



RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON WOMEN

Commissioners

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Anna Tucker

Beverly Turner

Camille Vollaro, M.A.

Tracy E. Williams

Staff

Shanna Wells, M.Ed., *Director*

**Full Commission Meeting
June 12, 2006, 5:00 PM
One Capitol Hill, 2nd Floor
Conference Room B
Providence, RI 02908**

MINUTES

Present: Denise A. Barge, Joyce J. Dolbec, Carol Gibbons, Joanne M. Hill, Mary Anne Miller, Linda H. Newton, Sarah H. Rockett, Corinne Calise Russo, Jan Torres, Marilyn Coccozza Trillo, Camille Vollaro, Tracy Williams.

Excused Absent: Jane M. Anthony, Catherine Graziano, Neena Savage, Beverly Turner.

Unexcused Absent: Jacqueline Laguerre, Lela Morgan, Anna Tucker, Robert Watson.

Present, Non-Voting: Shanna Wells.

Guests: Senator June Gibbs, Representative Grace Diaz.

Call to Order

Chair Joyce Dolbec called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Consent Agenda

Mary Anne Miller made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, which included minutes from the meetings of April 10 and May 15, 2006. Joanne Hill seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair's Update

Chair Joyce Dolbec called the Commissioner's attention to the "Save the Date" card distributed with the meeting materials. On Thursday, September 7, 2006, 8-9:30 AM, State House State Room, RICW, in collaboration with Leadership RI, will host the "60 days and Counting Breakfast", bringing together women running for General Assembly, State and Federal Office in Rhode Island, to count down the days to the November 7th election. On Tuesday, October 3, 2006, 6:00 PM, Crown Plaza Atrium, RICW will be hosting the 2006 Women of the Year Event. Chair Dolbec urged all the commissioners to attend these events.

Chair Dolbec asked Director Shanna Wells to develop a procedure manual for the RICW office.

By-laws committee members Carol Gibbons and Jan Torres gave a draft of amended by-laws to Chair Dolbec for review.

On May 16th, Chair Dolbec's state representative, The Honorable Raymond Church, formally introduced her as Chair of the RICW to the State House of Representatives. He presented her with a citation, congratulating her on her election.

Denise Barge attend the Affirmative Action program that occurred the end of May as a representative from the RICW.

Jan Torres made a motion to accept the Chair's Update. Camille Vollaro seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Director's Report

Web-Site Update: The website update is complete and the new site went live on May 15th.

Emerging Women in Business (EWIB): The EWIB Conference was held on June 8th. Director Wells' role was to coordinate the logistics of the venue layout and equipment, as well as to created an exit evaluation and to compile that data. Based on the evaluations, the conference was successful in reaching the targeted population (low income and minority women), and the event ran smoothly.

Office of Women's Health Advisory Committee (OWHAC): I have been working with the Priorities Sub-Committee, drafting priorities for presentation to DOH Director Dr. Gifford. The OWH technically does not exist anymore, having been absorbed into the newly created Health Disparities Division.

Met Student Intern: The student completed her project on women in politics. Unfortunately, she did not obtain the full sample size, so the data is skewed.

Polaris Project: The Polaris Project combats human trafficking and modern-day slavery. While human trafficking victims are of both genders, they are predominantly female and children. A new chapter is starting in RI, and on May 16th, Director Wells met with Carrie Lutjens and Zachary Townsend, Co-Coordinator of Polaris Project Rhode Island (PPRI). While the Washington, DC office offers direct services to victims, PPRI will focus their work on policy – seeking to get anti-trafficking legislation passed. They asked if we would sit on their advisory committee. Tracy Williams said she was willing to sit on the Advisory Committee. Joyce Dolbec instructed Director Wells to attend as well.

