

Virginia Council on Women
Science Museum of Virginia, Thalhimer Room
Draft Minutes- May 15, 2013
9:30am-12:00pm

Attending:

Tracy Key
Dawn James
Rita Surratt
Theresa Preda
Bakula Dave
Mais Abousy
Jeff Caruso
Brooke Tribble
Ruth Zajur
Ann Harbour
Carey Sousa
Jeff Caruso
Lis Bresee

Staff: Jennifer Aulgur
Stacy Whitehouse
Generra Peck
Jeff Palmore

The meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Chairwoman Tracy Key.

A motion was made by Ruth Zajur and seconded by Theresa Preda to adopt the meeting agenda.
The motion carried

A motion was made by Rita Surratt and seconded by Dawn James to waive the reading of the March 5, 2013 meeting minutes and to adopt the minutes as written. The motion carried.

Legislative and Staffing Update

Jennifer Aulgur passed around a handout listing legislation passed during the 2013 session that impacted women; an updated version will be sent via email later in the summer

Emily Barrett will be leaving the administration and will no longer be able to staff Council on Women meeting. We wish her luck in her new job.

The Council discussed how they would like to be involved in next year's legislative session. Past Councils have sent a letter to the Governor expressing areas outlining areas they would like the Governor to look at during session. Generra Peck suggested being cautious on stating specific stances on legislation since the Council may not always be in full agreement.

Generra Peck suggests Governor's Office staff could brief the Council on legislation for individual rather than group action, and possibly have guest speakers from Governor's office or other offices to educate the Council on specific policy topics.

Generra also mentioned the Governor's Office holds a STEM-H event at the Capitol, which is another way the Council could be involved if future administrations continue the event.

Updated Roster

Jennifer Aulgur sent around a contact list and ask all members to update their information or add it if they are a new member. Updates will be emailed after the meeting.

STEM Essay Contest Wrap-Up

Kinsey Peeler, Executive Director of the Science Museum Foundation, attended the meeting to discuss the Council on Women's partnership with the Museum.

Statistics: Over 330 essays submitted, \$22,000 raised for three top winners and 5 honorable mention awards.

2013 Partnership Discussion:

- Process: the Museum puts the donated checks put in a holding account and sends thank you letters to the donors.
- The Museum suggests keeping the number of scholarships given to 3 and perhaps increasing the amount if more money is raised. Increasing the number of scholarships beyond three would create an administrative burden.
- It was mentioned that there is sometimes confusion at the Women's Leadership Breakfast over recognizing the sponsors for the breakfast versus recognizing the sponsors for the essay contest. It was suggested having clearer signage either at the event or in the program next year.
- Improved this year on having sponsor representatives and judges at the breakfast for recognition
- Records need to be kept by the Council of which sponsors support the contest each year
- It was suggested making the scholarship presentation more about the young ladies receiving the scholarships by either having them all speak briefly or rotate who speaks each year.
- Chairwoman Key suggests creating a memorandum of understanding with the Science Museum on how the financial and administrative process should work so future Councils have a guideline. A draft would be best before the August Council of Women meeting.
- The Council agreed that future meetings need to focus on balancing the financial commitment the Science Museum has for the breakfast; the Museum lets the Council have 30 seats, which diminishes their fundraising totals for the breakfast

A new liaison from the Council to the Science Museum is needed to replace Dawn James since she has taken on other responsibilities on the Council. Brook Tribble volunteered to take that position.

2013 Scholarship Process Discussion:

- Process: Every applicant received an email letting them know the outcome; the winners received a signed letter from the Governor and First Lady
- ***Action Item for Theresa Preda to draft a letter to be signed by the Governor and First Lady to be sent to the contest judges.***
- ***Action Item for Council members most involved in the essay contest to create a guidebook on the process used for the essay contest.***
- There were several rounds to the judging process. Some judges suggested the judging process to be more subjective
- It is important for all Council members to participate in this initiative, either by directly fundraising or recruiting others to do so, or helping with judging essays
- It was suggested that a link be put on the Council website to direct people to the winning essays.
- It was also suggested that the Council discuss how to help award winners network with each other and stay on the STEM path- ideas suggested were alumni reception, mentorships, hold additional program, and have the winners speak at their high school or other area high school about their STEM experience

Working Women's Subcommittee

A Working Women's Subcommittee of the Council on Women was created with the goal to review Virginia state government services and make recommendations on how to make services more efficient and simpler for working women

The report produced by the Council will be passed along to agencies and include follow-up by members regarding implementation. Members can work with Legislative Service and legislators on drafting legislation.

Challenges for this subcommittee are time commitment, the learning curve in learning how state government works, and lack of knowledge about work currently being done by the Governor's office and other agencies on this issue.

Generra Peck and Jeff Palmore from the Governor Policy office attended this meeting, and are willing to reach out to offices they work with about specific services, or do research on how to solve specific problems that Council members pass along.

The policy staff suggests holding a lunch with female staff at the Governor's office to get their ideas on how to make government processes more efficient for women .

Several members of the subcommittee sent out surveys to friends, businesses, and female business professional for their opinions on government services. Jennifer passed around a handout summarizing the responses.

Members should send ideas and topics to explore in state government by June 30th. Ideas given at the meeting included health and education, DMV after-hour services and improving state government website layouts.

Jennifer will email member the Report from the Governor's Commission on Government Reform. Jeff Palmore will research whether there has been a report done on policies and services impacting women in state government

FOIA Policies

Jennifer and Tracy reviewed FOIA policies for meeting and electronic communication.

New Business

- Future meetings will be held Tuesday, August 13th and Wednesday, September 18th.

A motion was made by Dawn James and seconded by Jeff Caruso to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45AM.