

Virginia Council on Women

Draft Minutes
August 13, 2014
9:30AM – 11:30 AM

The August 13 meeting of the Council on Women was held at the downtown offices of Capitol One (200 South 10th Street, Suite 801, Richmond VA) and was called to order at 9:30 am by Chairwoman Tracy Key, who also welcomed the council members and staff present. Council members each introduced themselves to the group since so many members were newly appointed.

Members present were:

Tracy Key
Theresa Preda
Rita Surratt
Ruth Zajur
Brook Tribble
Jeff Caruso
Olivia Turner
Lashrecse Aird
Meta Braymer
Carol Gibbons
Meredith Harbach
Sally Mullikin
Marcia Price
Susan Rowland

Members absent were:

Julie Coggsdale
Lis Bresee
Mais Abousy
Ann Harbour

Staff present:

Kelly Thomasson
Katherine Waddell

A motion was made by Carol Gibbons and seconded by Rita Suratt to adopt the meeting agenda. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Rita Suratt and seconded by Ruth Zajur to waive the reading of the May 7, 2014 meeting minutes. The motion carried.

General Updates – Kelly Thomasson

- Kelly welcomed new members, gave an update on the appointments process (all seats are now filled until the next round of seats expire in June 2015), and passed out the Governor's lapel pins to all the members.
- Circulated a board roster to be marked with any necessary updates.

FOIA presentation - Josh Heslinga, Assistant Attorney General

- Josh showed a video about FOIA (available for viewing here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50oddl3nUe0>) then followed up with a few comments and took questions from the group.
- He feels the video takes the “emails = meeting” rule a little too far. Emails can constitute a meeting, but they don’t always.
- Remote meetings/conference calls – Members may participate electronically (i.e. by conference call), however you must announce their location in advance as an alternate meeting location. If a member has a last minute emergency, s/he can dial-in without having given advance notice of a remote meeting location. Only 3 members can have a true emergency at a time.
- Subcommittees and work groups are public bodies and need to follow meeting rules that apply to the full Council.
- Records retention (Virginia Public Records Act) –
 - Public records must be maintained, including emails and notes from meetings
 - Good idea to create a central email address for filing/record retention purposes – for example, if Kelly is copied on all Council business related emails then it will be easy to file them and save without each Council member having to worry about saving records.
 - Any public records/notes you have should be turned over when you leave the council (unless they have already been copied on the central email)
 - Also, good to keep in mind that if a private body submits information, then it also becomes public record.
 - Default is to keep info for two years. The Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office is the custodian of the Council on Women’s records.
- Questions can be directed to the FOIA Council or the AG’s office (the Council should have our own liaison in the AG’s office and we are working to figure out who that is). The AGs office is a lawyer/client relationship, unlike the FOIA Council.

Old Business:

STEM Subcommittee – Tracy Key

- Tracy gave an update to new members on the history of the Council’s involvement with this STEM Scholarship initiative and the need to discuss how we should move forward.
- Passed out a balance sheet from the Science Museum with our account activity – money raised, dispersed and the 7% administrative fee.
- Originally partnered with the Science Museum because the Council didn’t feel they could take on coordinating their own event. The Up and Atom breakfast provided a wonderful platform, good press and PR, especially with the First Lady’s attendance this year. Also the accounting services they provide (send money directly to the winner’s university).
- Moving forward will need help with both facets of the STEM contest – judging and fundraising.

