

Virginia Council on Women Minutes of April 20, 2016 Meeting

General Assembly Building, 8th Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Hala Ayala (Vice Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Rita Surratt (Treasurer), Amy Eckert, Carol Rick Gibbons, Suzanne Jackson, Tracy Key, Allison Lawrence Jones, Lori Merricks, Devin Pugh-Thomas, Susan Rowland, Olivia Turner, Ruth Zajur.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Katharine Waddell, Niyam White

Call to order. Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. She introduced Kelly Thomasson as the new Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Agenda and Minutes: The members unanimously adopted the agenda following a motion by Susanne Jackson, seconded by Rita Surratt, and unanimously adopted the minutes of the January 19, 2015 meeting following a motion by Carol Rick Gibbons, seconded by Lori Merricks..

Old Business

General Assembly Update: Katherine Waddell reported that the Council's letter regarding the appointment of Judge Roush to the Supreme Court got a hearing but neither Judge Roush or Representative Alston were approved for the position. Stephen McCullough, who had worked in the Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli's office was appointed. She noted that the "veto session" was the day of the Council meeting.

STEM Essay Contest: Meta Braymer thanked the Carol Rick Gibbons, Tracy Key and the committee noting that the contest was fabulous. The Governor's office sent a press release recognizing the winners, sponsors and judges. Carol thanked the committee and recommended that the Council reach out to sponsors earlier in the year and that the Council do more than award scholarships (e.g. build a mentorship program involving sponsors and past members,) Tracy added her thanks and reported that the account has about \$4000 to carry over for next year. She also recommended improving the marketing materials to include statistics regarding women in STEM (, which she will do this summer); build annual events to add sources of revenue (e.g. include the cybersecurity industry); launch mentorship (and possibly periodic conference calls to connect girls); ask sponsors if they want to be involved in judging; have name tags at the reception noting who are winners, judges, sponsors; send the program with essays to sponsors and potential sponsors; use sponsors to reach out to potential sponsors. Tracy circulated the financial report (attached), noting that there are still outstanding pledges, and commented that the fiscal agent was a good partner. Lori Mericks suggested inviting non-Council judges and work with the Secretary of Education. Amy Eckert noted that Newport Shipbuilding had activities in STEM and that the Council should work with it more. Meta asked the committee to provide a proposal on establishing a mentorship program for the Council's August meeting.

Women & Girls' Wellness Month

Governor's Proclamation: Katherine Waddell reported on the Governor's presentation on April 12 of his proclamation on *Women & Girls' Wellness Month*, which she, Kelly Thomasson, Meredith Harbaugh and Hala Ayala attended. She gave the proclamation to Miriam Bender, as chair of Women's Health Virginia, and pictures of the meeting with the Governor to those who attended.

Women's Health Initiative's service project: Katherine also reported on the event at Housing Families First, which First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, Meta, Meredith, Sally Mullikin and she attended, with families, and a representative of Commonwealth Parenting (who discussed communicating with children when under stress). One father asked about getting his rights restored and Meredith will follow up regarding the process. Meta read a thank you note from Housing Families First Executive Director Beth Turnbull that Meredith had forwarded.

Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation 2019 Event; Miriam Bender reported on her conversation with former state Senator Mary Margaret Whipple regarding the Foundation's plans for the 2019 Commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the first representative legislative assembly in the New World, arrival of the first recorded Africans to English N. America; observance of the first official Thanksgiving; and the expanding impact of women on the Virginia Colony. Senator Whipple and Rep. Barbara Comstock are co-chairs of the Impact on Women Committee, which has just started planning and has decided that the plans will be for substantive activities not a gala. The Council will put it on the August agenda and follow it on an ongoing basis.

Leadership Resources: Hala Ayala asked for Council members' input for the list she is developing. The Council agreed that we need to define what we want it to be and what organizations should be on the list. Meta will review Hala's current list before it is distributed or put on the Council's website. We will keep it on the agenda to discuss further in August.

New Business

Governor's Women's Summit 2016: Meta Braymer reported that the event will be the Governor's Women's Summit of 2017, after the Governor's office indicated that it should not be held in the fall when it would be close to Senator Warner's annual women's meeting (scheduled for this fall in Richmond.) We will plan for the summit in spring 2017. Lori Merricks suggested that we include a presentation regarding STEM at the summit.

Council Retreat/Strategic Planning Session: Meta Braymer opened the discussion, noting that it may not be possible to have an overnight retreat. She asked whether there should be a strategic planning committee that would report recommendations to the Council or try to have a retreat, and what the goals are. Members expressed concern that the Governor provide some direction; that the Council know what the other Governor's councils are planning; that the Council develop vision about what it will present as a public group, what its focus is, and that it align with the Governor's goals; and that the goals are not our individual interests but the Governor's priorities. Meta noted that the Council's charge includes "reports" and that we should consider what we might do, adding that our plans would provide some continuity for the Council. Meta asked for feedback regarding issues, ideas, and possible research to discuss at the August meeting. Lori Merricks and Amy Eckert volunteered to work on strategic planning.

Council Timeline: Meta will send a revised timeline for 2016-17, to include the STEM dates.

Announcements:

- Ruth Zajur announced that her appointment to the Council is expiring and thanked the Council.
- Susan Rowland reported breaking news that Harriet Tubman's picture would be on the \$10 bill.
- Members are invited to the NAWBO STEM Roundtable will be on April 25 in the Patrick Henry Building, Richmond. NAWBA and the SBA did a study regarding gender gaps for women in business, especially in STEM. Meta Braymer will attend.
- Tracy Key will go to the Children's Science Center meeting at Fair Oaks Mall on April 27
- Miriam Bender announced that the Women's Health Virginia annual conference on women's health, *It Starts in Her Head—The Brain's Crucial Connections to Women's Wellness*, will be on June 17 in Charlottesville. Information and registration are at www.womenshealthvirginia.org
- Lori Merricks announced that Kelly Thomasson will be visiting Danville.

Next Meetings: August 16 and October 25.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. following unanimous adoption of a motion to adjourn by Miriam Bender, seconded by Carol Rick Gibbons.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam A. Bender, Secretary