

Governor's Council on Women and Girls
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity & Workforce Equity
June 13, 2019
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order and Introductions:

Meeting was brought to order at 11:00 a.m. by Co-chairs Office of Health Strategy Executive Director Victoria Veltri; Assistant Comptroller Michelle Gilman; Department of Housing Deputy Commissioner Shante Hanks on behalf of Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno; and Department of Economic & Community Development Deputy Commissioners Glendowlyn Thames and David Kooris on behalf of Commissioner David Lehman. The following Council members / designees were in attendance and introduced themselves: Senator Marilyn Moore (Senate Democrats), Solicitor General Clare Kindall (Office of the State Attorney General), Chief of Staff Shannon Wegele (Office of the Secretary of the State), Chief of Staff Astread Ferron-Poole on behalf of Commissioner Roderick Bremby (Department of Social Services), Erin Choquette on behalf of Commissioner Josh Geballe (Department of Administrative Services), Commissioner Bongsi Magubane (Department of Motor Vehicles), Commissioner Jorge Perez (Department of Banking), Commissioner Amy Porter (Department of Rehabilitation Services), Director of Communications Lora Rae Anderson on behalf of Commissioner Michelle Seagull (Department of Consumer Protection), Commissioner Kurt Westby (Department of Labor), Chief of Staff, Operations and Performance Victoria Hackett on behalf of Commissioner Katie Dykes (Department of Energy & Environmental Protection), and Debra Goss on behalf of Commissioner Joe Giulietti (Department of Transportation). (Co-Chair Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz joined later in the meeting.)

II. Public Comment:

- Frances Arquette-Becher owner of Akwesasne Construction in Glastonbury – Ms. Arquette-Becher would like to volunteer her services to the Subcommittee.
- Amanda Aronson – principal of Aronson Consulting, an educational & non-profit consulting firm. Ms. Aronson mentioned that her purpose at the meeting is to support the Subcommittee's work and be more effective in the field.

III. Legislative Report: Ms. Gilman introduced Senator Moore who provided an overview of the Legislative session:

- Senator Moore explained that her report will focus on bills that passed the legislature with respect to Commerce, Labor and Human Services.
- Paid Family Medical Leave provides employees with eligibility for up to 12 weeks of paid family medical leave and if any employee has a serious health condition that occurs during pregnancy and results in incapacitation, the employee will be eligible for up to 14 weeks of medical leave. Senator Moore stated that it is our responsibility to explain to small businesses and the community that this Bill will not cost the employer anything; it is going to be the employee who is going to pay into a system and will take over a year to be able to draw out of that account.

- The \$15.00 dollar minimum wage Bill for Connecticut is scheduled to be a .90 cent increment in October and a \$1 dollar raise each year until 2023.
- The Two Gen Initiative has developed a Task Force with the purpose to have every department and their commissioner be a part of looking for ways to lift the Connecticut families out of poverty and provide support for parents.
- Brief synopsis of other Labor and Commerce Bills including Senate Bill #s 854, 1029, 1105, 03 and 857.
- Ms. Gilman thanked Senator Moore for the recap and stated that the subcommittee will continue to monitor all bills and other matters reflected within the state budget.
- Senator Moore noted that there were some bills that did not pass this session that are important to women and girls and that it is important to make sure they are reintroduced in the 2020 session.
- Ms. Gilman noted that advocates from the public will be brought in as part of these proceedings and the Council.

IV. **Update on Subcommittee Priorities and Activities:**

- **Office of the Lieutenant Governor:** Ms. Phoenix-Sharpe thanked the public speakers for coming to the meeting and noted that the Lt. Governor and Governor will be meeting to go over the recommendations for the Steering Committee which will involve volunteers representing various organizations throughout the State. Ms. Phoenix-Sharpe stated the intention for Steering Committee organizations to be assigned to support a particular subcommittee. Ms. Phoenix-Sharpe also noted that the Governor and Lt. Governor are putting together a Corporate Leadership Circle of fortune 500 companies headquartered, and other companies with a significant presence, in Connecticut in order to more comprehensively address economic opportunities and work force equity with input from the private sector, including their best practices. The Steering Committee will be announced at the July 10th full council meeting.
- **Office of State Comptroller:** Discussed the ongoing workforce analysis and explained that the next step will be to distribute a comprehensive workforce report to all agencies. The Office of the State Comptroller hopes to have the report done prior to the July 10, 2019 full council meeting.
- **Financial Literacy Program:**
 - Ms. Phoenix-Sharpe explained that the goal is to develop ways to review with women and girls basic financial competencies as well as small business tax and other corporate financial obligations.
 - Mr. Perez stated that the Department of Education, Department of Banking and Department of Revenue Services would all like to be involved in the work but wanted clarity re scope and who is spearheading the initiative
 - Ms. Anderson (DCP) gave a brief summary of the first meeting held with representatives from Departments who may have interest in and/or resources for the initiative and noted that they discussed a wide range of subjects.
 - Ms. Veltri noted that the Office of Healthcare Strategy should also be a part of the Financial Literacy programming with respect to healthcare literacy. She also noted that the Health Disparities Institute at UConn could be a good resource as it focuses on healthcare and health insurance literacy. She also suggested to contact the Community Colleges with financial literacy courses.

- Ms. Porter suggested inclusion of a Benefit Counseling component for people with disabilities and asked to be a part of the efforts.
- Ms. Gilman asked to participate in the effort.
- Ms. Veltri suggested that the Insurance Department also be included.
- **Disadvantaged Business Resources:** To help disadvantaged businesses understand and gain access to the kind of resources available to them:
 - Ms. Choquette noted that the DAS Supplier Diversity Program has the SBE/MBE Certification Program that certified small and minority businesses, including women owned businesses. She also noted that this resource may be helpful and have a lot of materials.
 - Ms. Goss noted that UConn has a small program called Small Business Development Center, which can be looked at as another resource. She also noted that the CT DOT has a Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program that administers a federally funded supportive services program.
 - Ms. Wegele noted that businesses communicate with the Office of the Secretary of the State every year for their annual report in the business registry, which provides an opportunity to ask the businesses about whether they are woman, minority or veteran owned in a non-mandated way form. This allows for the creation of a list of businesses identified by ownership which may be helpful in connecting businesses with available resources
 - Ms. Porter asked that businesses owned by persons with disabilities be included
 - Ms. Choquette asked about availability of a list of businesses and noted that this would be helpful for DAS
 - Ms. Wegele, a member of the public, Mr. Kooris, Lt. Governor and Ms. Thames discussed existing resources, how they have been communicated to the public and the importance of keeping track of businesses that are using the resources versus those that are not and penetrating the latter market

V. Next Steps: Lt. Governor:

- Noted that she and the Governor will be meeting to discuss the list of organizations and people currently on the council contact list and that she is looking forward to getting representatives from the larger Fortune 500 companies and other companies in CT
- Asked for Subcommittee reports to be submitted by Friday June 21, 2019. Co-Chairs of the Subcommittee should provide a short paragraph re status of initiatives to her General Counsel
- Noted a plan for a Subcommittee Chair Conference call, prior to the meeting of the full council on July 10th, 2019 in order to review updates.
- Noted the very successful Legislative session for women and girls but also that there is still work left to do.
- Congratulated Ms. Glendowlyn Thames for her appointment as a Deputy Commissioner for DECD and thanked Ms. Thames for all of her work to support the team.
- Thanked everyone for all of the good work that is occurring.

VI. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.