

Virginia Council on Women

Minutes

October 11, 2018 Meeting

Patrick Henry Building, 1111 E. Broad Street, Conference Room 2, Richmond, VA 23219

Members Present: Carol Rick Gibbons (Chair); Katy Sawyer (Vice-Chair); Ikeita Cantú Hinojosa (Secretary); Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth ; Ex-Officio Council Member); Amy Bridge; Caryn Foster Durham; Jill Gaitens; Diana Gates; Chrystal Neal; Devin Pugh Thomas; Ashley Reynolds Marshall; Katie Tyson.

Staff Present: Traci J. DeShazor, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth (Staff Liaison); Gena Berger, Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources; Michaela Mizrahi, Student Intern.

Call to Order

Chair Carol Rick Gibbons called the meeting to order at 1:01pm.

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Rick Gibbons welcomed everyone in attendance. Carol stated that the meeting would be condensed to an hour due to inclement weather watches from Hurricane, now Tropical Storm, Michael.

Agenda, Minutes, and Membership Directory

The agenda for the October 11 meeting was adopted unanimously on a motion by Katy Sawyer, seconded by Ashley Marshall. The minutes of the August 9 meeting were adopted unanimously [with the joking reminder that the Secretary omitted mention of the “fact” that the Council Class of 2017 is the best], on a motion by Caryn Foster Durham, seconded by Chrystal Neal.

Council members received the 2018-2019 Virginia Council on Women Membership Directory in order to review it and provide staff with corrections.

OLD BUSINESS

- Women’s Healthcare Initiative Subcommittee Report and Update: Katy Sawyer, Women’s Healthcare Initiative Co-Chair, reported the following: The subcommittee anticipates an updated charge by January’s meeting. A list of Virginia October health and wellness events will be posted on the Council website and social media with the goal of expanding the list moving forward. New General Assembly laws will be posted on the Council website along with helpful resources. [Council Members received a packet titled “Virginia Council on Women Healthcare Subcommittee: Changes to Virginia laws pertaining to women, children, and families: October 11, 2018”] The subcommittee discussed partnering with Governor and First Lady Northam and the Girl Scouts in two ways: (1) April’s Women & Girls Wellness Month – Richmond event in garden of Governor’s Mansion where Daisies and Brownies could earn Healthy Living badge; and (2) Mini Med School “Grand Rounds” with Governor Northam – event at other 2 Girl Scout Council areas where Juniors could earn STEM badge. Secretary of State Kelly Thomasson reported that she recently met with the Girl Scouts and said that she will connect the subcommittee with her contact. When Council Members were asked if they were ever a Girl Scout, the overwhelming majority of Council Members raised their hands, underscoring the organization’s female leadership mission.

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Subcommittee Report and Update: Jill Gaitens introduced herself. Jill Gaitens and Chrystal Deal, STEM Subcommittee Co-Chairs, reported the following: The timeline for essay sponsorship is December. Marketing materials are forthcoming. Since the Council received over 500 essays last year, the number of judges needs to increase this year. Judges are invited to the Governor's Mansion for the scholarship reception. The subcommittee is currently focused on getting financial commitments by February-March and capitalizing on end of year corporate giving. The overall fundraising goal is \$10K per girl, or at least \$50K. Jill and Chrystal will confer and develop a game plan and then provide Council Members with manageable, bite-size pieces to handle. The subcommittee is exploring a software system called Judgify to better manage the application, scoring, calculating, reminding, and administration process. Since the free software only allows 100 submissions, software could be acquired per region in order to remain free or one \$500 sponsorship could be used to purchase software. Since such decisions must be made between now and January 2019, the subcommittee will decide how to move forward. The Math Science Innovation Center is the current administrator and charges a 3% fee, so the subcommittee is exploring whether to change to a free statewide administrator next year, such as the Library of Virginia, which does not charge. Michaela has been researching outreach to rural and lower socioeconomic young women for the STEM scholarship application process.
- Summit Subcommittee Report and Update: Carol Rick Gibbons reported the following: The Women's Forum scheduled for Tuesday, October 16, 2018, in Hampton, Virginia, has been canceled. No Mini Summits will take place in 2018. The subcommittee needs to discuss realignment and plans for the future. The Council has the opportunity to join with Kathy Spangler, Executive Director, American Evolution – Virginia to America: 1619-2019, for the Women's Achieve Summit in October 2019. Carol will meet with Caryn Foster Durham to discuss next steps.

