

**State of Vermont**  
**Vermont Commission on Women**  
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**Vermont Commission on Women Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, December 9, 2022 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Pavilion Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, 109 State St, Montpelier, VT**

**Commissioners present:**

Kiah Morris (Co-chair), Lisa Senecal (Co-chair), Hazel Brewster (remotely), Alex Hilliard, Nancy Kaplan, Wendy Knight (remotely), Sarah Mell, Ashley Messier (remotely), Heidi Tringe (remotely)

**Commissioners absent:**

Annie Mackin, Kim Nolan

**Advisors present:**

Alison Lamagna, Vermont Works for Women  
Jessica Barquist, Vermont Network

**Guests:** Meghan Tedder (remotely)

**Staff:** Cary Brown, Ellie Lane

**Presiding:** Lisa Senecal

**Recording:** Ellie Lane

**1. Meeting Called to Order**

Meeting called to order at 9:38 a.m.

**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.

**4. Approval of meeting minutes of October 2022 & November 2022**

Motion made by Nancy, seconded by Kellie  
To approve the October 2022 meeting minutes as submitted.  
Unanimously approved, minutes approved.

Motion made by Nancy, seconded by Kellie  
To approve the November 2022 meeting minutes as submitted.  
Unanimously approved, minutes approved.

**5. Introductions**

Alex shared that they met with a VLS law student about vagus nerve resetting. Alex explained the benefits of resetting the vagal nerve and walked the group through a brief exercise.

## 6. Updates and announcements

Kiah announced that Alex joined the Rights and Democracy board.

Cary announced that a new Commissioner has been appointed, Annie Mackin. She works at the UVM Health Network.

Kiah talked about the documentary she's been working on called [Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age](#). The US Premier will be at the State House on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, with a panel discussion to follow. And then there will be additional screenings. The Network is going to have folks present for aftercare.

## 7. Legislative Lunch" event for opening of new legislative session

Cary gave some background on the history of VCW's legislative luncheons and talked about outreach from the DOL Women's Bureau about hosting a joint legislative briefing.

Input included:

- A suggestion that we offer an orientation for new legislators, that would be focused on sharing who we are and what we do. Most agencies are doing these, some are in person and some remotely. Lunch is necessary.
- Being in favor of an in-person event if we have the capacity.
- We could have one big online event and then some smaller group sessions in person.
- Asking for clarification of the goals.
  - Cary shared, to make sure they know about us, and what we can offer.
- Asking whether there might be legislators who could speak to how we work.
- The event should be short and sweet and we focus on 3 – 5 takeaways.
- It could be like an open house. A short presentation, and then an opportunity to connect.
- Commissioners could all be there at tables and each having this conversation with legislators – so it's more direct and more intimate interactions. We need to feed people if we want legislators to give us their time. Maybe we could order food from women-owned businesses.
- Kellie suggested and wondered about how we supplement with digital resources. Kellie offered to help.
- Ashley would love a one-pager for our priority issues, having more resources available. Ashley offered to help.
- Our printed materials could have a QR Code that takes someone to our website.

## 8. Youth involvement with VCW

At our last meeting, an idea came up about having youth involvement in our work. Cary asked the group for additional thoughts about how we might do this.

Feedback included:

- VWW used to have a youth advisory council, but not for the past few years. They are currently thinking about reintroducing that. They've had some advice that casting a wide net and having a large number of participants is a good idea, because they won't all come every time. It was very hard to get folks together in person.
- the state youth advisory council has had overwhelming interest, and there is now a list of youth that were interested in engaging. Second, we need to go to them. VCW may be able to help make those connections.
- In higher education, there are a number of community groups that we could connect with.
- a more regional approach if that's possible.
- loves the idea of working with career centers, and she would prioritize how to get youth appointed to the Commission.
- at Women Can Do a number of youth were concerned about confidentiality, and we should think about having a variety of ways of sharing input with us.

## 9. Staff updates

Cary shared about the panel on paid family medical leave and child care held yesterday morning by the Lt. Governor and the Speaker of the House. She and Kiah were on the panel about paid family medical leave. The panel covered topics including what features a quality program needs, such as adequate wage replacement, duration, universality, and equity issues.

There will be a PFML bill re-introduced. VCW is part of the FaMLI coalition.

At our January meeting, we'll try to have some folks come to talk about some of these legislative priorities.

Cary also shared that we're expecting a child marriage bill, a workplace harassment & discrimination bill removing the severe or pervasive standard, as well as another workplace discrimination bill about settlement agreements.

There has been some discussion about bringing back a liaison position with the National Guard that would be positioned in the Governor's office, we'll be watching for that.

The Vermont Network is taking the lead on the the legislative briefing for legislators about CRCF, on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

Cary shared that we've posted the Communications & Outreach coordinator job and asked Commissioners to share that post far and wide.

Cary went to the New England Women's Policy Conference in Boston last week and shared her experience. She moderated a panel about early care and education and the workforce.

The National Association for Commissions on Women (NACW) is planning a regional conference in Massachusetts, and it's possible that we might be involved in that in some way.

VCW is advertising for legislative interns, we're hoping to bring on one or two interns.

Shalani Surayanarayana will join us for racial equity work in January and February, we had some scheduling challenges, but we'll have that back on the agenda in January.

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:36 pm**