Mary Anne Miller made a motion to accept the Director's Report. Carol Gibbons seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Legislative Committee Report

Legislative Committee Chair Tracy Williams reported that letters of support were written and submitted on the following bills:

- S. 2419—Cyber Stalking Bill
- H. 7189—Affirmative Action
- S. 2972/H. 7399—Confidentiality of Phone Records
- H. 7383—Notification by Owners of Intent to Leave Section 8 Program

The Legislative Committee recommended letters of support be submitted on Senate Bill 2347—Garnishment of Video Lottery Terminal Winnings for Child Support and House Bill 6778—Re-naming the New Sakonnet Bridge the Anne Hutchinson Bridge.

Mary Anne Miller made a motion for letters of support for House Bill 6778 be sent to the House and Senate. Camille Vollaro seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.** Tracy Williams made a motion that letters of support for Senate Bill 2347 be sent to the House and Senate. Mary Anne Miller seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

A brief discussion was held regarding Senate Bill 2804/House Bill 6793—An Act relating to Health and Safety—Health Care Rights of Conscience Act. The Legislative Committee recommended opposing this bill. This act would provide protection from discrimination to all health care providers who chose not to participate in a health care service that violates the conscience of the health care provider. The act would also provide a civil cause of action for damages in instances of violations of this act. The Commissioners felt they needed to see the bill in detail in order to decide whether to oppose it. Mary Anne Miller suggested if further clarification is needed that Cheryl Le Claire and/or Kathy Cordy at the Department of Health may be able to provide further insight.

Tracy Williams made a motion to accept the Legislative Committee Report. Corinne Calise Russo seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Education Committee

Education Committee Chair Sarah Rockett described the trouble her committee is having setting an appropriate date for the annual Education Award event.. After much discussion, Sarah Rockett made a motion to recognize Education Award recipients in an event held in January at the State House and to give 50% of the award in August and 50% of the award in January (The Rhode Island Foundation needs to be consulted to see if this is possible). Tracy Williams seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Health Committee Report

Health Committee Chair Mary Anne Miller distributed information on the new Cervical Cancer Vaccine that was recently approved by the FDA. On Friday, June 16th, a meeting will be held with Prison Medical staff to examine the gaps in services for women re-entering the community. Mary Anne Miller made a motion to accept the Health Committee report. Linda Newton Seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Strategic Action Planning

After lengthy discussion, the group decided that the document needs to be restructured so as to view each goal with action plans to better find gaps, and to prioritize activities. Shanna will put together the new documents for the Commissioners. Other related items discussed:

- Asking legal counsel (and others) for clarification about the necessary quorum needed for RICW. If quorum stipulations are in our by-laws, then can't we change them? What are the ramifications of doing so?
- Director Wells attends some outside meetings. Chair Dolbec would like to see greater Commissioner involvement in meetings with other groups. Given their schedules, can others do this? Can we have other organizations come to us rather than we going to them?

Tracy Williams made a motion to have the Strategic Plan restructured, as per the discussion. Sarah Rockett seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Departmental Appointments

The Departmental appointments for Elderly Affairs, Labor and Training, and Health expire on June 30th. Commissioners voted on which departments of the following should be asked to send representation to the Commission:

Departments Expiring or Not Represented

Elderly Affairs
Labor and Training
Health
Elementary and Secondary Education
Environmental Management
Transportation
Human Services

Ballots were distributed and the Commissioners voted and chose to have Elderly Affairs and Labor and Training represented. A tie vote between Health and Human Services occurred. Chair Joyce Dolbec decided, given the changes occurring at the Department of Health with the Office of Women's Health, that the Department of Health should continue to be represented on the Commission.

Announcements

On June 26th Chair Joyce Dolbec will be working with the Girl Scouts on their Leadership Project. She will distribute Independent Women pins to participants.

A forum to engage community attention and discussion around cancer will be held at the YWCA of Northern RI on June 13th, 6:30 PM. On June 21 and 22, 8 PM, WGBH/July 27 & Aug 3, 8 PM, RIPBS will air the program "A Lion in the House" regarding cancer diagnosis and its effect on families.

A call for nominations for the Women of Achievement in Health Care was distributed.

Adjournment

Linda Newton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Denise Barge seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Minutes approved on August 7, 2006.

Jan Torres, Secretary