

**City of Worcester
Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

[Teams Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 227 862 949 380 Passcode: aqf4iN

Call in: 469-998-7682 Access Code: 141 531 054

Spanish subtitles were made available over Teams

Attendance

Members Present Virtually: Esther Boama-Nyarko, Taylor Rich, Katie Roy, Amaris Gonzalez, Stefanie Silva, Abby Doyle

Staff: Samantha Sendrowski

Call to order

Committee Member Silva called the meeting to order at 5:56 pm. Quorum was established on a roll call (5/0/0). Chair Gonzalez joined the meeting at 6pm.

Review and approval of May 7, 2024 meeting minutes

Committee Member Silva made a motion to approve the May 7, 2024 meeting minutes. Committee Member Doyle seconded the motion. Unanimously approved on roll call (5/0/0).

Annual planning

Committee Member Silva made a motion to approve the draft report for fiscal year 2024, that outlined the committee membership and activities and initiatives of the committee. Committee Member Doyle seconded the motion. Unanimously approved on roll call (5/0/0).

Committee Member Silva summarized the contents of the planning spreadsheet sent to the group: The proposed topics for each month were: July mentorship program, August mentorship program, September mentorship program, October gender-based violence, November open, December planning for Women of Consequence awards, January community discussion placeholder, February planning for Women of Consequence awards, March open, April community discussion placeholder, May open, and June planning.

Chair Gonzalez added that the idea that she had around planning for next year is to condense some of the work that we have and to create actionable steps. The intention of having like the mentorship program there on multiple monthly meetings is so that the committee can revisit it and put it into action.

She would also like to have a placeholder for community engagement each half to give the committee time to get more folks in the general public to attend. She thinks we have really good guests who share a lot of really good information was thinking about how to get more folks to be involved.

She thinks May of next year might be good to do an actionable event – the committee could be planning and putting things together and all the work throughout the year. The actionable event could be something like collaborative event with another committee or with an organization on a topic or theme that the committee agrees on for the year or something that relates to the community conversation or earlier guests. She thinks it might make it easier to put a report together to make recommendations to the City on actionable steps that they can take or that we would like to see to expand our work or support our work moving forward. Vice Chair Rich recommended having the May community discussion focused on Women’s Health, since May is Women's Health Month. There are a lot of different health equity challenges for women.

Committee Member Doyle suggested incorporating youth violence into the Domestic Violence Awareness month as well. She said when we think about domestic violence, a lot of times we think about older couples and youth kind of get left out of that a lot. But youth are really the most vulnerable when it comes to that type of topic.

The Committee would like to involve outside organizations in the gender-based violence discussion, YWCA of Central Massachusetts, LIFT (Living in Freedom Together), Pathways for Change, and Girls Inc. For Girls Inc., Committee Member Doyle suggested seeing if some of the girls in the program would be able to stay later and participate virtually from Girls Inc. Chair Gonzalez suggested putting together a communications campaign for the October discussion.

Chair Gonzalez shared that the mentorship program has really just been an idea to date, and the committee would be developing the program. There have been thoughts about creating a general mentorship program. There have been thoughts about creating a mentorship program for Young Women of Consequence, with the Women of Consequence as mentors. There are folks who signed up at the 2024 Women of Consequence event to be mentors.

Committee Member Roy shared that she has experience with mentorship programs in the professional realm. She thinks having the three planning sessions dedicated to it makes sense because the committee will need to start by defining the desired outcome, and what the program should look like. She also thinks there could be some opportunity for partnership with Big Brothers, Big Sisters and doing all of the logistical pieces of mentorship and how we make sure that if we're pairing people, we're doing it in a way that is safe.

Committee Member Boama-Nyarko suggested breaking up the action items for the mentorship program, so that the committee can keep things moving forward between meetings. Chair Gonzalez suggested having a subcommittee for the mentorship program, and suggested having Committee Member Roy as a member of the subcommittee.

Chair Gonzalez shared that there was a conversation in the past about renaming the group and having it focused around gender equity. She wanted to bring that up to see what people's thoughts were. Staff Liaison Sendrowski shared the idea for a name change as a recommendation during the 2021 community discussion on gender-based violence. The intent was to emphasize the goal of the committee is gender equity, not just finding out what the status of women is, and to be more inclusive. If the committee is interested in changing the name of the committee, it would require an ordinance change through City Council. The committee can draft a new mission and name if they decide to, and if the committee agrees on it, it can then be sent to City Council.

Committee Member Roy said that the name change to gender equity opens up another really important conversation about people who are nonbinary and people who are transgender, and she thinks that that is incredibly important. But she is worried that may broaden the focus of the committee too much.

Committee Member Boama-Nyarko shared that she thinks outwardly it may sound like we're changing some words in a mission, but it comes up with a lot of responsibility for the committee to make sure that we are creating a space that is more inclusive, whether via the name or the mission, or just generally within this to truly make the space equitable in the safe space for other folks to join. The current name and mission right now says it is for the status of women, and it doesn't necessarily specify whether you are a cisgender woman versus a transgender woman, so she doesn't think the committee needs to change its name, but the committee needs to be more inclusive in its actions. Committee Members agreed that they want to have the committee be an inclusive space, but did not necessarily want to change the name.

Discussion on recruiting new committee members

Chair Gonzalez recommended we continue to have conversations around evaluating our mission statement and reworking. She suggested having going through the committee's mission, values and goals as a standing action item on the committee's agendas for this year.

Chair Gonzalez motioned to approve the first four months monthly meetings, which will be the mentorship program for July, August, September and then October, a discussion or community event on gender-based violence. Vice Chair Rich seconded. Unanimously approved on roll call (6/0/0).

Adjournment at 6:30pm

Next meeting Tuesday July 2, 2024, 5:45pm.

Lead topic: Mentorship program