

Virginia Council on Women

Minutes of October 24, 2017 Meeting

Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, VA

Members Present: Meta Braymer (Chair), Devin Pugh-Thomas (Vice-Chair), Miriam Bender (Secretary), Hala Ayala, Erin Evans Bedois, Amy Bridge, Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, Caryn Foster Durham, Amy Eckert, Carol Rick Gibbons, Ashley Marshall, Sue Rowland, Katy Sawyer, Lisa Speller-Davis, Katie Tyson.

Staff Present: Kelly Thomasson, Traci DeShazor, Katherine Waddell.

Call to order

Chair Meta Braymer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and introduced new members Katie Tyson and Ashley Marshall.

Agenda and Minutes

Meta proposed moving the discussion of the STEM committee to New Business. The revised agenda was adopted unanimously following a motion by Carol Rick Gibbons, seconded by Sue Rowland. Meta thanked Miriam Bender for the minutes and called attention to the statement regarding e-mails that was discussed during orientation. The minutes were unanimously adopted following a motion by Katy Sawyer, seconded by Amy Bridge.

Old Business

Women's Healthcare Initiative. Katy Sawyer reported that the subcommittee's goal will be to look at health care in Virginia and how to improve it. She plans a conference call, probably before the General Assembly convenes in January, to discuss future action (such as a women's health panel at the 2018 summit and developing priorities around the new governor's priorities.) She distributed an information sheet regarding the gubernatorial candidates' positions on health care and a Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation information pamphlet, which is available at no cost.

New Business

Subcommittee Membership. Meta distributed the subcommittee membership list.

STEM Essay Committee: Carol Rick Gibbons reported on the history of the program and the components (fundraising, contest judging, awards.) Devin Pugh-Thomas has developed and is updating an electronic score sheet to improve administration and judging of the contest. The committee is planning outreach to potential judges to have them identified by the end of 2017 and training for judges in January 2018. The contest will be launched before school Christmas breaks, with the deadline for submissions on February 18, judging by the end of March, and the awards ceremony on April 18 (coinciding with the Veto Session.) The committee is working with the Dept. of Education to increase outreach to schools with low-income demographics and is posting information on a new app regarding scholarship opportunities for minority students. The Council discussed additional outreach through other groups, including the "Y"s, Boys and Girls' Clubs, the faith community, Girl Scouts, fraternity and sorority alumni groups, United Way, associations (e.g. of science teachers, PTOs.) Other activities for involving past winners will be developed in 2018.

Amy Eckert reported that the Council raised \$41880 and gave each regional winner \$7000 in 2017. She noted that the 2018 goal is to give a \$10,000 scholarship to each winner. The fundraising effort will start earlier and they will seek more diverse funding, involvement by all members, and new donors. She will send information to the Council by e-mail.

Traci DeShazor will suggest to the new administration that there be more interns to support the Council to help with initiatives like the STEM contest.

Proposed Initiatives. Traci DeShazor reviewed the strategic plan discussions, which set goals of visibility, the STEM program, advocacy and engagement (through the Women's Health care Initiative and Summit), and personal and professional development, noting that the plan provides a basis for setting priorities, focusing energy and resources, strengthening operations and making decisions. She reviewed the accomplishments in 2017. The Council discussed the pitfalls and areas of opportunity and successes. Pitfalls and opportunities include the timing of activities (need to pace through the year); need for regional and program diversity (not have all-Richmond focus, develop more/different Women & Girls' Wellness Month events, possible regional summits); improve communication (go beyond Governor's mailing list, develop a Council newsletter, have website/page for the Council); improve the structure (meeting schedule, procedures) to be more nimble and increase momentum; be a source of information (expand and keep the resource list current); have a budget. Members identified these successes: broadened Council focus; growth of the STEM contest; increased interest in serving on the Council; increased diversity of the Council; better communication and planning; participation by members and defining roles for members; the Women's Summit; and standing up for women's health in the legislature.

Traci reviewed the proposed timeline, noting the uncertainties with a new administration and the beginning of transition right after the election. She noted that Katherine Waddell has been appointed to the Board of Health.

Traci asked for new members' reflections on the areas of opportunity. Amy Bridge suggested the Council prepare a report card on the status of women in Virginia and Katie Tyson suggested a grading system for issues affecting women. Amy will work on a report card. She asked that other members send information to her.

Traci reiterated the issues that need to be addressed in next steps: visibility (including more organizations for outreach); advocacy and engagement; a report card on women; and mini-summits.

Announcements: The General Assembly will convene on January 10. Next Council meetings: January 25 and April 18. August and October meetings are tentatively scheduled for August 9 and October 11.

Meta thanked the Council and Katherine Waddell.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. on a motion by Ikeita Cantu Hinojosa, seconded by Miriam Bender.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Bender, Secretary