

## Virginia Council on Women

### Minutes of January 17, 2017 Meeting

General Assembly Building, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Hala Ayala (Vice Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Erin Bedois, Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, Carol Rick Gibbons, Meredith Johnson Harbach, Allison Lawrence Jones, Lori Merricks, Sally Mullikin, Katy Sawyer, Devin Pugh-Thomas.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Katharine Waddell, Traci Deshazor

Call to order. Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

#### Agenda and Minutes

Meta proposed changes to the agenda: eliminating the Chair's report and adding a discussion of Council letters to the General Assembly to *New Business* and adding Meredith Harbach to the *Legislative Update*. The members unanimously adopted the agenda, as amended, following a motion by Katy Sawyer, seconded by Erin Bedois. They then unanimously adopted the minutes of the October 25, 2016 meeting following a motion by Hala Ayala, seconded by Katy Sawyer.

#### Old Business

STEM 2017. Carol Rick Gibbons summarized the plans, distributed the press release from the Governor's office, and noted that the applications are open, with information posted on the Council's web site and facebook page. She asked members to share the info, noting that the deadline is February 20. Judging will be completed by March 17 and the winners announced March 27. The reception will be on April 25. The contest needs sponsors and judges. She called attention to Amy Eckert's December 30 e-mail with sponsor information and the goal of having \$50,000 pledged by the end of February. Capital One has pledged \$10,000; donations of any amount are welcome. Carol circulated the list of potential sponsors so that members could sign up as contacts. There are now 32 judges and the goal is to have 75 by January 31. Three will judge each essay. Carol will send the list of judges, so that members can suggest others to invite.

Women's Health Initiative. Meredith Harbach said she did not have additional information about *Women & Girls' Wellness Month* plans for April and suggested that the Council again plan a dinner at Housing Families First and have the Governor sign a proclamation. Miriam Bender described the broader *Wellness Month* activities of Women's Health Virginia and invited members to encourage organizations with which they are involved to participate

Virginia Summit on Women. Meta Braymer noted that the Governor's office had issued a press release (link to be sent to the Council by Traci Deshazor), to which she has received feedback from across the country. Meta distributed the agenda and list of panelists and reviewed it with the Council. The plan is to have 24 tables of 8, with discussions at the tables during the networking sessions facilitated by Council members. The topics for the networking sessions and confirmation of speakers will be done by January 31. Meta asked Council members to send suggestions regarding topics. The program is not targeted at any age or other demographic group, but is open to all and aiming for a diverse audience (public and private sector, any age, race, locality.) After the summit (at the April meeting), the Council will discuss plans for other possible meetings, discussions, and mentoring efforts.

#### Legislative Update

Meta Braymer introduced Robert Brink, Senior Legislative Advisor to the Governor and Jenny O'Holleran, the Governor's Director of Policy, who discussed the Governor's agenda, summarizing

the past successes (workforce development, veterans' homelessness, transportation, restoration of rights) and priorities (building the new Virginia economy; funding mental health and addressing the opioid epidemic; economic development; public safety and justice reform; education workforce development; and social legislation (using his veto on bills that limit abortion or would discriminate.) Mr. Brink distributed copies of the Governor's report *Three Years: Expanding The New Virginia Economy*.

### New Business

General Assembly Letters. The Council discussed legislation that has been introduced that would limit abortion access (including HB1473 that would establish a 20-week limit; HB1762 that would require additional "informed consent"); the "Day of Tears" resolution (HR268); and the Governor's budget provision that would provide \$6 million for a pilot program to provide long acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) as part of TANF. The Council considered and unanimously adopted a motion by Meredith Harbach, seconded by Carol Ricks Gibbons, that the Council communicate support or opposition for certain policy initiatives or proposed legislation that would impact women in the Commonwealth. Members then discussed which issues should be the subject of such communication, with members suggesting that statements regarding abortion and contraception access be in the broader context of access to health care and economic development and opportunity. The Council unanimously passed a motion by Meredith Harbach, seconded by Miriam Bender, that the Council draft and distribute to the General Assembly, a letter supporting the Governor's budget proposal regarding LARC. Members discussed the process for drafting and getting members' input. Meredith will draft a letter and distribute it. The group discussed whether the Council should send letters regarding other issues, e.g., mental health and the 20-week abortion ban, concluding to send only the LARC letter. Members would like to receive legislative updates from Katherine or Meredith so that they can individually contact their legislators.

Strategic Plan. Meta noted the good summary by Traci Deshazor of the October discussion and suggested that the officers and committee chairs develop a plan for presentation at the April meeting. She deferred scheduling a meeting of that group. Meta noted that five members' terms expire in August and asked those members to contact Traci Deshazor or Kelly Thomasson if they are interested in being reappointed.

Council Timeline. Meetings are scheduled for April 25 (new date), August 22 and October 24, 2017.

Announcements. Women's Equality Day is January 23 and members are invited to the Governor's reception for which they should RSVP by January 19. Members are invited to *Disney on Ice* in Richmond on January 18. Financial disclosure forms are due on January 17.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m. on a motion by Lori Merricks, seconded by Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Bender, Secretary