



RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON WOMEN

Commissioners

Linda H. Newton, *Chair*

Corinne Calise Russo, *1st Vice Chair*

Carol Gibbons, Ph.D., *2nd Vice Chair*

Joanne M. Hill, *Treasurer*

FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, August 20, 2007, 5:00 PM
One Capitol Hill, 2nd Floor, Conference Room B
Providence, RI 02908

MINUTES

Denise A. Barge

Carrie Bridges, MPH

Representative Joanne Giannini

Catherine Graziano, Ph.D.

Victoria Johnson

Jacqueline B. Laguerre

Helene Martin, RNC, CAGS, NCC

Lela Morgan, M.A.

Representative Carol A. Mumford

Representative Eileen S. Naughton

Adelita Orefice

Sarah H. Rockett, M.A.

Neena Savage, Esquire

Marilyn Coccozza Trillo

Beverly Turner

Staff

Shanna Wells, M.Ed., *Director*

Present: Denise Barge, Carrie Bridges, Carol Gibbons, Catherine Graziano, Helene Martin, Rep. Carol Mumford, Linda Newton, Sarah Rockett, Marilyn Coccozza Trillo.

Absent, Excused: Joanne Hill, Victoria Johnson, Lela Morgan, Corinne Calise Russo, Beverly Turner.

Absent, Unexcused: Rep. Joanne Giannini, Jacqueline Laguerre, Rep. Eileen Naughton, Adelita Orefice, Neena Savage.

Call to Order

Chair Linda Newton called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM.

Consent Agenda

Catherine Graziano made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Sarah Rockett seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair's Report

The chair asked Director Wells to leave the room during the time the Chair reviewed Director Wells' evaluation with the full Commission. The evaluation was completed on June 25, 2007.

Chair Linda Newton was happy to report that the RICW Op Ed piece on Human Trafficking appeared in the Providence Journal on July 14, 2007.

Chair Linda Newton informed the Commissioners that a letter was sent to Legal Counsel regarding the development of a 501(c)(3) called, "the Friends of RICW". The letter informed Legal Counsel of our intention to move forward on the 501(c)(3).

Chair Linda Newton informed the Commissioner that Commissioner Jane M. Anthony resigned from RICW. Group discussion ensued regarding formally recognizing the past two Chairs at the Women of the Year event and with a citation from the legislature. Rep. Mumford stated she could provide the citations.

Chair Linda Newton has contacted the Governor's office numerous times regarding appointee slots needing to be filled, and the renewal status of her appointment. To date, no word has been received from the Governor.

Director's Report

See attached written report.

Committee Reports

Goldman Education Award Selection Committee: Sarah Rockett reported the Goldman Award Selection Committee met on July 11, 2007, and selected three recipients: They are:

Elka Arredondo, of Central Falls, RI. Ms. Arredondo is a senior at the University of Rhode Island who is studying to become a Physical Therapist.

Lisa M. Fortier, of Woonsocket, RI. A single mother of a six year old son, Ms. Fortier is currently enrolled at the Community College of Rhode Island, seeking a degree in General Studies.

Sandra Harrington, of Hope Valley, RI. A single mother of 5 boys, Ms. Harrington is a junior at the University of Rhode Island who is studying to become a teacher.

In lieu of an Education Award Event, which has been, historically, poorly attended, this year recipients will be invited to attend the Women of the Year award event, where they can be publicly recognized.

Girls Non-Traditional Trades Forum(GNTT): Carol Gibbons reported the National Association of Women in Construction is donating \$2,500 to the GNTT event. This is the largest single donation in their history. GNTT Committee will meet the end of September.

Women of the Year Committee: Co-Chair, Marilyn Cocozza Trillo reported

Recipients selected in May:

- Dr. Lynn Antonelli, Navel Engineer
- Sister Mary Reilly, Founder of Sophia Academy, and co-founder of McAuley Manor and Dorcas Place
- Karen Stein, Ph.D, founder and director of URI's Women's Studies Program

Sponsorships so far:

- Amica Mutual Insurance – Silver Sponsor \$1500
- Lefkowitz, Garfinkle, Champi & DeRienzo PC – Bronze Sponsor \$500

Location:

- University Ballroom, Radisson Airport Hotel, Post Road, Warwick
- Menu:

Other:

- Letters to legislators requesting citations were sent on August 15th
 - Request for Mrs. Carcier to give greetings from the state submitted
 - Flowers and engraving for plaques have been ordered
 - Invitations were printed gratis by Blue Cross Blue Shield and arrived on August 18th
- Invitations will be mailed by August 31st

The Commissioners discussed adding a non-profit sponsorship amount. Commissioners decided they want to go forward with this.

Chair Linda Newton requested, after discussion from the Commissioners, that each Commissioner sell 10 tickets to the WOY event.

Old Business

Pay Equity: Director Wells received updated information about Pay Equity in Rhode Island. Women in Rhode Island now make 84¢ to a man's \$1.00, up from 78¢. Unfortunately, the change is due to a reduction in men's pay, rather than an increase in women's pay. The next Equal Pay Day is April 22, 2008. After discussion by the Commissioners, Director Wells was instructed to find out what activities may be planned for that day, to see if the RICW wants to participate.

Budget: Director Wells informed the Commissioners that RICW received all the money asked for in the current FY 08 enacted budget. However, the Budget Office set a very low target for FY 09. The FY 09 Budget target would cover personnel expenses, but would only leave \$2,040 for operating expenses. After group discussion, the Commissioners decided by consensus to request above the Budget Office target, and to ask for the same amount for Operating Expenses that we've received these past three years.

Amendment to Labor Law: The Supreme Court ruling of June 11, 2007 *Long Island Care at Home, Ltd., Et Al. v. Coke* could potentially impact home health care workers. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that home health care workers – who are paid to work as caregivers – are not entitled to be paid minimum wage, earn overtime pay and other basic job benefits. This decision effects 2.1 million working women who comprise 90% of the paid caregiver workforce, without the right to the wages and benefits guaranteed by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The Fair Labor Standards Act, introduced in 1938, was amended in 1974 to include domestic workers from agencies as well as individual workers. However the law makes an exemption for babysitters and workers providing “companionship services,” and the ensuing regulations interpreted this to include care for elderly and infirmed patients. This interpretation equates full-time caregivers with occasional part-time babysitters or pet sitters, and excludes all workers providing in-home care for sick, elderly or disabled people, even if the worker is employed by home care agencies and businesses. This allows the home care businesses to pay their employees low wages and provide no benefits, while they make profits.

Director Wells asked if the Commissioners were interested in writing to Congress to request an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Commissioners felt they did not have enough information to decide. Director Wells will provide Commissioners with the Supreme Court Ruling, and additional information on Home Health Care Aides.

Adjournment

Catherine Graziano made a motion to adjourn. Marilyn Coccozza Trillo seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 6:39 PM.

These minutes approved on September 10, 2007

Linda H. Newton
Chairperson