

Virginia Council on Women

Draft Minutes
October 15, 2014
9:30AM – 11:30 AM

The October 15 meeting of the Council on Women was held at the Patrick Henry Building (1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond VA) and was called to order at 9:36 am by Deputy Secretary Kelly Thomasson. Council members re-introduced themselves to the group since so many members were newly appointed. Also introduced were two staff from the Office of the Attorney General. Cindy Norwood will be the liaison to the Council on Women moving forward.

Members present were:

Rita Surratt
Ruth Zajur
Jeff Caruso
Olivia Turner
Lashrecse Aird
Meta Braymer
Carol Gibbons
Meredith Harbach
Sally Mullikin
Ann Harbour

Members absent were:

Tracy Key, Chair
Julie Coggsdale
Lis Bresee
Mais Abousy
Theresa Preda
Brook Tribble
Marcia Price
Susan Rowland

Staff present:

Kelly Thomasson
Katherine Waddell

Attorney General Staff:

Cindy Norwood
Heather Lockerman

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

A motion was made by Ruth and seconded by Rita to waive the reading and adopt the minutes of the August 13, 2014 meeting. The motion carried.

General Updates – Kelly Thomasson

- Kelly circulated a board roster to be marked with any necessary updates.
- No legislative updates at this time.

Old Business:

Women’s Healthcare Initiative – Meredith Harbach

- Meredith presented the draft minutes from the Subcommittee’s first meeting on September 23 and discussed what the group had settled on for their next steps
 - To begin preliminary planning of a Women’s Wellness Walk and Health/Wellness Fair at the Capitol to be offered during National Women’s Health Month/Week in 2015, potentially partnering with Women’s Health Virginia and seeking sponsors from Virginia healthcare providers, etc.
 - To begin the process of collecting data to determine the current state and regulation of women’s access to healthcare in Virginia, relating to the issues set out above
 - Each member was tasked with investigating and gathering specific data and will plan to report back to the subcommittee at the next meeting
- She also discussed the process of selecting members of the subcommittee and that with so much interest she had decided to limit the group to 5 (including herself) in order to keep it manageable and facilitate scheduling meetings.
- Kelly asked if we should have a vote on the Wellness Walk, as that is their only proposal that seems to require consent from Council at this time.
- Jeff asked to table that motion in order to talk more about the process for selecting subcommittee members. He would like to know what criteria were used for selection. He feels criteria should have been specified, and then based on those criteria each volunteer’s qualifications should have been gathered and assessed before selections were made.
 - Meredith said there was not specific criteria written out and that she tried to find a balance of people who represented different views and would work well together and have the time and flexibility to attend meetings.
 - Sally offered that EVERYONE on this Council is qualified to serve on the subcommittee and that Meredith could have picked everyone. She objects to revamping the membership of the subcommittee.
 - Carol was not selected for the committee but doesn’t feel excluded, agrees that it makes sense to limit the size of subcommittee groups to a manageable size.
 - Kelly said the STEM subcommittee only has a few people on the committee, but everyone on the Council volunteers to help with the initiatives. This group should operate in the same way. Meredith agreed
 - Olivia agreed with limiting the size but also appreciates that everyone has different backgrounds and 1) there should be a way for all Council members to get ideas to the subcommittee and 2) because the Council has a majority new members we need to share our background/bios with the group.
 - Group agreed to discuss during the bylaws conversation but probably best to address as each new subcommittee is formed.

- Ann and Ruth offered historical perspective – for the Working Women’s Report, Dawn was the lead and she broke it down into four sub-groups. It was a very fluid process and while there were only a few people on the committee, all of the Council members had time to add their expertise. We just need to make sure we have time as a full Council to flush out ideas.
- Meredith agreed that was a great strategy and encouraged everyone to reach out to her and members of the subcommittee to share ideas and expertise. There is no timeline for completion of a report so there is lots of time to flush out ideas with the Council.
- Jeff asked if there would be a role for Council members who went to subcommittee meetings
 - Meredith said it would be helpful to know in advance so she can add you to the agenda.
 - Cindy (AG’s office) – said anyone can attend subcommittee meetings and contribute, you just can’t vote.
- Meredith asked if we should offer motion on the Wellness Walk
 - Carol asked, before voting, want to make sure the timing of the Wellness Walk won’t be a conflict with the timing of the STEM Scholarship contest and that we’ll have enough members to go around to help with all of the components of both events.
 - Meredith said the motion would be to allow the subcommittee to explore the idea, not to proceed with planning and confirming details.
 - Ann offered that a Wellness Walk/Health Fair might not have to be a huge lift by the council – each health plan has outreach sections that might help.
 - Meredith offered a motion to have the Women’s Healthcare subcommittee move forward with investigating the idea of a Health Fair with the details TBD. Carol seconded the motion and it was agreed to by unanimous consent.

