

**Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Ethan Allen Room, Vermont State House, 115 State Street, Montpelier, VT

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Laine Dunham, Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey

Commissioners absent:

Lynn Batchelor, Charlotte Dennett, Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson, Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle Martel, Melinda Moulton, Colin Ryan, Kerry Secret

Advisors present:

Becky Raymond of Building Bright Futures
Diane Derby of Senator Leahy's Office
Katarina Lisaius of Senator Sanders' Office
Donna Heath of Vermont Federation of Business & Professional Women
Meg Smith of the Vermont Women's Fund
Marybeth Redmond of Vermont Works for Women

Guests: Tiff Bluemle of Change the Story VT, Kelly Walsh, and VCW interns Alexis Zona and Caroline Keller

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Myers, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Hannah Myers

Meeting called to order at 9:34 a.m.

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

Due to the lack of a quorum, the approval of March's minutes was postponed.

Staff/event updates:

Cary updated everyone about the timing and logistics of today's events. The Commission and advisors will sit in Senate Seats in the House Chamber before 10:00 a.m. and the Equal Pay Day resolution will be read shortly thereafter. We will go to the Governor's ceremonial office where he will sign the proclamation at 11:00 a.m. After that, we'll return here and hear from Tiff about the new Change The Story report, "Where Vermont Women Work...and Why It Matters".

Next week on April 20th there will be the first Start Smart Salary Negotiation Training at Norwich. Lindsey Lathrop-Ryan of Change the Story is presenting. Cathy is letting her students know, Lilly has let other VT colleges know.

Regarding our DOL Grant for Paid Family Leave Study, we are moving forward and are in the process of scoring bids. We are hoping to be able to award a contract very soon.

The New England Women's Policy Initiative biennial conference is Friday, November 18, 2016 in Boston. The planning committee now includes Allyson Laackman from the VT Women's Fund council. The Prosperity Together initiative of the Women's Funding Network is one focus of the conference. Another focus is on economic security for women of color. Commissioners who are interested in helping with this event are encouraged to get in touch with Cary. Marcia thought that last year the conference was well worth attending.

VLS holding a conference this Friday called Sex, Race & Empowerment in the 21st century. Cary is speaking. The VCW Cheryl Hanna Legal Rights of Women Interns will be acknowledged.

The Vermont Women's Fund Annual Benefit Celebration is coming up on May 3rd in Burlington.

VCW will be present and signing businesses up for the Equal Pay Compact at the upcoming Vermont Business Expo and the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility conference.

Our May business meeting will be at the 4th Floor Conference Room at the Pavilion at 9:30 a.m. Our June business meeting will also be at our normal place and time, but will focus on our Advisory Council members.

At 9:53 the Commission went to the House Chamber for the reading of the Equal Pay Day Resolution, and then on to the Governor's Ceremonial Office for the signing of the proclamation. Governor Shumlin, Cary Brown of VCW, Tiff Bluemle of Change The Story VT, Desiree Cerretani of UTC Aerospace Systems, and Meg Smith of the Vermont Women's Fund spoke.

The Commission returned and resumed the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Tiff Bluemle presented Change The Story VT's Newest Report, "Where Vermont Women Work...and Why It Matters":

Tiff acknowledged Cary's work in vetting data and editing this second report, as well as Eileen who had made valuable suggestions about a month ago, and helped to get some data about Advanced Placement testing. Tiff offered to walk the Commission through the report and then open it up to questions.

Occupational segregation wouldn't be such a problem except for what it means for women's earnings. 15 out of 25 occupations are at least 70% male or female. Compared to 1970, the gender distribution of workers in traditionally female occupations has not changed much. Participation and enrollment in apprenticeships, tech programs, and college programs show this isn't likely to change any time soon. While young women are half of high school students taking AP tests in Calculus and Chemistry, they are only a handful of those earning bachelor's degrees in the physical sciences, computer science, economics and engineering.

Carol asked, how do we involve businesses and ensure women are being hired so that female role models exist? Tiff discussed how CTS is involving employers in the Business Peer Exchange, offering suggestions, etc.

Gretchen mentioned that in the legal field, the mentors and role models are very important. Informal, private meetings were very helpful.

Becky offered that the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children is conducting outreach to employers asking about their employees' needs for child care, and asking them how they're helping to meet them.

Marcia mentioned an article she read that discussed evidence that when men enter a traditionally female occupation, the average wage goes up, but this is because they pay men more, and maybe not because they are paying women more. Tiff mentioned that the reverse is also true, that as women enter non-traditional fields, the average pay decreases.

Meg said that women hold the majority of wealth in this country. Marcia pointed out that the opposite is true for women in poverty.

Announcements

Ruth represented VCW by being a judge at the Vermont History Day 2016, and presented the Doborah Pickman Clifford Vermont Women's History Prize to a high school student Kali Adams, who is home schooled. Her winning essay was called, Dorothy Thompson: Finding the Truth.

Diane announced that she expects registration for the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference will open on Monday.

Meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.