

City of Worcester
Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
Meeting Summary
Date: February 3, 2015
Worcester City Hall, 4th Floor

Members Present: Chantel Bethea, Robin Currie, Sarah Gruhin, Athena Haddon, Jennifer Madson, Elizabeth Tomaszewski

Members Absent: Heidi Sue LeBoeuf, Kathleen Linton, Karen Pelletier

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

1. Call to Order:

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

2. Welcome and Introduction:

3. Approval of the January Minutes:

A motion was made by Ms. Currie to accept both the Minutes from the Joint Commission Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and Human Rights Commission as well as the January ACSW Minutes. This was seconded by Ms. Haddon. Ms. Bethea requested of the ACSW note taker to share the draft notes from meetings with the Chair and Liaison 2 weeks prior to the following meeting for review.

4. 2015 updated ACSW brochure:

A motion to approve the ACSW brochure was made by Ms. Currie and seconded by Ms. Gruhin. Members unanimously approved.

5. Project/Issue assignments:

- a) **Needs assessment survey:** Discussion on the Needs Assessment Survey generated suggestions to include space to identify: as head of household, race, ethnicity, number and ages of children in the household, neonatal support, and unemployment. Ms. Madson agreed to update the survey for the next meeting. Ms. Bethea suggested that the Survey might be disseminated at the Parent and Guardian Expo May 2nd.
- b) **Infant mortality:** Ms. Currie reported scheduling an informational meeting with a local emergency room doctor and nurse to gather more information and will report back at the next meeting.
- c) **Teen STD rates:** Ms. Haddon reported that there is a MA state report from 2010 regarding Sexually Transmitted Diseases, with a small section dedicated to adolescents. Ms. Haddon will reach out to the Worcester Department of Public Health to access additional information.
- d) **Child care:** Ms. Bethea reached out to Worcester Housing Authority's Plumley Village and Great Brook Valley as potential sites for Roundtable discussions. Ms. Madson reported that volunteers from the YWCA Girls CHOICE program can be made available to babysit during the roundtable sessions. Ms. Bethea stated that she will be

- inviting childcare and welfare professionals to share information at the prospective Roundtable on Childcare Needs for Women.
- e) **Employment:** Ms. Gruhin reached out to US Labor Department's Angela Rizzoli for employment statistics on women. Ms. Rizzoli led the June Roundtable on Working Women held in Worcester in collaboration with ACSW. She suggested the MA state or census bureau and Workforce Central might have more local statistics.
 - f) **STEM:** Ms. Tomaszewski reported ample state and national statistics based on gender for STEM related fields and education. She suggested that the ACSW request data in the fall from the Worcester Public School system.
 - g) **Sexual Exploitation:** The issue was tabled for further discussion in the next meeting after supplementary notes were to be completed and provided to ACSW members.
 - h) **Women and Homelessness:** Ms. Bethea reported that the City released a 3 year plan in 2007 and Laurie Ross conducted a survey on youth homelessness in 2012. Gender-specific data including the 5 year trends in homelessness had been requested by Ms. Nash from various local agencies and would be shared with Ms. Bethea who is gathering data on the subject for prospective further projects. .

6. January 13th Joint Commission Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women & Human Rights Commission:

Members discussed the Joint meeting and expressed that, as their first Joint Meeting with a City Official as speaker, they felt unfamiliar with the Joint Committee process. Despite having read the briefing material, it was felt that a meeting with the Human Rights Commission prior would have been beneficial in preparing questions. As it was a "Conversation with the Worcester Police Department regarding prostitution," members were uncertain if this would be the appropriate forum to make specific requests. It was suggested that upon further discussion and follow up, the ACSW would write a formal recommendation to the City Manager. The liaison would submit the recommendation which would include the objectives and deliverables.

7. Commission member input for next agenda items:

It was agreed that discussion on future projects and the Roundtable timeline would continue at the March ACSW meeting. Members agreed to keep review of the ACSW Brochure on the agenda in order to keep it updated with future accomplishments. The Needs Assessment Survey and Childcare would be listed on the next agenda for further discussion. Ms. Currie would send notes from the Joint Commission Meeting for further discussion.

8. Announcements to share concerning community and educational events of interest and to inform and educate the women of Worcester:

- a) WAASE will meet February 9th at the Worcester Department of Public Health.
- b) Spectrum will host a Women in Recovery Conference on April 10, 2015.
- c) The YWCA of Central MA has put in a call for nominations for the Catherine Erskine awards; the deadline is February 18, 2015.
- d) The Worcester Public Library has a Triumph! Black Military Unsung Heroes Expo during the entire month of February, with a Bob Marley Birthday Bash on February 7th.
- e) The Worcester Police Department is advertising upcoming Police Officer examinations.
- f) Deadline for the Fair Housing Poster Contest for students in grades 1-12 is on Mar. 27th

9. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38pm.