

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER
Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

Heather Borelli
Kayanna James
Ariel Lim, Vice Chairperson
Coretta McCarter, Chairperson
Samantha Sendrowski
Casey Thomas
Tracey Whitney
Rubby Wuabu

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday December 1, 2020, 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: Heather Borelli, Kayanna James, Ariel Lim, Coretta McCarter, Samantha Sendrowski, Casey Thomas

Members Absent: Tracey Whitney and Rubby Wuabu

Staff: Jayna Turcek

Call to order, introductions and instructions for virtual participation

The meeting was called to order at 5:52pm.

Review and approval of November 10, 2020 meeting minutes

Committeewoman Lim made a motion to approve minutes as written and Committeewoman Borelli seconded to approve the November 10, 2020 meeting minutes. All approved.

Old Business:

Election of officers-

Committeewoman James self-nominated for Vice-Chairperson. Committeewoman Thomas self-nominated for Vice-Chairperson last month and chose to withdraw. Committee unanimously voted to elect Committeewoman James as the new Vice-Chairperson.

Committeewomen James and Thomas voiced support for Chairperson McCarter to continue as Chairperson. In a vote of confidence the Committee unanimously affirmed her as Chairperson.

Finalization of 2021 Women of Consequence Awards Nominations Forms-

Committee reviewed the google form applications and spent time reviewing the criteria for the young women of consequence application. Director Turcek will send out the outreach list to the Committee for review, input and assistance in outreach. The city manager's office will publicize the event and nomination process.

Review for discussion DRAFT report of ACSW COVID family structures recommendations (Samantha Sendrowski)-

Committeewoman Sendrowski provided a summary of the draft recommendations are a local reflection on what was put forward from the Massachusetts Committee on the Status of Women's October report on Child Care and Education during COVID-19: <https://www.mass.gov/news/mcsw-child-care-and-education-during-covid-19-report->

c/o Jayna Turcek, Director of Human Rights & Accessibility
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[october-2020](#). COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting women (employment, childcare, career and economic impact).

“Society’s response to COVID-19 is revealing that American culture is not conducive for supporting parents and prioritizing early education for children.” (See statistics in report hyperlinked above).

She mentioned specific action Committee should take including:

- **Increase visibility of the gender disparities.** One way to get this out could be during the City’s press briefings. Additionally the city surveys on the impact of COVID-19 have not been explicit in gathering data specific to gender. Director Turcsek will share with the City Manager’s Office.
- **The preliminary data was not segregated by gender.** Committee agreed to recommend that this is gathered and Director Turcsek will follow up with Dr. Castiel.
- **Resources on City of Worcester website are not updated and incomplete. Specifically there is no or limited childcare resources.** The Worcester Public Schools resource page seems up to date with this and other information. Committeewoman Sendrowski agreed that a link to WPS COVID-19 resources page from the City of Worcester COVID-19 resources pages would help. Director Turcsek will make request.
- **Covid has wreaked havoc on child care.** 15-20% of childcare centers in central MA did not reopen - most impacted were those that didn't have a contract with the state - mostly small and private providers. 60% of parents reported being uncomfortable in September with sending kids back to childcare. Demand for early childcare decreased due to discomfort, unemployment, and other factors, but demand still exceeds supply
 - 16-20,000 families on statewide wait-list, but now caught up through January 2020 requests
 - Committeewoman Sendrowski to follow-up with Kim Dion from Dept of Early Education Resource and Referral Agency for stats from Worcester
- Eve Gilmore indicated early childhood providers and staff connect about three times a weeks and encourage specific call-in times for parents and caregivers to get information and have conversations. The learning is **that the priority focus has to be on the social/emotional issues before introducing any educational material.**
- **Develop incentives for business to support a workforce managing child care responsibilities, such as create on-site child care or access to care resources as an employee benefit.** Eve Gilmore also reportedly concurred with this recommendation as childcare is an essential part of the economy.
- **Prioritize and ensure safe return to workspaces for educators and support staff**
- Common Start is advocating for more funding for early childcare education. Committeewoman Sendrowski was asked to invite the Central MA chapter to our next meeting to learn more.

Chairperson McCarter pointed out that the Committee received the biweekly COVID-19 statistics report from the Health Equities Taskforce and that Hispanic school aged children and youth have the highest rate of COVID-19.

More conversation to come.

Request for Proposal (RFP) document for programs, events, activities (Chairperson McCarter)-

Chairperson McCarter proposed the adoption of a project proposal and planning template. It will include a timeline and the action steps will be embedded into our yearly work calendar. All agreed this will be a great tool.

Committeewoman Borelli offered to share the template she uses for project management at work. Chairperson McCarter will prepare the 2021 calendar and share with all.

Suggestions for future agenda items

- Committeewoman Wuabo will present on mentor program proposal using new RFP template
- Committeewoman James will present on the We Are Women of Worcester campaign/calendar using new RFP template
- Committeewomen McCarter and James will present on “The Talk” in partnership with the Black Families Together. Chairperson McCarter to share the partnership agreement template from Black Families Together at the next meeting.

- Human Trafficking Awareness month. (Chairperson McCarter represented the Committee in the organizing committee meeting for earlier today with LIFT. Committee is supportive of awareness activities planned.)
- Nicole Bell, Founder of LIFT (speaker for meeting date to be determined)
- Common Start conversation with Central Ma chapter representative
- Next month the theme for the WOC awards to be finalized. Potential theme: Everyday Heroes. Committeewomen will also think about keynotes. Director Turchek to talk with Dr. Castiel for recommendations from healthcare.

Next Meeting: January 5, 2021 at 5:45pm

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.” – Amelia Earhart