

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Permanent Commission on the Status of Women**  
January 31, 2012, 1pm – 3pm  
Nash School, Augusta

**In Attendance:** Eloise Vitelli, Chair, Karen Keim, Cheryl Timberlake, Romy Spitz (Scott Murray, text-to-speech), Fatuma Hussein, Elizabeth Ward-Saxl, Jennifer Burke, Dennis Culley, Donna Yellen, Julia Colpitts  
Participating via conference call: Karen Raye, Odelle Bowman, Jenna Vendil, Ruth Summers, Kimm Collins, Sarah Bigney

Guests: Laura Harper, Maine Women's Lobby, Alexandra Hill, Bates College, intern with the MWL, Peaches Bass, Maine Department of Labor State Workforce Investment Board, Women's Issues Committee. Via conference call: Jackie Cooke Regional Administrator of the Womens Bureau with USDOL.

**Welcome and Introductions**

New appointees, guests

Looking for feedback on video conferencing as meeting tool.

Dennis left early to attend another meeting.

**Appointment process update:**

- Karen Raye, Ruth Summers and Cheryl Timberlake are new appointees from the Speaker's Office as of September 2011.
- Senate President's Office appointees next. Only one is complete – Jennifer Burke.
- The Governor has four expired appointments. Three are re-appointments: Fatuma Hussein, Julia Colpitts, and Romy Spitz. Donna Yellen will be taking Robyn Merrill's place. It is hoped these appointments will be posted by the end of the week; they become official seven days later. Because the appointment has not yet been posted, Donna's vote and presence do not count today.
- Dennis and Karen Keim (Governor's appointments) have been asked to submit paperwork to the Governor's Office although their terms have not expired. This re-posting will not change their terms.
- Jane Root's appointment (Governor) is a current vacancy. Rep. Wayne Mitchell will make a recommendation for a replacement.
- By our next meeting in April, we should have a fully appointed commission.
- Others whose terms will start to come due are asked to let the Chair and the appointing body know if you are interested in being re-appointed

**Commission Background, Mission, Structure**

By way of introduction to new members, the Chair provided an overview of the Commission. This is the 1st anniversary of the Commission, created by the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature as a "new" Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. (PCSW) The previous commission was removed from statute by the Legislature. The PSCW is housed

within the Secretary of State's Office who provides staff support. The SOS has supported the Commission's membership in the National Association of Commissions for Women for a second year.

Members have spent the last year developing and understanding the Commission's role and mission and have been working on a report to share with both the Legislature and Governor (mandated) and the broader public. One subcommittee has been working on developing the report and another has been working on outreach that will help us take report to the public.

### **Review and approve minutes from 11/2/2011**

Karen Keim motion to accept. Romy Spitz, second. None opposed.

At some point we have the option of posting our minutes online on SOS website.

No objections. Starting with today, we'll post the minutes.

### **Committee Reports**

**Research and Data Collection** – Members were given a copy of the latest draft of the report. Alyra Donisvitch, an intern working with Women, Work and Community, has helped to assemble. Sub-committee met with Ed Cervone from the Maine Development Foundation for advice on how to formulate our report. Burgess Advertising has agreed to design the layout of the report; they have received a draft.

Five dimensions to the report: Education, Economic Security, Safety & Wellness, Health, and Leadership in Public Life. The intent is to examine in broad terms the opportunities and challenges for women and girls in these areas; identify gaps in the data available, and refer to other existing reports for more in-depth information. Commission members are asked to look through the draft and note any area that is missing information that is deemed relevant. Example: there is sparse data on women with disabilities or minority women in Maine.

The Maine CDC has just released a 167 page Maine Women's Health Report 2011. The copies were distributed via Jenna V. to several members of the sub-committee. The Maine Women's Health Campaign is interested in where there might be intersections of our reports. Barbara Leonard from Maine Health Access Foundation will be contacted for advice. The Commission will be asked for their input on what data to include in the PCSW report. Other resources include Erika Lichter at Maine CDC, the American Heart Association and Andrea Irwin from the Maine Women's Health Campaign.

Commission members were asked for comments on the current draft of the report. They included: Data from the Community College System to add to UM numbers is important. Karen Keim will pursue.

Could we include a snapshot of broadband access to overall well-being? Tele-medicine? The southern area of the state has more access. This could be added to the Education section or Safety and Well-being. Internet access can enhance an array of benefits to well-being. From the Economic Security front, internet access in state can be a barrier.

Sexual harassment data is needed. That data did not make in draft. We'll suggest edits and will beef up. Need data sources. The Maine Human Rights Commission reports an increase in the incidence of employment related sexual harassment.

Some areas span different sections of the report. Maybe not everything relating to sex or violence should be under Safety, for example. Certain themes cross multiple domains. Perhaps in the Executive Summary we can focus in on the areas with overlap.

Is there a way to reformat the report to include lifespan in more than one category? We could pull out particulars in textboxes with visuals. We are faced with a challenge in meeting an April deadline, updating data, editing to a 10 -15 page document. The aim is to produce a report that is sharp and focused and can be used to start a conversation.

Discussion ensued and a proposal made for a revised time line for the report: A biennial report next January may be more useful to Legislature since data must be updated. This session, report on the PCSW progress. We have preliminary data fields to take out to communities (seeking input). Pull it all together in final report. Set a benchmark for future reports to track data going forward. It should be replicable, consistent over time, and able to be compared to men and boys, other states/nation.

The Outreach Committee currently inactive. It's difficult to lay out a work plan if we don't have a report yet and no budget. How do we educate and get it done so it's fair and a balanced without funds? Commission members were appointed because of connections with constituencies; it will take all of us to solve that problem, utilizing our contacts to distribute the report. SOS will post the report on line.

A question was raised regarding the Commission's ability to accept funds: Was that provision left out inadvertently or was it an oversight in the legislation? It was noted that the Committee of Jurisdiction is the State & Local Committee. We may wish to revisit that issue, explore the opportunities to amend our legislation to allow private or other public funds to support our work/mission. Jackie Cooke pointed out that other commissions have formed their own foundation; she is willing to connect the PCSW with MA, VT or CT.

### **Goals for the Coming Year**

Commission members agreed to the proposal for a revised work plan for the report as follows: Final draft by our April meeting for review and first round comments. In the meantime the Outreach Committee will create a plan. Spring and early summer bring report to communities. Late summer and early fall integrate feedback. Aim to have ready for January 1, 2013.

Outreach Committee. Needs a new chair/co-chairs. Agreeing to serve on this committee: Karen Raye, Fatuma, Jenna, Jennifer, Donna, Cheryl, and Romy. Jenna and Jen will work together to convene the committee and serve as initial co-chairs. First tasks: Formulate questions for focus groups based on an initial draft in order for data to fall into final report. Utilize Survey Monkey and determine other appropriate approaches for

outreach to specific communities. Outreach will work on a draft outreach plan for Jul – Oct.

The Data Committee members include Dennis, Karen Keim, Megan, Eloise, Elizabeth, and Karen Raye; they will keep working towards a final draft by our April meeting. Overall goal is to produce a compiled report to bring to Legislature in January 2013.

In the long term, we may want to seek changes in our statute to enable the Commission to fully meet its mission. There seemed general consensus to proceed slowly in this direction, to focus on demonstrating the value of the PCSW.

**Next Meetings:**

April TBA

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Wednesday, October 24, 2012.

Motion to adjourn, Elizabeth.