

**Vermont Commission on Women
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

Center for Achievement in Public Service, Schulmaier Hall, 32 College Street, Montpelier

Commissioners Present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey,
Eileen Boland, Carol Buchdahl, Charlotte Dennett,
Ruth Finn, Cathy Frey, Melinda Moulton,
Danielle Martel, Colin Ryan

Commissioners Absent:

Lynn Batchelor, Laine Dunham,
Jennie Gartner, Susie Hudson,
Nancy LaVarnway, Kerry Secrest

Advisors Present:

Diane Derby of U.S. Senator Leahy's Office
Jen Horowitz of Let's Grow Kids
Lynn Blackwell of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and the League of Women Voters of Vermont
Kelly Ault of the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance

Guests:

Mehanna Borostyan, UVM student and VCW summer intern

Staff: Cary Brown, Lilly Talbert

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Lilly Talbert

Meeting called to order at 9:33 a.m.

Nominations for Chair (election to be held June 14):

Cary announced nominations she's received for Chair: Carol and Marcia. Carol responded that she was honored to be nominated but is unable to serve, and thanked all. There was one more request for nominations and no response. One nomination for Chair: Marcia.

Welcome/Introductions:

Marcia welcomed everyone and asked for self-introductions.

Marcia spoke about the winners of the Deborah Pickman Clifford prize at Vermont History Day this year, Adam Clark and Jerret Muzzy of Vergennes Union Middle School. This special prize recognizes the most outstanding entry related to Vermont women who have contributed to our state, or to the role that women have played in Vermont's history. Ruth spoke about the experience of judging this contest, as she has for many years.

Gretchen stated the Vermont Geography bee winners were both girls for the first time.

Marcia passed around the meeting snack sign up for 2017-2018.

Staff and Legislative Updates:

Cary reported on a meeting yesterday of New England Commission directors in Boston.

Cary informed the group that Kelly Walsh's VT Equal Pay Compact work will end June 30th. US Department of Labor Women's Bureau approached us to partner on an event in Brattleboro on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 16th. Everyone should have received an invitation. Brattleboro Equal Pay Compact event is Tuesday, May 16th at The Lounge. Program starts at 3 and reception at 4:30.

Cary responded to a question about the Women's Bureau budget: they don't know about their future budget: they've been asked to submit plans for reorganization.

Lilly will be at the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility Spring Conference on Wednesday May 17th, sharing table space with Main Street Landing, who has again graciously sponsored VCW. She'll pitch the Equal Pay Compact to employers in attendance.

Mehanna will be joined by another intern, Summer Colley, a junior at St. Mikes.

Senator Leahy's Women's Economic Opportunity Conference will be held on Saturday September 16th at Vermont Tech. This year the conference features Change The Story as the theme, with workshops and a full group session following lunch focused on Change The Story reports and issues.

Legislative Update:

Paid family leave passed the House.

Accommodations for pregnant employees was signed into law last week.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION made by Carol and seconded by Melinda

To approve meeting minutes for April 2017 and for March 2017 meetings as submitted.

MOTION APPROVED. Accepted as presented.

Presentation: Change the Story VT "Vermont Women and Leadership" report:

Tiffany Bluemle, Director, CTS led the group through some highlights of the most recently released report on women and leadership.

Approval of 2017-2018 VCW Meeting Schedule:

MOTION made by Carol and seconded by Ruth.

The schedule is adopted. Note: Venue and times can be changed.

-BREAK

Discussion: Change the Story VT – Next Steps:

Commissioners and advisors shared a number of comments and thoughts:

- Does the why matter?
suggests Economic Equity and Security committee meet every month and delve into changing

the story of these dynamics.

- how to change this...you have to see women doing it. How do we educate people...how do we get the reports into the schools.
- you can't change what you don't understand. Why is never asked enough. Automation and robotization profoundly influence the work world now – job loss is huge. How are those in highest level planning for who in the future will work? Those in power will prefer to have women out of work because men cause unrest and revolution. Noted was a recent Time magazine article re: guaranteed annual income.
- Don't get bogged down in the why – focus on our response, take pieces that can be changed or are changing, see what works, and help.
- What's the goal? Define what you want to focus on. Look at larger social/economic forces which work against changing this story. Are they going to be positive or negative – ask questions.
- Focus on Why This Matters for addressing – the economy, power, control.
- Sleuth into the Why – ID what factors the Commission can work on. Work with partners. Younger children understand this dynamic – approach schools. Use them as ambassadors and spokes people. Highlight the positives and the people – feature those who lead, feature mentors.
- focus on cultivating young women leaders.
- Where are the levers of change? We have lack of \$ and time. We need new allies who push, with broader reach and deeper pockets and who have a stake in changing this story. What's the best use of our time. Who are the change makers?
- if you had a million \$\$ what would you do?
- Where can we best align our efforts? Data collection.
- show your economic impact!
- Focus more on positive why: women in Vt continue to have reproductive health access; to work, they need access to affordable quality child care; and they need decent transportation. Examine societal attitudes: ask the personal level CTS question: "What's the division of labor in your family?"
- Presentation and persuasion: use these tools – seek out skeptics – particularly those who are numbers driven. These tools (reports) make the case and have numbers to back it. Collect and share stories of how people are changing this. ID advocates. Utilize that passion. Use data with stories. Men need to see women who are successful.
- There's an awareness, there needs to be a will.
- Consistent effort is key. We need others to track this and care about it and talk about it.
- Invite women legislators to talk about their experience to the Commission. Change makers like the HR Director.

Generative Thinking Session: serving and engaging Vermont women who are most in need:

Commissioners and advisors engaged in a generative thinking discussion of this topic.

Commissioner Retreat Planning:

Retreat to be held 10:00 – 2:30 on Wednesday, June 14, at Hildene in Manchester VT. Facilitated meeting. Lunch: organized potluck. Eileen organizes with Lilly's assistance

Announcements:

Kelly announced *The Power of Collaboration*, the Alliance's Third Annual Membership Meeting on Tuesday, June 13th from 1:45 - 5:15 pm* at the Three Stallion Inn in Randolph. Check the [Annual Meeting webpage](#) for the full agenda and other presenters. This reflection, planning, and social event is free and open to Alliance individual, business, and organizational members, as well as strategic partners ([see list here](#)). Join the Alliance [here](#) or at the meeting. Requests for dues waivers are welcomed.

Melinda: I'll be speaking at the Persist 5K Run/Walk on Mother's Day in Burlington. Event Description from [site](#): Born from the energy of the Women's Marches, the Persist 5K Run/Walk is an event for all of us to champion the rights of women and raise money for the most vulnerable among us. This is a chance to wear our hats again and experience the tremendous solidarity of togetherness as we put in motion a symbol of resistance and solidarity, raise awareness of our voice in our state, and support Vermont women in need. Race proceeds will benefit the Vermont Women's Fund.

There will be a Resist and Rebuild Summit convened by those involved in the Women's March in Montpelier on May 20th, 12-4 at Montpelier High school, learn more [here](#).

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.