

Meeting Minutes
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
March 27, 2013, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Nash School, Augusta

In attendance: Eloise Vitelli, Karen Stram, Elizabeth Ward Saxl, Jennifer Burke, Melissa Simones
Participating via conference call: Ruth Summers, Marianne Moore, Sharon Campbell
Absent: Fatuma Hussein, Donna Yellen, Romy Spitz, Karen Keim, Julia Colpitts, Brenda Commander, Cheryl Timberlake

Welcome and Introductions of new members, guests

Karen Stram was on the original Women's Commission under Governor Longley. Looking for women as caregivers in the report. Sharon Campbell is a former DV advocate.

By-laws passed last meeting. LD 231 still in committee. Therefore, appointing a chair and vice chair will need to wait as well as the work of the Finance Committee. Elizabeth's office may be able to maintain a GoogleDoc site for the Commission. Jen will work with Elizabeth to locate login information. This would be a Governance Committee function.

Review and approve Minutes from 1/23/2013, 2/27/2013

Motion to accept January meeting minutes - Eloise, second – Melissa, all favor

Motion to accept February meeting minutes – Elizabeth, second – Jen, all in favor

Committees: Reports and Appointments Need at least 3 members on each.

Governance – Elizabeth, chair, Karen Stram, Jen, and Melissa

Recommendations to fill vacancies – By-laws empower the Governance Committee to make recommendations to fill Commission vacancies including chair and vice chair.

Motion to empower the Governance Committee to forward recommendations for Commission vacancies to the Governor and the Speaker of the House. – Jen. Second – Marianne, all in favor.

Recommendation for establishing 'annual year' for Commission – Other issues in bylaws need clarification.

Recommendation for Officers (pending Legislation – Develop structure around process of making recommendations, determine if secretary treasurer needed, GoogleDocs/means of external communication with the Commission.

Finance – Cheryl, Ruth, and Julia

Recommendation for Fund development (pending Legislation) - No current budget, but prep work/fund development can be started. Do we need a treasurer/secretary treasurer? Will fill in chair later.

Outreach and Education - Jen chair, Fatuma, Brenda, Sharon, Ruth, Marianne, Donna, and Romy
Strategy for Release of Survey Results - We had fantastic survey results because we utilized our own networks. Share results with these networks. Thank them for participating. We need to reach out to legislative leadership with the survey results. Let them know it's public and that they should read it. Nikki will print out hard copies of surveys for them. Eloise will draft cover letter.

Communication - When do we want to promote our own existence externally? Former members with networks gone. Once back to GoogleDocs, utilize Kate Power's list of potential organizations to network.

We did not reach out to all organizations on the list. We will share the list with new members and reach out to past members. Nikki will share PCSW Interested Parties list with Jen.

How do we want to promote ourselves? Press release and offer interviews? If so, what would our timing be? Decision to wait until the legislation passes/once Commission knows whether it can accept funds. July/August time frame.

Eloise – Other groups are happy to help promote the Commission. I have been cautious about others promoting the Commission; would want us to take charge and do ourselves. In the short term, what should we do to get the word out?

Jen – Contact your legislators. Encourage them to vote yes on LD 231 and mention that the report and survey are on the website to give relevance as to why they should vote yes.

Sharon will share a copy with the Senator King, Sen Collins and Congressman Michaud.

Eloise – There may be federal funding available for the Commission.

Eloise – I met with the Maine Women’s Health Campaign a few weeks ago. They also have a mission/purpose with no funding. Julia and Elizabeth are also members of this group. Mary Hermon set the group in motion. They have a couple public forums and utilize GoogleDocs. They could be a sister organization. Does the Commission feel that this is a group to share our report with? We could use their events to get the word out.

Jen – Makes sense. (No other responses.)

Eloise – Go through Kate’s list to come up with other partners. Please bring other groups you work with to the notice of the committee if you think they would be good to partner with. Let’s give some thought to how people communicate with us. Welcome ideas of how public can communicate with us.

Sharon – Maybe set up an email account on gmail.

Nikki will check to set up a state email box info@commission for women.

Karen – Use partners input and expertise. Were all interested in and promote in the same women.

Report/Research – Quiet now.

Karen – Are there other areas that Legislature is looking for? Is the Commission getting asked to look for holes? Or are there growing issues that have not been identified yet?

Eloise – Report considered what do we know, what data exists, where are there gaps? That is part of what our role is. Overall comments on the survey were concerned with older women living alone and their health care, younger women staying safe and finding jobs.

Melissa – Any feedback from the survey regarding what they wanted/wished to answer questions on?

Jen – Never did. Good question. Did not have a more a more open ended question like that and we need to do that.

Sharon – Any questions about literacy rates? If were looking at future of girls, this is important. So many kids have moms who can’t read. (I’m a tutor at my daughter’s school.)

Eloise – Who else is paying attention to those issues? Make sure those groups are paying attention. Ex: Kids Count. The Commissions role is to provide a coordinating role for all the other groups. Should we convene these other parties and see what they would like to see the Commission do?

Karen Stram – Do we think about picking out our own priorities?

Eloise – That will come out of the June meeting. New people, what do you want or think the commission should be?

Old Business

LD 231 – Still in committee.

New Business

Work Plan for coming year

Next Meetings: *Propose ½ day in June for planning; set dates for fall/winter*

Eloise – Suggest we set committee meetings in April and May and a half day in June. 11-3 suggested for June meeting because of drive from the north. Commission will try to provide lunch. Required to meet 4 times/year. Setting concrete dates at least quarterly makes sense. Plot 4 meetings.

Marianne – Fridays good for me (Sharon, Jen)

Jen – Update on legislation, our outreach committee should make contacts on their own. We'll get a list of organizations out to everyone. Feel free to communicate with that organization to let them know that you're a member.

Motion to adjourn - Jen, second – Karen, none opposed.