



## **Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (MePCSW)**

### **In-Person Meeting Minutes**

**June 11, 2024**

**9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**MePCSW Members in Attendance:** Anne Gass (Chair), Sue Mackey Andrews, Dania Bowie, Rebecca Austin, Keita Whitten Foster, Jill Randall, Jill Barkley Roy, Darylen Cote, Jennifer Wilkey, Kate Elmes, Samantha Lott Hale

**MePCSW Members Absent:** Maulian Bryant, Meredith Strang-Burgess, Fatuma Hussein (joined briefly via zoom)

**Staff:** Elinor Higgins, MePCSW Executive Director

#### **1. Business**

- a. **Approved April Meeting Minutes** - Jill Barkley Roy made the motion, seconded by Darylen Cote. Approved unanimously.
- b. **Discussed and Approved Remote Participation Policy** - Sue Mackey Andrews made the motion, seconded by Darylen Cote. Approved unanimously.
- c. **Reviewed public meeting rules** - Commission must provide notice and avenue for public to attend meetings of 3 or more Commission members and conduct Commission business during public meetings.
  - i. **Discussion:** Opportunities to utilize public meetings to bring additional voices to the table, opportunities to structure agendas so there is a section for public comment

**2. Level Set on Powers and Duties of Commission:** Research, activities, advocate, information, meetings, reports ([see statute](#))

**3. Overview of Findings from Executive Director's Meetings with Commission Members, Partner Organizations, and State Agencies**

**a. Content areas of interest:**

- i. Health
- ii. Girls and Youth
- iii. Aging
- iv. Safety
- v. Caregiving and Family Supports
- vi. Workforce
- vii. Root Causes/Systems Issues/Social Drivers
- viii. Rights

**b. Operations topics of interest:**

- i. Meeting structure and committee work
- ii. New website (update coming by September)
- iii. Equity and diversity in Commission work and membership
- iv. Opportunities for focus groups or site visits in different parts of the state and/or across different communities
- v. Professional development for Commission members

**c. Overview of member strengths** (including legislative knowledge, leadership skills, writing and editing, graphic design, community connections and more)

**d. Overview of interest areas from key partners**

- i. Issues facing incarcerated women in Maine
- ii. Access and barriers to addiction treatment
- iii. Sustainable funding and higher pay for care professions
- iv. Transportation and culturally appropriate services for immigrant populations
- v. LGBTQ organizations, supports, and advocacy efforts in rural Maine
- vi. A need: better research and data on Maine women and girls to inform advocacy
- vii. Opportunities to convene and educate about findings and state data sets

**4. Proposed Direction for MePCSW**

- a. Renewed focus on research, data, and information to leverage position in state government, provide good information to lawmakers and community, and to recognize high-impact opportunities amidst limited capacity

**5. Selecting a Theme and Focus for 2024 MePCSW Report**

- a. **Proposed Topic:** Maine Women in the Workforce
- b. **Discussion:** Need careful consideration of report framing to maximize inclusivity and recognize burdens of unpaid care work. How to acknowledge one key topic while also identifying varied influences on wellbeing of women

and girls. Opportunities to highlight issues in care workforce and to collect and lift up data on women in nontraditional industries (e.g. construction). Opportunities to promote the report to key audiences through policy briefings and press events.

- c. **Approved Workforce theme for 2024 report** – Kate Elmes made the motion, seconded by Daylen Cote. Approved unanimously.

## 6. Identifying Working Committees

- a. Brainstormed ideas for standing and ad-hoc committees
  - i. Formed an ad-hoc working committee to complete the 2024 MePCSW report – will meet in July
  - ii. Plans to form an ad-hoc communications and publicity committee for report roll-out and socialization
  - iii. Identified need for a governance committee – will discuss further in August and select membership (may include vice chair position)
    1. Initial tasks may include: developing onboarding process, identifying, developing standard agenda template
  - iv. Other committee ideas: data advisory committee, events ad-hoc committee, legislative committee

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities Discussion and Activity

- a. Using RASI matrix, began discussing MePCSW tasks and corresponding roles and responsibilities for Commission members and staff

## Upcoming Work

- Develop, launch, and distribute the 2024 MePCSW report
- Work with partners at Maine Department of Labor to collect data on women in construction industry
- Update by-laws and FY25 Workplan

## “Parking Lot” Ideas for Future Work:

- Listening sessions/focus groups across the state, ideally with appropriate training for Commission members and compensation for focus group participants
- Opportunities for partnership with key organizations across the state to represent diversity of voices and experiences
- Explore opportunities for statute updates to allow financial support/reimbursement for Commission member participation
- Build data dashboard drawing on existing data – advocate for data collection that can be stratified by gender and race/ethnicity
- Identify opportunities to provide district-specific information for legislators