- Fundraising – Tracy and Julie worked to put together a list that includes companies that have a connection to STEM and may be good new sources for fundraising.
- Tracy noted that she hopes the new council members will go forward and embrace this program. We want to start thinking in a broader way with research on what companies care about STEM and forming relationships. Local companies are more likely to donate when they form personal relationships by attending the breakfast event with the Council and scholarship recipients, etc.
- Judges don't have to be council members
- Brook noted that she thinks the experience would be enhanced by letting the girls present their own essays – possibly to the Governor in the Patrick Henry Building. Also, the timing of the breakfast is difficult because its AP and IB testing season.
- Susan thinks the initiative is great and should be continued, but also asked if there was a way to extend the opportunity to older women who are going back to school. Would like to recognize women across the commonwealth of all ages.
 - Tracy noted that with the ongoing rotation of Council Members and lack of the entire Council's participation there is a capacity issue. Any expansion of the program needs to be in conjunction with new Council Members taking on some of the responsibility, as well as the assurance that the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office & the judging committee can handle and process even more essay applicants. The number of applicants continue to grow each year. Also not sure how you would get notices out to potential participants without going through the schools. Sally suggested going through Chambers of Commerce.
- Theresa proposed staying with the museum for another year while we figure out how to move forward, but add our own event where the girls could meet with the Governor. Kelly noted that we thought about this too late for the 2014 contest. Our female cabinet secretaries and First Lady were willing to participate in a separate event for the contest winners but we need more planning on how to make it a worthwhile event (include all of the winners and not just the top two, consider inviting back past winners each year, etc).
- Meredith suggested that in addition to the fundraising and judging committees, perhaps we need a third committee to plan the event.
- Kelly will schedule a meeting with leadership at the Science Museum to discuss our partnership and the relationship moving forward. Any interested Council members are welcome to join Kelly at the meeting (Katherine, Sally & Brook offered to attend to represent the Council). In the meantime, will get everyone a copy of the MOU and budget.
- Marcia moved to host the STEM essay contest again in 2015. Meredith seconded and the motion carried.
- Need to make a decision on what event we will have moving – we can't raise money if we don't know what we're raising money for.

Bylaws – Tracy Key

- Tracy distributed draft bylaws to the group for review and encouraged everyone to read over on their own time and submit recommendations directly to Tracy.

- In drafting the bylaws, Tracy spoke to the Women's Councils of Texas, Maryland and others for guidance and examples. Texas is the most advanced, however we do have differences (we are not a corporation, etc). This document is general ideas we can use for discussion.
- Most important points to note today are Officers and Attendance.
- Tracy noted she believes it would be helpful and important to have a vice chair and a secretary (to take minutes).
- It was noted that we need the legislature to support the Council. As we grow more and want to do more, we need publicity and their support. Perhaps a pursuing a Virginia Women's Hall of Fame; or many states do a woman's conference. The long term goal is to become more visible to the Commonwealth.
- Theresa made a motion for Tracy to make a final draft of the bylaws. Carol seconded and motion carried. Tracy asked Council Members to review in greater detail on their own time and get back to her with any edits.

Working Women's Report – Key and Thomasson

(note: Kelly had to leave early for a meeting with the Governor and was not there for this report so the discussion was very short).

- The Working Women's Report was tasked to us by the former governor late last year. The final document is still on the website. It is not a partisan document; this council wants to move forward and be partners with the administration.

New Business:

Request from Governor McAuliffe – Katherine Waddell

- Katherine distributed and read a letter from Governor McAuliffe asking the Council to form a Women's Healthcare Initiative to make recommendations and provide analysis on women's access to healthcare in Virginia.
- The Governor asked Meredith Harbach to chair this women's healthcare subcommittee.
- Susan moved to form a subcommittee and Marcia seconded; the motion carried.
- Meredith asked anyone interested in working with the subcommittee to email her; would like to get up and running by the October meeting in order to present some ideas on what we can do moving forward.
- Sally suggested that with the General Assembly reconvening in September to discuss Medicaid expansion, we should let legislators know that women will be greatly impacted by this and this is an important issue to us.
- Theresa moved to send a letter to the General Assembly reminding them to remember women when making their decisions. Susan seconded the motion and it carried.
- Meredith will draft, sign and submit the letter from the subcommittee. She will send the draft to the council members.

Review of Meeting Dates - Tracy Key

- Next meeting is Wednesday, October 15 in Richmond (location tbd). Group agreed that generally 9:30 - 11:30 am is the best timing.
- Will likely meet in May, immediately following the Up and Atom breakfast, but will hold off on confirming until we solidify the plan for the STEM initiative.
- It was suggested that if we are meeting in January perhaps we could lobby in the afternoon.
 - Concerns: do we need to register? One person cannot speak for the entire council; we don't want to appear partisan/political.
 - Ideas: We could pick topics that are not biased; need to start flagging things that effect women.
- January meeting set for Wednesday, January 21 at 1:00 pm. Susan will get a room reserved in the General Assembly building,
- Jeff suggested that we could have a guest speaker provide a substantive briefing on health care issues. Everyone agreed it was a great idea. Katherine will work on lining up a speaker.

Meeting adjourned shortly after 11:30 am.