

## MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday March 2, 2021, 5:45 PM**

Virtual meeting on Cisco WebEx:

advisorycommitteeonthestatusofwomenwebex@cow.webex.com

Call in number: 415-655-0001; Access code: 160 850 2789

This meeting was not live streamed. A video recording is posted on the city website.

**Members Present:** Ariel Lim, Samantha Sendrowski, Casey Thomas, Tracey Whitney, Rubby Wuabu, Coretta McCarter

**Members Absent:** Heather Borelli, Kayanna James

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek

### **Call to order, introductions and instructions for virtual participation**

The meeting was called to order at 5:53pm

### **Review and approval of January 5, 2021 and February 2, 2021 meeting minutes**

Committeewoman Lim made a motion to approve minutes as written and Committeewoman Sendrowski seconded to approve the January 5 and February 2 meeting minutes. All approved.

### **Old Business:**

#### 2021 Women of Consequence Award Ceremony

Ceremony to be held on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 6pm

Live streaming: [www.worcesterma.gov/video-on-demand](http://www.worcesterma.gov/video-on-demand)

City of Worcester FB: [www.facebook.com/events/215950803322791/](https://www.facebook.com/events/215950803322791/)

#### Updates on ACSW COVID Family Structure Recommendations and Next Steps (Samantha Sendrowski)

COVID-19 case numbers are going down, but it is still a public health crisis. New vaccination sites are being added in Worcester. According to a report from UMass, the vaccine is not being distributed equitably. Notably, vaccination efforts are not reaching Black and Hispanic individuals between the ages of 30-49. President Biden stated that there would be enough vaccines for everyone in the country by the end of May, but there is a question of if this will fix the issue of folks traveling into different communities to receive the vaccine. The question was raised if there is data about the number of people who are eligible but have declined the vaccine, but it is unclear how to find this information.

The Worcester Department of Public Health had a meeting recently regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, and addressing equity. There has been a strong push for educators and students to get the vaccine, with many teachers' unions in support. President Biden mandated that teachers should receive priority status to receive the vaccine. Further questions regarding vaccine equity can be submitted to Director Turchek to submit to the Department of Public Health.

Committeewoman Sendrowski recommended publishing the COVID-19 family structure findings as a report including charts and infographics. It could be broken down by geographic locations, sectors, demographics, and unemployment. Committeewoman Sendrowski shared some statistics regarding unemployment in the state and in the city:

- The state unemployment rate reached for women reached an average of 9.9%
- Men's unemployment rate in the state reached an average of 8.8%
- Statewide, the group with the highest unemployment rate is Hispanic and Latina women at 17%
- In Worcester, the unemployment rate reached 11.2% with no sex-disaggregated data available
- Approximately 93,000 women left the labor force across the state
- In Worcester, approximately 1,170 people left the labor force
- In Worcester, there are approximately 35,000 children under the age of 18, about 10,000 of them are under age 5
- 40% of those children under 18 live in a female led household
- More than 25% of children under 18 live below the poverty line

Committeewoman Sendrowski also shared information regarding early childhood education.

- There are 292 licensed childcare providers in Worcester, providing capacity for 4,578 children
- Since the start of COVID-19, 46 providers have closed, 19 permanently
- Those 46 providers represent 677 childcare spots, and the 19 permanently closed providers represent 158 childcare spots that are permanently gone
- There are 305 children on the waitlist for childcare, with an average wait time of 7-8 months
- 1000 children in the city use childcare vouchers

There is an upcoming meeting to discuss enrollment numbers in Pre-K and Kindergarten.

Committeewoman Sendrowski suggested having a member from the school committee come speak at a meeting, but it was decided a member of the school administration would be better suited to answer questions. Director Turchek to request a member of the administration to join a meeting. There was a question of if this data includes households who have "doubled-up," meaning having more than one family living in one household. Committeewoman Sendrowski stated that these statistics do not capture this information, it only can distinguish by female led households, male led households, and married households. This leads to the conclusion that many children must be with a stay at home parent, other family member, or receiving childcare from an unlicensed provider. The question was raised if Worcester has ever tried universal Pre-K or universal daycare.

Committeewoman Sendrowski provided recommendations based on this information. Questions regarding this information will be raised during the April 6 meeting with a speaker from Common Start. Committeewoman Sendrowski also questions what the city can do at a municipal level to support childcare, and what issues women in Worcester are facing. Committeewoman Wuabu suggested tracking the recommendations over the next year to see if the city makes progress on them. This conversation to be continued at the next meeting with guest speakers.

#### Review request for Proposals and Timelines for 2021 Programs, Events, Activities Mentor Program/Day (Rubby Wuabu)

The notification letter sent out to the Young Women of Consequence applicants introduced the idea of the mentor program, and two young women reached out with their interest. Committeewoman Wuabu intends to meet with those individuals and find out about the interests to start building connections and a match with mentors. The Committee discussed pushing the overall program to

May, because it was envisioned as an in-person networking program. The Committee will reevaluate later to see if an in-person event may be able to be held.

Committee members agreed to start compiling a list of women in their lives that would be a good fit for the mentor program, including former ACSW Committee members and former Women of Consequence.

Chairperson Coretta brought up the need to get consent from parents and getting CORI checks for Committee members. Chairperson Coretta and Committeewoman Wuabu to work with Director Turchek on CORI checks and consent forms. Committeewoman Wuabu to work on a basic intake form to gather information regarding name, age, grade, interests, career interests, etc. Committee to review this information again next month. Committeewoman Wuabu to define the mentor program and mentor day requests for proposal to outline different phases. Committee members also suggested looking into other mentor programs in the area.

Chairperson Coretta brought up that all of the projects that the Committee works on are tied together in some way. Committeewoman Wuabu to complete two requests for proposals, one for mentor day, and one for an ongoing mentor program, on a timeline of 6-12 months.

Wonder Women of Worcester Poster Series – Round 2 (Tracey Whitney) – TABLED

### **New Business**

#### **Suggestions for Future Agenda Items**

- Chairperson Coretta to work on a calendar for Committee.
- Committeewoman Wuabu requested to discuss mentor program again at the next meeting.
- The Committee requested an administrator from Worcester Public Schools early childhood program attend a meeting after April to discuss COVID-19 family structure findings.

**Next Meeting:** April 6, 2021 at 5:45pm

### **Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm**

*“The success of every woman should be the inspiration to another. We should raise each other up. Make sure you’re very courageous: be strong, be extremely kind, and above all be humble.” – Serena Williams*