NEW BUSINESS

- Update on Council's Social Media Strategy, Michaela Mizrahi, Intern: Michaela gave a presentation that updated Council Members on the Council's current social media presence and plans for increasing message effectiveness (such as utilizing gold medal gymnast Gabby Douglas, a relatable Virginia Beach hometown hero, who was abused), expanding our web presence (for example, possibly moving beyond Facebook to Instagram), better reaching our intended audience, and finding an online voice for the Council.
- Discussion of Children's Cabinet and Women's Healthcare-Related Issues – Gena Berger, Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources: Council Members received a Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) handout: "Who Qualifies for Virginia Medicaid Under Expansion?: Medicaid expansion will provide quality, low-cost coverage to 400,000 Virginians." Gena Berger reviewed the importance of Virginia's recent Medicaid expansion. A key expansion population is to childless adults – about 50% are women, and some will also be new mothers who will now receive Medicaid benefits beyond the pregnant women coverage that only extends 60 days post-birth.

Gena discussed Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) efforts to improve access to LARC by providing it to post-partum women before they leave the hospital, working with Medicaid to unbundle LARC for better provider reimbursement rates, etc. LARC benefits include: decline in the pre-term birth rate; safer spacing between pregnancies (18+ months); lower abortion rate; decreased infant mortality rate; etc. A LARC pilot is currently underway in which 12 Virginia providers are reimbursed for both the device and the cost of care. The Virginia Department of Health issued a press release listing the providers. The state will track data. Council Members expressed interest in learning more, and Gena will provide follow up information to Traci.

In June 2018, Governor Northam signed an Executive Order creating a "Children's Cabinet 2.0" focused on early childhood and school readiness, nutrition and food security, and maternal health and reducing infant

mortality. Home visiting has been important. Virginia has seen a decrease in utilization of WIC, and the root causes are being investigated. It is possible that certain immigrant communities may be afraid to access such services, which is unfortunate since the program is designed to provide people in need with healthy foods. The Cabinet is staffed by the agriculture and forestry team, and the farm to school, strengthening farm families, and helping Virginia's economy initiatives are closely connected. The Children's Cabinet is also working on child welfare in the courts, schools (increasing school resource officers, etc.), and housing; trauma-informed care for children; mental health access for children; and ways to create resilience for children and their families.

Regarding current challenges, the Trump Administration is proposing to change the Title X federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services to impose a domestic Gag Rule. The changes prohibit abortion referral; restrict unbiased comprehensive counseling or information about pregnancy options; and exclude agencies that provide abortion using non-federal dollars from receiving any Title X funds. The Northam Administration has spoken out against the Trump proposal and will work to secure the roughly \$4.5M in replacement funds, if necessary, to protect women's health. The proposal is scheduled to take effect in 2019.

Another challenge is the finalization of abortion facility regulations. The process is being used as an opportunity to assess where areas are too strict and overly burdensome. The regulation of abortion facilities are open for public comment, so please tell the Northam Administration how you feel.

A final concern is Virginia's maternal mortality rate, especially among African American women. Opioid-related overdose appears to be a leading cause, most likely attributable to trauma throughout life, especially during early years. The Virginia neonatal and perinatal collaborative is working on this issue. A summit will take place in January 2019. Council Members expressed interest in learning more, and Gena will provide follow up information to Traci.

- Discussion of Subcommittee Meeting Structure: Council Members agreed to hold subcommittee meetings in directly advance of full Council meetings, using the 1.5 hour window before the full Council meeting for subcommittees. In January 2019, subcommittees will meet from 11:00am-12:30pm and the full Council will meet from 12:30-3:00pm.
- Discussion of 2019 Council Priorities: In January 2019, Council Members will discuss if the Council's efforts are appropriately balanced, if activities are overburdening staff and stretching Council Members too thin, or if the group feels that more should be done.
- Policy and Initiative Report – Traci DeShazor, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth: Given time constraints, Council Members will receive a report in January 2019.
- Chair's Report
 - The Task Force to Commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote is underway.
 - The Women's Achieve Summit will take place October 14-15, 2019 in Richmond, VA, as part of the American Evolution 2019 commemoration events.
 - The "Voices from the Garden" Virginia Women's Monument Dedication Event is scheduled for October 19, 2019 as part of the American Evolution 2019 commemoration events.
 - "Commanding Stories," Senator Mark Warner's 9th Annual Virginia Women's Conference, will take place Saturday, November 17, 2018, 8:00am-3:00pm, Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, VA.
 - October is important for several awareness months (National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, National Bullying Prevention Month, etc.).

Announcements

Diana Gates encouraged Council Members to visit her husband at the Powhatan Indian Village at the Jamestown Settlement & American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

Ashley Marshall distributed purple tassels to Council Members in connection with the Allstate Foundation's Purple Purse effort. The tassels serve as conversation starters in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month and efforts to end financial abuse and promote economic empowerment for survivors of domestic violence.

Next Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled from 12:30-3:00pm on Thursday, January 10, 2019 (the 2nd Thursday of the month).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:24pm on a motion by Amy Bridge, seconded by Ashley Marshall, with unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Ikeita Cantú Hinojosa, Secretary