

**Virginia Council on Women**  
**Minutes of April 25, 2017 Meeting**

Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, VA

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Hala Ayala (Vice Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Erin Bedois, Amy Eckert, Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, Carol Rick Gibbons, Meredith Johnson Harbach, Devin Pugh-Thomas. Susan Rowland, Katy Sawyer, Michelle Strucke, Rita Surratt.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Katherine Waddell, Traci Deshazor

Call to order. Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Agenda and Minutes

Meta proposed adding to the agenda a discussion of *Appointments and Reappointments to the Council* to be led by Katherine Waddell. The members unanimously adopted the agenda, as amended, following a motion by Hala Alaya, seconded by Erin Bedois. Meta noted a correction to the January 17 minutes that the speakers on the Legislative Update were introduced by Katherine Waddell. The minutes, as amended, were unanimously adopted following a motion by Carol Rick Gibbons, seconded by Devin Pugh-Thomas.

Old Business

STEM Essay Contest and Reception: Meta Braymer thanked Carol Rick Gibbons and Amy Eckert for their leadership and work on STEM 2017. Carol then thanked Traci DeShazor for her work. The contest had 503 entries (a record number), 55 judges, and raised \$42,500. The Council discussed ways it might get STEM winners involved with the contest. Ideas included writing to past winners to introduce them to new winners; having past winners make videos regarding what they've done since winning; and inviting earlier winners to the reception for new winners and possibly the Women's Summit. Meta noted that the ideas would be good to consider as part of the strategic plan. Amy will develop a database of past winners. The Council discussed the judging process and the criteria, which posed some difficulties from the scoring system and keeping the judgments to STEM issues rather than other criteria. Council members suggested other possible improvements, such as increased outreach to schools in needy areas; more information for guidance counselors; having a conference call with judges to explain the criteria; adding a "secondary" scholarship (e.g. \$500 for books) or increasing the number of scholarships. Meta suggested that the Council discuss the issues at a future meeting. The committee will ask judges for their feedback (possibly with a Survey Monkey survey.)

Governor's Proclamation of *Women & Girls' Wellness Month*: The Governor signed the proclamation on April 20 at a ceremony attended by Meta Braymer, Hala Ayala, Meredith Harbach, Sally Mulliken, Traci and Katherine. Katherine gave proclamation to Hala.

Women's Health Initiative. Meredith Harbach recognized Women's Health Virginia and Miriam Bender for leading the statewide observance of *Women & Girls' Wellness Month*. She reported on the Council's dinner at Housing Families First, about which she had written Council members. The subcommittee will not meet again until the fall. Meredith suggested that it consider a broader effort in more communities for *Wellness Month* next year. Meredith also reported that she had sent a letter for the Council to the General Assembly regarding the budget proposal to fund LARC, which did not pass. She noted that the bill that would provide for 12-month contraception prescriptions had passed.

Governor's Summit on Women. Meta Braymer thanked everyone, especially Kelly Thomasson, Katherine Waddell, Traci DeShazor (who handled the details), the subcommittee, donors of resource bag materials and the facilitators. Traci was given a standing ovation. Traci noted the issue of having the summit and STEM contest in the same timeframe and the need to do more earlier and out of the office. She plans to debrief with the subcommittee and survey participants.

### New Business

Appointments and Reappointments: Katherine Waddell noted that appointments would be made in June and that members seeking reappointment should let her know of their interest. Members whose terms are expiring and who are eligible for reappointment are Allison Lawrence Jones, Carol Rick Gibbons, Meredith Johnson Harbach, Sally Mulliken, Devin Pugh-Thomas, and Susan Rowland. She thanked Rita Surratt, who is not eligible for reappointment, for serving two terms. Rita expressed her thanks and noted how well the Council has grown during her tenure.

Strategic Plan. Meta Braymer called on Traci DeShazor to facilitate the discussion. Meta noted that many members thought the Council needs a vision statement to define what the Council is and to have a foundation to continue regardless of who is governor. Traci distributed a summary of the October discussion and indicated the next steps, suggesting that the members form 5 groups (Visibility, STEM, Advocacy, Engagement, and Personal and Professional Development) to discuss the points under each of the outlined initiatives, consider a timeline of action, and designate a spokeswoman. The members decided to have 4 groups, merging Visibility and Engagement. That group will be led by Meredith and Katherine. STEM will be led by Carol Ricks Gibbon; Advocacy by Michelle Strucke; and Personal/Professional Development by Meta Braymer.

Council Timeline. Meetings are scheduled for August 22 and October 24, 2017.

Announcements. Women's Health Virginia will be hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> annual conference on women's health, titled *Twenty Years on the Road to Women's Wellness*, on Friday, June 9 in Charlottesville.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m. on a motion by Rita Surratt, seconded by Erin Bedois, which was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Bender, Secretary