont Commission on Women Education and Research Foundation. Commissioners are requested to help make follow up calls or send messages to their area legislators. Hannah will coordinate this.

Cary announced that the new CTS report, Women's Business Ownership and the Vermont Economy, will be presented at our next meeting. The next report on Leadership is now in development. Women in elected office, on boards and commissions, and in business leadership positions will be among the topics. Commissioners and Advisors are welcome to add their data resources or thoughts about this topic and should be in touch with Cary.

Cary spoke about the DOL grant study work, which is in final phases. Drafts are being exchanged, and the December meeting may also feature the national researchers who conducted the study.

Melinda recounted her experience telling her personal story to incarcerated women in the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, and what a rewarding experience that was. Melinda encourages all Commissioners and Advisors interested to consider being a speaker. This is coordinated by Vermont Works for Women.

Charlotte reported on her conversations about women voting in the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility. Due to the short time frame before the election, as well as challenges around volunteer coordination and communication, she was able to assist just one woman with absentee voting. The facility staff have indicated that they would welcome future help with planning and facilitating the process of voter registration and absentee voting.

#### **Approval of October, 2016 Minutes**

**MOTION** made by Melinda, seconded by Ruth  
To approve the minutes as submitted.

**MOTION APPROVED**

**Marcia lead introductions.**

**Advisory Council Discussion:**

**Marcia asked representatives to introduce their organization and provide information about how that organization's work intersects with VCW's mission.**

Anne Gallivan – Evolve focuses on advancing women in government and business leadership.

Kevin Veller for Congressman Welch. Areas of interest are health, human services, housing, food and nutrition. There are supports unique to women's needs in those areas.

Diane Derby – via Senator Leahy's Judiciary committee work: domestic and sexual violence, the courts, civil rights. Presents the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference.

Katarina Lisaius with Sarah Wilkinson of Senator Sanders' Office – Assigned areas of interest are human services, education, and housing.

Erin Post of Vermont Women In Higher Education – Erin serves on the board of VWHE, an all-volunteer organization. VWHE fosters leadership and supports women from diverse backgrounds, and is inclusive of all women – not just those currently in leadership positions. VWHE presents two events: a fall dinner – 3 awards presented, and a spring conference, March 23/24, 2017 – theme: Strong Women, Strong World.

Matt Levin, Executive Director of the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance. The Alliance is an advocacy coalition focused on public policy for children 0-8 and young families.

**Carol led a small and large group discussion organized using the following questions:**

**What do you see as legislative issues for our state?**

**What data will be needed for policy makers and the public to discuss these issues and make a decision?**

**How are you going to pay for these initiatives in a deficit budget?**

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.