

Virginia Council on Women

Draft Minutes
May 7, 2014
9:30AM – 11:00 AM

The May 7 meeting of the Council on Women was held at the Science Museum of Virginia (2500 West Broad Street, Richmond VA) and was called to order at 9:32 am by Chairwoman Tracy Key, who also welcomed the council members and staff present.

Members present were:

Tracy Key
Theresa Preda
Dawn James
Rita Surratt
Ruth Zajur
Lis Bresee
Nicole Neily
Brook Tribble
Jeff Caruso
Julie Coggsdale

Members absent were:

Mais Abousy
Bakula Dave
Brenda Fastabend
Camille Fleenor
Ann Harbour
Carey Sousa
Olivia Turner

Staff present:

Kelly Thomasson
Katherine Waddell

A motion was made by Rita Suratt and seconded by Ruth Zajur to adjust the agenda to consider New Business before Old Business and then to adopt the meeting agenda. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Nicole and seconded by Jeff to waive the reading of the January 15, 2014 meeting minutes. The motion carried. Tracy suggested some minor edits to the minutes to clarify a few things since they had been transcribed by someone not in attendance. A motion was made by Rita and seconded by Theresa to adopt the corrected minutes. The motion carried.

Legislative Update – Kelly Thomasson

- There was no formal legislative update presented, rather Kelly asked what sort of updates the Council would be interested in moving forward and asked for feedback and any questions related to the last General Assembly session or pending legislative issues.

- Theresa advised that in the past (not as much recently), the Council had made statements on the Governor's priorities that might be helpful in preparation for a legislative session. And that Dawn had done fantastic work in this area with the Working Women's Report.
- Jeff asked if any of the legislation that dealt with the Conflict of Interest Act or the Freedom of Information Act would affect the Council.
 - The new ethics legislation is still being reviewed and analyzed, but at this time it is believed that the only impact would be that Financial Disclosure statements will have been to filed twice a year rather than annually and will be filed with Legislative Services, rather than the Sec of the Commonwealth's office.
 - Kelly also advised the group on recent guidance received from the Attorney General's office on FOIA meeting laws
 - Members can dial-in for a meeting, but a quorum must be present in-person and anyone dialing-in must make the room and conference line available to the public and that alternate location but be posted on the meeting notice.
 - If there is a true emergency situation (sickness, etc), a member can dial-in without having posted in advance. (unsure if there is a limit on the number of people who can do that in one meeting).
- Tracy asked for clarification on what constitutes a quorum, especially now that we have one member who has resigned and because the Secretary's office serves as an ex-officio member.
 - We need to write by-laws to address quorum for the Council
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Tracy and Theresa will draft bylaws for the group to consider at the next meeting.

Appointments update – Kelly Thomasson

- We have seven seats expiring on June 30 (one of which is already vacant since Leslie Anderson resigned). *If you are interested in being reappointed please let Kelly know ASAP.*
- We are looking for a diverse board make-up to reflect Virginia.
- Hoping to have decisions made well before the seats expire.

Contact information and miscellaneous housekeeping – Kelly Thomasson

- A contact sheet was circulated for corrections. An updated roster will be emailed to everyone.
- Lunches have been served at meetings in the past, however the assembled group agreed that was not necessary and it would be preferable to meet earlier in the morning and get back to work. The preference is to meet from 9:30 – 11:30am.
- Governor's lapel pins – Ruth asked if Council members will be receiving new pins. The Governor's office doesn't have a pin policy yet and haven't started distributing them widely. Generally in the past, pins were distributed to members as they were appointed, not to existing members. If you're interested in a pin, please let Kelly know.

New Business:

STEM Essay Contest 2014 Review – Tracy Key, Theresa Preda, Lis Breese

- Tracy noted it was a fantastic event, event better than past years and continues to grow and gain momentum. Would like to start earlier with fundraising and work on it throughout the year rather than only the month before. Need a consensus from the Council on moving

forward and getting buy-in from the members to help out. It can't be run by just a few members.

- Theresa gave an update on how the judging process worked. It was all based on merit and judged on a point system. Maybe we should consider other criteria – geographic diversity? Financial need?
 - Brook spoke as a judge – she thought the merit based system worked well and it would get too complicated to introduce other criteria.
 - Lis concurred and added that it would be difficult to reliably collect financial need and keep that information confidential. However, it is worth considering geographic diversity.
 - Theresa asked if it was ok to distribute final scores of all the applicants to the judges. Agreed.
- Lis gave a fundraising update. It is a lot of work to raise money – she'll be at a disadvantage next year because she recently switched jobs and won't have the same connections she did this year. Everyone knows someone they can ask for sponsorships and hopes that more members will get involved in fundraising. The press release from the administration is a huge help to add legitimacy to the event and the request for money.
 - Dawn suggested approaching past Council members for donations or fundraising assistance.
 - Julie suggested compiling a list of STEM related businesses in Virginia to target for fundraising
 - Ruth asked for a script to use when making fundraising calls.
- Dawn said we might consider changing from STEM to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) which is becoming more the norm.
- Rita suggested posting the winning essays on the website – will need to get permission from the students first.
- A motion was made to form a subcommittee to work on the STEM Essay Contest and recommendations for moving forward. Tracy will lead the effort, with Nicole, Julie and Brook. Other members not present will be encouraged to volunteer also (**ACTION ITEM**). The group will have ideas to review at the next meeting.

Administration's Priorities and How the Council can Help – Kelly Thomasson

- Reiterated the important nature of the Council and the Governor's commitment to their work.
- Introduced Katherine Waddell – new part time staff who , amongst other things, will be a liaison between the administration and the Council and help explore ideas the Council may want to pursue.
- First asked the Council to weigh in on what's working or has not worked in the past, what you see for the future of the Council, etc.
 - Rita - appreciative that the Council's website has been updated
 - Kelly noted we are working on resolving the broken link to the Resources page. Council members weighed in that when we find that information we'll also need to bring it up-to-date.
 - Theresa – before the Working Women's Report the Council really didn't do much of anything.

- Dawn – the Working Women’s Report really introduced some good ideas – might be good for everyone to take a good, fresh look at the report. There are probably some things that could be easily implemented (either legislatively or by execution action).
 - Tracy – the Report was written to be a non-partisan endeavor that was directed and applicable to whoever took office.
 - A motion was made by Ruth and seconded by Jeff to create a subcommittee to look at the report and work with administration on recommendations. Dawn will chair and Jeff will help **(ACTION ITEM)**
- Briefed the group on the First Lady’s initiative dealing with childhood nutrition and hunger. Lis and Nicole will talk to the First Lady’s office to get more information and see if there might be a way for the Council to get involved. **(ACTION ITEM)**

Review of Attendance Policy & 2014 Meeting Dates - Tracy Key

- The forthcoming bylaws will formalize an attendance policy. Its important that Council members be present and realize this is a working board.
- As the administration considers new members, make sure appointees bring a diversity of skills and understand the nature of the board and are willing to show up and actively contribute in someway by lending their time, talents or expertise to help the Council achieve its goals and continue to grow new initiatives.
- Meeting dates approved for the remainder of 2014:
August 13, 2014
October 15, 2014
Meetings will take place from 9:30 – 11:30am in Richmond

Old Business:

MOU with the Science Museum – Tracy Key

- The newly formed STEM subcommittee will have recommendations for the MOU along with their overall recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.