

Vermont Commission on Women

Meeting Minutes

April 8th, 2015

Pavilion Office Building, 4th floor conference room

Montpelier, VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey
Nancy LaVarnway, Carol Buchdahl
Danielle Martel, Melinda Moulton
Ruth Finn, Laine Dunham
Charlotte Dennett

Commissioners absent:

Dr. Felicia Kornbluh, Kerry Secret
Lynn Batchelor, Jennie Gartner
Shambulia Gadsden Sams
Susie Hudson, Eileen Boland

Staff: Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill | **Recording:** Claire Greene

Interns: Rebecca White | **Advisors:** None | **Guests:** Juliet Dowling, Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform

Welcome/Introductions/Minutes

Approval of March 2015 minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl, seconded by Melinda Moulton

MOTION APPROVED

Staff Updates

Commissioners were notified that Marcia's term as chair is coming to an end at the end of the fiscal year. Chair nominations will be made at the May meeting and then put up for a vote at the June meeting. Anyone wishing either to run for Chair or to nominate someone may contact Cary to learn more.

Equal Pay Day @ the state house is on April 14th:

Lilly provided an overview of the day's events:

8-10 am: BPW and League of Women Voters have sponsored coffee and donuts

Most advisors will be present in the card room with their materials

9:45 am—everyone heads to the Senate seats in the House for the resolution

11 am—Equal Pay Proclamation signing and Vermont Equal Pay Compact press conference in the Governor's Ceremonial Office

12 pm- Ethan Allen Room for lunch

VCW interns Emmi and Becca will be tabling in the Davis Center at the University of Vermont with information on Equal Pay Day. They will be taking photographs of students holding a white board answering the question: "What would you with your money lost from the wage gap?"

Vermont Equal Pay Compact:

- Modeled after a similar initiative in Boston, the Compact requires signing employers to commit to at least three concrete steps to help close the wage gap between men and women.
- Will serve as a way to highlight the important role of employers in creating pay equity.
- The Compact is in partnership with the governor
- A few employers will be present at the press conference who have already agreed to sign on
- Employers will be able to sign up online on VCW's website
- Focus is on education, visibility, and awareness

Change the Story Partnership

- Officially named Change the Story
- Research project on economic well-being of women is still a priority

Mental health working group:

- There has been an in-house expansion of mental health resources on VCW website
- Cheryl Hanna Internship: will be working with Vermont Law students this summer to update legal rights of women handbook
- Focusing on trauma, mental health, and poverty
- What is our goal? What do we want to do? What's the outcome of this committee? Request from the committee to find one to three areas of focus. Commissioner suggestions:
 - Identifying the populations that are in need of these resources most
 - Acknowledging the economic insecurity root causes of mental illness
 - Stigma/normalizing the conversation
 - Utilizing academic pathways: Making the Cheryl Hanna internship at the forefront/avenue to address these topics every year, bringing young people into the fold

Ruth attended and gave an update on the Women's History Month resolution reading that happened on March 27th and Vermont History Day on March 28th.

Advisory Council Additions

Organizations proposed:

- Evolve Rutland
- Vermont Women in Law Enforcement

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl, seconded by Nancy LaVarnway to add these to groups as Advisory Council Members.

MOTION APPROVED.

Legislative Update

S20: A bill establishing and regulating dental therapists

H.221: Criminal Justice Reform Bill

H.75/S.9: Child protective services

H.187/S.15: Healthy Workplaces Bill

H.105: "Revenge Porn" Bill

S.60: Financial barriers to sexual assault medical services

S.141: Mental health and access to fire arms

H.464: Gender balance boards and commissions

Announcements

- This past weekend Cary attended debate of female inmates at CRCF hosted by SPEAK, a Vermont Law School student debate and public speaking organization. Those who participated answered the question: should the state provide second chance housing after women complete their minimum sentencing?
- Bess O'Brien has a new documentary film on eating disorders (currently in production)
- This year is the hundredth anniversary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm