

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

Commissioners present:

Hazel Brewster, Alex Hilliard, Nancy Kaplan, Sarah Mell (remotely), Ashley Messier, Heidi Tringe, Wendy Knight (remotely), Kellie Campbell (remotely)

Commissioners absent:

Kiah Morris (Co-chair), Lisa Senecal (Co-chair), Kim Nolan

Advisors present:

Alison Lamagna, Vermont Works for Women
Katie Salina, Let's Grow Kids (remotely)

Guests: Meghan Tedder

Staff: Cary Brown, Ellie Lane, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Sarah Mell

Recording: Ellie Lane

1. Meeting Called to Order

Sarah is running the meeting in the absence of both Lisa and Kiah.

Meeting called to order at 9:41 a.m. by Sarah.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Postponed due to lack of quorum.

3. Review Group Agreements

The group took a minute to review the group agreements.

4. Approval of meeting minutes of October 2022

Postponed due to lack of quorum.

5. Introductions

Sarah asked the group to introduce themselves, and to share their dream vehicle (not necessarily a car).

6. Updates and announcements

Heidi shared that her daughter Emily and the Montpelier field hockey team are playing in the state championships tomorrow at UVM.

Cary met one of her predecessors, who was the second executive director of the Commission. She shared a few stories of note that were relayed to her.

Alison shared that VWW just launched this week a new partnership with AALV, they got a small grant and are partnering with VWW to offer program services including career coaching, as well as small-group workshops, and work with female-identifying youth. They are also offering a small trades exploration. It's kicking off this week and has a short timeline, the program will run through June. In other news, they have been working on an

equity initiative around the infrastructure workforce. They will put together a guide that can be used by employers about strategies to keep equity at the forefront. VWW is building a reentry support program for women leaving the correctional facility and they just received a three-year grant for that, they will be able to include housing and employment support.

Nancy works at the College of Medicine, is the Resource Navigator, and is tasked with putting together a statewide advisory council around rural health communications, and needs counselors. She may be reaching out to connect with Commissioners about community contacts.

Alex applied to be on the Vermont Women's Fund council. They are excited about that possibility.

7. Racial Equity Work

Sarah led a discussion about racial equity.

8. Staff updates

Cary shared with the group about our Future of Incarceration of Women in Vermont event coming up on November 10 at 6:00 pm. It's open to the public, but it's designed for people who are not legislators or working with DOC. We currently have 60 signups.

Ashley shared that Massachusetts passed a moratorium on discussing new prison construction, but the Governor vetoed it. Some have asked whether this could happen here, and that's an interesting idea.

The New England Women's Policy Initiative conference (NEWPI) is coming up. It will be a hybrid event, and is happening in Boston on Friday, December 2nd at the Edward Kennedy institute.

We submitted our budget request at a 6% increase, rather than the 3% we were asked to submit. We also put in a formal request for a 4th position for a data management coordinator, which is going to the Governor's office for decision.

Cary shared our VCW policies document and talked a bit about our reproductive rights policy, but we're wondering if we want to think more intersectionally and more broadly about reproductive justice including health care and resources for parents, the right to place or not place a child for adoption, and to think about the word "choice".

Cary shared the process for adopting policies.

9. Committees

The group broke out into committees for short discussions.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:05 p.m.