

## Virginia Council on Women Minutes of January 19, 2016 Meeting

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

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Hala Ayala (Vice Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Rita Surratt (Treasurer), Amy Eckert, Carol Rick Gibbons, Meredith Harbaugh, Suzanne Jackson, Tracy Key, Allison Lawrence Jones, Lori Merricks, Sally Mullikin, Devin Pugh-Thomas, Olivia Turner.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Katharine Waddell, Niyah White

Call to order. Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. She introduced and welcomed new members Devin Pugh-Thomas and Allison Lawrence-Jones and intern Niyah White.

Guest Speakers. Katherine Waddell introduced Anna Healy James, Policy Advisor to the Governor, and Robert Brink, Senior Legislative Advisor to the Governor. Mr. Brink described the Governor's theme for the next two years, *Building a New Virginia Economy*, and distributed copies of the Governor's report on the subject. Ms. Healy discussed the Governor's legislative package, which focuses on education and workforce development, and issues on which legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly session that affect women (equal pay, access to health care (Medicaid expansion and women's health care), education and educational equity, and domestic violence.)

### Agenda and Minutes

The members unanimously adopted the agenda following a motion by Carol Rick Gibbons, seconded by Rita Surratt. Tracy Key moved adoption of the minutes of the October 20, 2015 meeting, which was seconded by Olivia Turner. The members unanimously voted for the motion.

### Old Business

Council Website. Kelly Thomasson gave an update on the Council website. She asked members to submit their biographies or edit draft biographies that she circulated. Niyah White asked members to send information to Ms. Thomasson regarding issues to post on the Council's facebook page.

FOIA. Kelly Thomasson gave an overview of FOIA, calling attention to the open meeting requirements for meetings of three or more members. She will send a link to the FOIA video, if requested. She reminded members that Conflict of Interest statements were due December 15 and are required annually in December.

Leadership Resources. Hala Ayala reported on the preparation of a resource list of Virginia organizations and asked members to e-mail her suggestions.

### New Business

STEM 2016. Tracy Key reported on the sponsor packets that have been distributed, the list of potential sponsors, and contributions received to date (\$26,000). She asked for members' input on the brochure and help in fundraising. Carol Rick Gibbons described the process for judging and the subcommittee's goal of 40 judges, each of whom would judge no more than 20 essays (all from the same region), with multiple judges on each essay. Essays are due February 8 and judging is to be completed by March 21.

Meta Braymer asked about plans for the reception and Ms. Thomasson reported that it would be the same format as 2015.

Women & Girls' Wellness Month. Meredith Harbach reported on the 2015 Healthcare Initiative Subcommittee dinner at Housing Families First and plans for a similar event this year and having the Governor issue a proclamation regarding the month. She encouraged members to plan events outside Richmond. Suzanne Jackson noted a Domestic Violence Awareness event on April 27 in the Tri-Cities area. Miriam Bender described the collaborative effort led by Women's Health Virginia that led to the creation of the celebration in 2002 and WHV's ongoing cooperation with organizations to host events. She also encouraged members to increase participation by diverse organizations (non-profit, business, government, etc.) with which they are involved.

Governor's Women's Summit. Meta Braymer introduced the subcommittee members who summarized the early plans for a free event in Richmond, in the fall of 2016, focused on challenges to and strategies for women's engagement and leadership and the potential impact on Virginia's economy of increased women's involvement and empowerment. Council members discussed the target audience (approximately 200, depending on venue; ages 30-60; diverse); having opportunities for networking; and the need for developing sponsorships. Tracy Key made a motion, seconded by Miriam Bender, that the subcommittee keep planning a summit on *Connecting Women in the New Virginia Economy*. The motion passed unanimously.

Jamestown Foundation. Kelly Thomasson reported on interest by the Foundation to have a liaison from the Council as they plan their 2019 Commemoration focused on the impact of women. Members discussed the need for more information and the broader question of the types of partnerships the Council wants on an ongoing basis. Meta Braymer suggested that the broader issue be on the agenda at a potential retreat. Miriam Bender will try to obtain more information about the Foundation's plans.

Council Timeline. Meetings are scheduled for April 20, August 16 and October 25, 2016.

#### Other business

Letter in Support of Supreme Court Justice Jane Marum Roush. The members discussed sending a letter to the General Assembly supporting the Justice's appointment to a full term on the Court. Sally Mullikin made a motion, seconded by Hala Ayala, to send a letter. The motion passed unanimously.

ERA Legislation. Hala Ayala reported that a bill (SJ11) has been introduced for Virginia to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and suggested that the Council write to the General Assembly in support of it. The members discussed the process for approval of a letter, including one signed only by individual members who support it, and suggested that members who propose a letter can send a draft to the membership for consideration. Katherine Waddell indicated that she would see if the Governor has a position on the issue. Hala Ayala made a motion, seconded by Sally Mullikin, that, if the Governor is in support of the bill, the Council send a letter supporting the legislation. [Meta Braymer and Katherine Waddell left the meeting and Vice-Chair Hala Ayala, took the chair.] After further discussion Olivia Turner proposed an amendment to the motion that the letter add a statement that not all members agree, The motion was amended as follows: If the Governor supports SJ11, the Council should write a letter in support of the legislation and companion House bill, noting that some members do not agree, if that is the case. The motion was defeated, with 4 voting in favor, 6 opposed, and 1 abstention.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Bender, Secretary