

**Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes**

January 13, 2016

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

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland,
Charlotte Dennett, Ruth Finn, Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle
Martel, Melinda Moulton, Colin Ryan, Kerry Secrest

Commissioners absent:

Lynn Batchelor, Carol Buchdahl,
Laine Dunham, Cathy Frey, Jennie
Gartner, Susie Hudson

Advisors present:

Becky Raymond of Building Bright Futures
Anne Burmeister of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
Katarina Lisaius of U.S. Senator Sanders' Office
Kaitlyn Armstrong, Julie Scribner of Vermont Women in Law Enforcement
Meg Smith of the Vermont Women's Fund
Rachel Jolly, Marybeth Redmond of Vermont Works for Women

Guests: Tiffany Bluemle, Lindsey Lathrop-Ryan, and Robyn Freedner-Maguire

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Myers, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Hannah Myers

Meeting called to order at 9:36 a.m.

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

Approval of December 2015 minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted

Motion made by Eileen Boland, seconded by Ruth Finn

MOTION APPROVED

Staff/event updates:

Cary updated the commission on the DOL Paid Family Leave Feasibility Study Grant, which needs to be approved by the legislature. The legislature has concerns around awarding contracts to organizations that may lobby and is adding the grant approval to the FY2016 budget adjustment bill. This grant is designed to study the cost and feasibility of different paid family leave models to provide the answers to questions regarding how and whether paid family and medical leave might work in Vermont.

The FY2017 Budget process is underway; Cary will be testifying Feb. 3rd before the House Appropriations committee.

For this year's Women's History Month Event, we will be partnering with the Vermont Historical Society and the Green Mountain Club, and the event will be focused on Women of the Long Trail. The event will take place March 24th at 7:00 p.m.

Marcia requested changing the day of the April meeting from Wednesday the 13th to Tuesday the 12th in order to coincide with Equal Pay Day at the State House.

Moving the April meeting from the 13th to the 12th

Motion to move the April meeting from the 13th to the 12th

Motion made by Melinda Moulton, seconded by Eileen Boland

MOTION APPROVED

Cary gave an update on proposed legislation:

- There is a new paid family leave bill in the Senate, (S.254) that involves contributions from employers. It is being brought up in committee today. Our intern is there listening and will report back.
- Equal Pay Recordkeeping/Reporting (S. 247) is also being brought up today.
- Paid Sick and Safe Days will be discussed in committee next week; they are gathering witnesses.
- Board gender balance (H. 464)

Anne Burmeister of PPNNE reported on a pending access to birth control bill, which addresses (among other things) increased access to Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC).

Tiffany Bluemle and Lindsey Lathrop-Ryan, from Change the Story Initiative presented:

Change the Story is staggering the release of research & data over the spring. They will release a full report that knits it all together at the Women's Fund Event in May 2016. The tentative plans for roll-out (subject to change) are:

- First report is on Women, Work & Wages in Vermont. They will present this to the Women's Legislative Caucus on Friday, January 15th;
- Second report will be about occupational segregation;
- Third report will focus on Corporate and Political Leadership, state boards, municipalities; and
- Fourth will be women-owned businesses

Tiff presented and discussed the first report: 2015 Status Report: Women, Work and Wages in Vermont. Marcia led a full group discussion about the Change the Story report.

Robyn Freedner-Maguire, Campaign Director of Let's Grow Kids

Robyn began by explaining that she is here to give an overview of Let's Grow Kids, where they are and where they're going, and to seek advice. Let's Grow Kids is a campaign that launched two years ago, trying to lay the foundation about how critical care and education is for the ages of 0-5 and especially 0-3, which is when children develop the foundation that supports them in later years.

They have been very fortunate to develop their messaging based on research; they work with a firm that surveys 600 Vermonters, and they want to make sure the messages resonate with Vermonters. Currently at a pivot point, they want to help Vermonters understand how tenuous the child care system is, and its impacts. They are working with other key stakeholders to look at the supply and demand of early childcare. Demand is hard to define, but the preliminary data suggests that Vermont's child care providers are unable to serve 50% of infants and toddlers that need care. Let's Grow Kids is trying to create a sense of urgency, this system is and has been chronically underfunded, and needs to be infused with money to increase the quality and to make it affordable.

Last year, they supported the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care. Their hope is that the Commission's 2016 recommendations are something Let's Grow Kids can champion. Robyn stressed that the state needs to take some time and think about creative ways to fund this, and to think about child care as the complicated business model it is, and focus on the whole child. She wants the conversation to be elevated in the state.

Announcements

Anne Burmeister announced that the annual Roe. v. Wade event will be Friday, January 22, 2016 as they honor the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade. This year's event features information about the new Access to Birth Control bill, which seeks improve access to the full range of FDA-approved contraceptive methods for all Vermonters without cost-sharing, delays, or denial of coverage.

Agenda:

9:00 am in Room 10, central hallway, first floor, light refreshments available.

10:00 am in the Otter Creek Room, press conference where they'll talk about the new Access to Birth Control bill and hear from strong pro-women's health leaders.

Afterward, the group will reconvene in Room 10 for further education on the Access to Birth Control bill. Participants can then meet their legislators over lunch, if they choose.

Meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.