

**Vermont Commission on Women**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**32 College St, Montpelier VT**

**Commissioners present:**

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Deborah Bucknam, Kellie Campbell, Mary Daly, Ruth Finn, Emilie Kornheiser, Melinda Moulton, Lisa Senecal

**Commissioners absent:**

Charlotte Dennett, Danielle Martel, Marybeth Christie Redmond, Kerry Secrest

**Advisors present:**

Jen Horwitz of Let's Grow Kids (by telephone)  
Ashley Michelle Fowler of Mercy Connections  
Kevin Veller of U.S. Congressman Peter Welch's Office  
Sheila Reed of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders' Office  
Katherine Vose of WILPF Burlington

**Guests:** Edisa Muller, Ian Prieto

**Staff:** Cary Brown, Hannah Lane, Lilly Talbert

**Presiding:** Marcia Merrill

**Recording:** Hannah Lane

**1. Call to order and approval of September 2018 Meeting Minutes**

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Meeting called to order at 9:37 a.m.

Marcia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

**Approval of September 2018 Minutes**

**MOTION** made by Carol, seconded by Ruth:

To approve the September 2018 minutes as submitted.

**MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.**

**2. Staff Updates**

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Cary updated about the status of VCW's budget and developments regarding reducing office space and personal services to meet a level-funded budget as requested by Finance and Management. Commissioners discussed how they might respond or advocate for the budget in the coming months.

New England Women's Policy Conference is coming up on Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup> in Boston. VCW staff, Marcia, and Lisa will be attending; Lisa and Cary will both be presenting. Lisa will present with Sarah Copeland-Hanzas about our new Sexual Harassment law, and Cary will be presenting about Pay Equity legislation.

The next VCW Meeting in November is our advisory focused meeting.

Women’s Economic Opportunity Conference on Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Commissioners are invited to come help to table and solicit survey responses from attendees.

Lilly recently pulled together a planning meeting regarding events celebrating women’s right to vote for the 2020 Centennial. The League of Women Voters of Vermont is taking the lead on 2020 events; VCW is convening diverse interested parties and will help to get the word out.

### 3. Legislative Lunch

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Lisa updated the group about the legislative lunch planning efforts. Commissioners will be seeking corporate sponsors through the Vermont Commission on Women Education and Research Foundation and have created fundraising tiers. Melinda announced that Main Street Landing would again sponsor at the \$1000 level. We would need a binding commitment from potential sponsors by December 10<sup>th</sup> in order for them to receive the publicity promised. Folks also discussed whether this is a time to ramp up fundraising efforts for VCWERF generally, considering the political climate and focus on women’s issues.

### 4. Listening Project

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Cary updated the Commission about the status of the listening project survey and encouraged Commissioners to round up remaining surveys in their community. Commissioners updated the group about the forums that took place since our last meeting:

If Commissioners are interested in helping with data processing, please contact Cary.

### 5. Policy updates discussion

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Last month, we submitted proposed changes to the Health and Safety public policies, which were discussed, and are now before the commission to vote on.

#### Updating the Vermont Commission on Women’s Core Values

**MOTION** made by **Carol**, seconded by **Ruth**:

To adopt a change our core values statement, inserting “safety” after “we strive to ensure that all women live with”, as presented.

**MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.**

#### Updating the VCW’s public policy regarding Sexual Assault of Persons in Custody

**MOTION** made by **Carol**, seconded by **Lisa**:

To delete the Sexual Assault of Persons in Custody policy from the VCW’s Public Policies because Vermont now has a law addressing this issue.

**MOTION APPROVED.**

#### Updating the VCW’s public policy regarding Marriage for Same-gender Couples

**MOTION** made by **Carol**, seconded by **Lisa**:

To delete the Marriage for Same-gender Couples policy from the VCW’s Public Policies because same-gender marriage is permitted by statute in Vermont.

**MOTION APPROVED.**

**Adopting a new policy on “Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”**

**MOTION** made by Carol, seconded by Lisa:

To adopt the proposed “Sexual Harassment in the Workplace” policy as presented.

**MOTION APPROVED. Adopted as presented.**

**Discussion of Family Law Matters**

Carol presented the revision.

**Discussion of a potential Transgender Women Statement**

Are there differences for transgender women and men? Is saying “transgender women” reinforcing the binary? Are we excluding people who identify as trans but not as men or women? Commissioners had a discussion about the balance of inclusion and our role as the Commission on Women. Hannah plans to solicit feedback from Brenda Churchill about this statement.

**Discussion of a potential statement on women with disabilities and on women raising children with disabilities.**

**6. Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility Discussion**

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Cary recently met with the ACLU about issues related to women in prison and commissioners discussed.

**7. VCW Operating Guidelines updates discussion**

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This document is the internal guidance that we agree on. Cary made suggested updates to changes in our statute and grammatical corrections, and would like to discuss several potential substantive changes, as distributed

**8. Announcements**

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Lisa’s son came home and said that he’s starting a sexual assault and prevention club at his school.

Emilie would love for people to be thinking about finding a point person in each county/metro area who would be willing to be a long-term point person involved in moving the ERA. If we can find both democrats and republicans to do this together it would strengthen our efforts.

Vermont Mentoring Program at Mercy Connection is starting soon; it’s a five-week training program on Wednesday evenings, let Ashley Michelle know if interested in participating.

Mercy Connections Women’s Small Business Start-Up Class for Comprehensive Business Planning starts in January, recruitment is happening now. It’s a 15-week class.

Let's Grow Kids is co-hosting a gubernatorial forum in Burlington tomorrow, Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 5 – 6 pm at the DoubleTree in Burlington which will be focused on early care and learning. Questions need to be submitted in advance.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:33 p.m.**