STEM Subcommittee – Kelly Thomasson

- Kelly gave a recap of her recent meeting with the Science Museum Foundation to review the Draft MOU. There is very little wiggle room on the part of the Science Museum on the three main concerns of the Council
 - 7% administrative feed – this can’t be waived. It is in the Foundations guidelines that they must charge 7 – 15%, and are already giving us the best price they can.
 - Sponsor Recognition – the SMV feels strongly that they don’t want our STEM sponsors recognized from the podium as it detracts from their own sponsors, but are happy to recognize sponsors in writing – perhaps on table tents, on an easel board and/or on the projection screens.
 - Letting at least one of the scholarship winners read her essay at the event - in addition to limiting the time of the overall program, this makes them nervous not knowing the public speaking skill level of the girl.
- Ann said the Council has discussed in the past separating our initiative from the Up and Atom Breakfast and instead perhaps hosting at event at the Capitol. Feels that each year we erode more attention from our scholarship winners and would be nice for this to be the

Governor's event and not a SMV event. We could present awards during the reconvened session

- Everyone agreed this is a fantastic idea. Olivia added that we could invite their local legislators to add to the heft of the crowd.
- Ann suggested that we could check with the Capitol Foundation to see if we could partner with them to manage the scholarship funds. Cindy (OAG) offered to research this and find options.
- Rita made a motion for Ann to investigate if this proposed event is feasible and make a recommendation by November 1. If she determines that it is feasible, the Council authorizes the STEM committee to proceed with this new program. If not, we will continue with the SMV's Up and Atom Breakfast in 2015 and continue to look at alternative options moving forward.
 - Katherine seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
 - Proposal is to host an reception on the day of the General Assembly's reconvened session (probably mid-April). Event would be mid-morning before the GA gavels in. Light on food and drink, heavy on the recognition of the winners and importance of women and STEM. Invite Governor, administration officials, local legislators, sponsors, all winners and their families. Will also work with the GA to have the girls recognized on the House/Senate floor.
- Council also discussed the judging sub-committee of the STEM committee, which is currently headed by Theresa. Theresa's term expires next year and we need to find someone to take the reins. Carol offered to help Theresa this year and learn the ropes with the expectation she will lead the charge on judging essays moving forward.

Bylaws – Kelly Thomasson

- At our last meeting draft bylaws were circulated for review to be voted on at this meeting. In the interim, Kelly spoke with the Attorney General's office and it was indicated that the Council is free to adopt bylaws, however they are not necessary.
- Cindy Norwood from the AG's office advised the group that bylaws are not required by the code and any issues that may be addressed by bylaws could be resolved by a vote of the Council rather than instituting in bylaws. Further, just because a provision is addressed in the bylaws (for example, attendance policy) does not make it legally enforceable.
- Kelly submitted there were three main provisions that were of concern to the Chair/Council and which were aimed to be addressed through the bylaws: Attendance policy; creation of Officer positions (Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) and guidelines for subcommittee formation and membership selection criteria. Everything else that was listed in the draft bylaws is already addressed in code.
- It was discussed that these three issues could be dealt with in the following ways:
 - Attendance policy – If meeting attendance is an issue, the Chair can ask the Council member in question to consider resigning her/his seat in order to make way for another member to join who may have more time to devote to the Council.

- Officers – the Council may vote at any time to create Officer positions and should add that as an agenda item at the next meeting.
- Subcommittees - at the time when the Council decides to create a new subcommittee there should be a thorough discussion/vote on the expectations of the subcommittees work, who will Chair the group, what the criteria for membership will be and any other logistical details the Council feels important based on the current circumstances.
- Carol Gibbons made a motion to not have bylaws; it was seconded by Sally and the motion carried.

New Business:

Website – Kelly Thomasson

- During previous years there was a section of the Council on Women website titled “Leadership Resources for Virginia Women”. The links were stored on a Dept of Social Services server and are not longer active. Kelly asked the group if we would like to continue offering this as a resource.
- Meta suggested this seems critical to the goals of the Council to offer this resource to Virginians and that it should be continued. Lashrecse offered to take ownership of this project. Everyone should send her ideas and updates.
- Ann asked if we could circulate bios to the staff members and it was suggested that we also add this information to the website. All Council members should submit a short bio and photo to Kelly by November 1 to be added to the Council’s website.

Attendance at Women’s Conferences – Lashrecse Aird

- Lashrecse has talked with various members of the Council who are interested in attending a Women’s Conference and possibly hosting a Virginia Women’s Conference at some point in the future. She is going to start researching different conferences that are currently being hosted in Virginia (including Senator Warner’s upcoming Women’s Conference in November) and gathering information on how to attend and ideas for what we could do to partner with these events or host our own in the future. She will also incorporate the list of conferences that she finds on the list of Resources we post on the Council’s website.

Review of Meeting Dates – Kelly Thomasson

- Next meeting is Wednesday, January 21 at 1:00 pm. As previously discussed, Susan will reserve a room in the GAB (we can use the Patrick Henry Building as a backup location).
 - Prior to the meeting, the Council will gather at 12pm for lunch and an informal presentation from the administration on the state of healthcare in Virginia.
 - Katherine will arrange a speaker. Ann suggested Joe Flores (who is transition from the Senate Finance Committee to Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services) or Anna James, the Governor’s Policy Director, who

has extensive background in healthcare issues. Jeff also suggested we may try for Secretary Bill Hazel.

- The spring meeting date will be set around the STEM event (date TBD) and the remaining 2015 dates will be set in January.

Meeting adjourned shortly after 11:30 am.