

City of Worcester
Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
Meeting Summary
Date: August 5th, 2014
Worcester City Hall, 4th Floor

Members Present: Chantel Bethea, Robin Currie, Elizabeth Tomaszewski, Kathy Linton, Sarah Gruhin, Karen Pelletier, Heidi Sue LeBoeuf

Members Absent: no members absent

Staff: Catherine Nash, Human Rights Specialist, Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

Guests: Ms. Athena Haddon

1. Call To Order:

There being a quorum the chair called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

2. Welcome and Introduction:

The Chair welcomed and introduced Ms. Athena Haddon to present to the group.

3. Speaker: Ms. Athena Haddon:

Ms. Haddon spoke of her work with survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking and programs that she has helped develop including the D.A.W.N. program and Ray of Light training. The Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, WAASE, task force has been bringing diverse people and organizations around the table to work on this issue, however, Ms. Haddon expressed the need to address the demand in order to make significant progress and address the inequality of numbers of men as opposed to women being arrested. The Committee's interest in the topic was apparent as Members suggested assisting in WAASE's efforts, working in Outreach, and possibly requesting a Clark University Professor or research specialist to address to the ACSW.

4. Approval of the July 1st 2014 Minutes:

Liz Tomaszewski motioned to approve the 6/3/2014 Minutes with one correction. It was noted that the Liaison will be the permanent note taker for the meetings.

5. Civil Rights and Pay Equity Event, July 2nd Final Planning:

There was concern about the low attendance, but Members discussed the diverse attendees, from the Worcester Women's History Project, and a Professor from Assumption, as well as several others in the field of education. Mr. Gordon Davis presented on the history of women and pay equity, followed by a dialogue on early efforts women made pursuing equal rights.

6. The October Pay Equity Public Hearing Assignments of duties:

Individual Members volunteered to handle the following tasks: Ms. Linton and Ms. Tomaszewski the sign in table, Ms. Gruhin the time-keeping, the Chair audio equipment set up, and Ms. Currie note taking. The Liaison was asked to verify if there was a food budget for the event. The Chair confirmed that the ACSW Members would have seating in the front. Ms. Pelletier volunteered for the Agenda and Program packet.

7. ACSW Brochure Update Discussion:

Ms. LeBoeuf volunteered to review and update the ACSW Brochure with more up to date accomplishments and events undertaken by the ACSW.

8. Discussion on Possible ACSW Roundtable:

In view of the successful Roundtable held in June, and in light of the discussions generated in July with the attendees of the Civil Rights and Pay Equity event, the Chair raised the issue of the ACSW hosting its own Roundtable on relevant issues for local women of Worcester. While there was interest in the idea, some members suggested waiting to see how the Hearing would go prior to planning another event. It was to be added to a future agenda.

9. Women's Equity Day Proclamation Discussion:

The Chair raised a vote regarding ACSW co-sponsorship of the Women's History Project Proclamation for Women's Equality Day. All Members voted unanimously to support it by being co-sponsors and attending the event.

10. Input for Future Agenda:

Members shared issues including: Y/Women of Consequence review for 2015 improvements, recruitment for the ACSW, inviting a Professor from Clark to address the group on sexual exploitation, follow up details on the Public Hearing, and discussion on earned sick-time as a benefit for working women, and other relevant announcements.

13. Adjournment was at 7:50pm

City of Worcester
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“ADDENDUM” to Meeting Summary
Of July 1st, 2014
Worcester City Hall, 4th Floor

NOTE: At the meeting of August 5, 2014, it was determined that this addendum to the minutes of July 1, 2014 should be created. The guest speaker was City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr. His conversation with the Committee was extensive and the notes exceeded the bounds of the normal minutes. However, it was agreed that the full notes of that discussion be added to the record.

Mr. Augustus wanted to know what we wanted/need to know. The Committee Chair, Chantel Bethea, had spoken to him earlier and discussed the format for an *Annual Report*. He said it could be verbal or written, but a formal address of what we want the community or City to see or know. Mr. Augustus said that we are a diverse group and should therefore have a diverse set of ideas. We will get more attention if we offer “solutions” in addition to identifying the problems – in other words, offer approaches to deal with challenges.

Mr. Augustus suggested that we complete a Survey to determine what is going on and/or needed in the community. Ms. Bethea asked what we could do with such a Survey – is it merely a presentation or to provide programs. Mr. Augustus suggested that it would be better if the City Manager brings together the right team to provide solutions. He also suggested that it was better to bring issues up as they occur – like Ms. Currie’s recommendation to the City Police Department that they cease publishing women’s names who have been charged with prostitution (as contained in the July 1st minutes). Mr. Augustus also indicated that there are some issues where he has not control but is under the purview of the City Council. In those cases he would work to bring these issues to their attention.

There are two types of matters we should be working on: Those that we can bring to his attention for immediate or quick review; and those that require a long term commitment to work.

Ms. Tomaszewski asked Mr. Augustus if he thought there was something specific we should be looking into. He said that he knows we are working on the Pay Equity issue and that is HUGE. He wants us to let him know how the City can better help Women.

Athena Haddon, another guest to the meeting, brought up the issue about women in the sex trades and access to health care. How can we look for larger solutions to this problem? They are released back onto the streets within 10 to 16 hours and there is not enough time to provide them with the services they need – there is homelessness and

substance abuse issues. Sometimes they are not ready to be helped but that doesn't mean the work shouldn't begin.

Mr. Augustus asked what we thought are the most pressing questions. We discussed that we were preparing to hold a Public Hearing and had originally wanted to include any number of issues but have decided to focus on Pay Equity. He suggested that we focus on the CHIP report already prepared by the City. Ms. Currie said that the CHIP Survey was somewhat ambiguous which was why we want to have our own Public Hearing. Mr. Augustus suggested touching base with the public health people who put the CHIP survey together.

In addition to CHIP, Mr. Augustus offered that we look into the great Public Health Program with UMASS and Clark University which received \$6 Million from the State. There's energy and visibility on this. He also mentioned the matter of infant mortality.

Ms. Currie asked about DCF. Mr. Augustus said that in this case it is State Agency and we have no control. We should have enough here in Worcester to keep us busy. Sex Education was mentioned (Worcester has an unusually high STD rate amongst young children). The change clinic *Buffer Zone* law and specific public transportation issues for women. He also suggested that we conduct a day-long strategic planning session.

Mr. Augustus said that he doesn't want to tell us what to do. Again he mentioned that identifying problems with no solutions is not great but that identifying issues with potential solutions is key and we should bring them directly to him. Ms. Currie asked about policy recommendations – formal or informal. He wants to work with us but that he has a lot going on and that we also need to appreciate that some issues require a number of steps and cannot be immediately resolved.

Athena Haddon spoke – she's been working w/Women in the sex trades and she really appreciates the City Manager's and Police Chief's decision above. Ms. Haddon thinks a lot more attention needs to be paid to this issue and that it is specifically a Public Safety issue. She brought up the fact that young women are advertising themselves. Ms. Haddon also mentioned that the programs which address the "Johns" are not doing what they were originally proposed to do. Mr. Augustus agreed that this was an important issue.

Respectfully submitted: Sarah Gruhin