

Virginia Council on Women

Minutes of January 25, 2018 Meeting

Williams Mullen Building, Richmond, VA

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Devin Pugh-Thomas (Vice-Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, Margie Del Castillo, Caryn Foster Durham, Amy Eckert, Carol Rick Gibbons, Lori Merricks, Katy Sawyer, Lisa Speller-Davis, Michelle Strucke, Katie Tyson.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Traci DeShazor; student interns Madeline Lohr and Corey Brooks Nolan.

Call to order

Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. She congratulated Kelly Thomasson and Traci DeShazor on their reappointments by Governor Northam and introduced new member Margie Del Castillo. The members introduced themselves.

Agenda and Minutes

Meta proposed adoption of the agenda. Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa noted that her name should include Cantu and then moved adoption of the agenda with that correction. The motion was seconded by Katie Tyson and adopted unanimously. Meta thanked Miriam Bender for the minutes of the October 24 meeting, especially the discussion of the strategic plan. Carol Ricks Gibbons corrected the date for submission of the STEM essays (to February 8) and moved their adoption. Michelle Strucke seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously adopted.

Legislative Update

Lauren Schmitt, Deputy Legislative Director in the Governor's Policy Office reported on bills introduced in the General Assembly. Bills prohibiting personal use of campaign funds and "no excuse" absentee voting have not been heard. Other bills of interest include ones raising the threshold for grand larceny from \$200 to \$500 or \$1000 (different bills); universal firearms background checks; banning bump stocks; establishing licenses for student loan servicers and a student loan ombudsman; expanding Medicaid (high priority for the Governor); improving access to abortion, drugs for STDs and contraception without prescription; parental leave; and equal pay. Members asked about bills requiring schools and prisons to provide menstrual products and permitting medical cannabis. Lauren will provide an update regarding health-related bills to the Healthcare Committee at its February meeting. Laura encouraged members to write her with questions at Lauren.Schmitt@governor.virginia.gov.

New Business

STEM Essay Committee: Amy Eckert reported that the Committee has received \$3,000 and has pledges for \$33,000 for scholarships. She encouraged members to continue to raise funds with a goal of \$11,000 additional so that each scholarship would be \$10,000. She will send the list of proposed targets to the Council. The deadline for commitments is February 20.

Carol Rick Gibbons reported that information about the contest is on the Council Facebook page and website and on the Minorities to Majorities website. She will be meeting with representatives of the Department of Education regarding outreach. There are 43 judges and she encouraged members to become judges. Devin Pugh-Thomas and Amy Bridges have updated the electronic score sheet, which Carol will send to members. The award ceremony and reception will be on April 18.

Women's Healthcare Initiative. Katy Sawyer reported on the committee's January 25 meeting. The committee will broaden the focus beyond reproductive health; provide information to the Council and

possibly post information on the Council website about bills in the General Assembly but not take positions given the time limitations; work with the Summit Committee on a possible health panel; and plan for a proclamation and event for *Women & Girls' Wellness Month* in April. Ideas for *Wellness Month* include an event with the Governor and/or First Lady, possibly with young children (to fit with the First Lady's focus on pre-K issues.) Traci will discuss the ideas with the First Lady's staff.

Miriam Bender distributed the attached description regarding the development of *Women & Girls' Wellness Month*, Women's Health Virginia's efforts coordinating the observance since its creation in 2002, and ways that the Council and other groups can be involved.

The next committee meeting is on February 20, at 2 p.m. at the Patrick Henry Building, The committee plans regular meetings on the day of the full Council meetings. Meta asked the committee to report to the Council after its February meeting.

Women's Summit. Meta Braymer reported that she had mentioned the summit to the Governor and will ask Traci and Kelly to talk with him about it. The Council discussed when and where a summit should be held, agreeing that the event would likely be in 2019. Members also discussed the pros and cons of various times of year, whether to host smaller regional events, and possible formats for such events (listening sessions, presentations, networking). There was consensus that the Council plan two regional events (tentatively in Hampton Roads and Staunton). Meta asked the Council to think about themes for a summit and will plan to discuss plans at the April meeting. Lori Merrick will review information about other states' summits and Lori and Meta will review the 2017.

Council Timeline. Meta reviewed the timeline, calling attention to the April 18 meeting, which will be 1-3 p.m. with lunch at 12:30, paid by members. Future meetings are scheduled for August 9 and October 11.

Announcements.

The groundbreaking for the Virginia Women's Monument was held on December 4.

The Council will continue its development of the strategic plan. Meta Braymer asked the Council to review the summary in the minutes of the October 24 meeting.

The Women's Health Virginia annual conference on women's health, titled *She's Got Guts—The Microbiome, Food & Women's Physical & Mental Health*, will be on Friday, June 8 in Charlottesville. Registration is \$75 before April 1, \$85 after that. More information about the program and registration (including online registration) is available at www.womenshealthvirginia.org.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. on a motion by Katy Sawyer, seconded by Lori Merrick.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Bender, Secretary