

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
MEETING SUMMARY**

Wednesday October 24, 2012
City Hall, Room 401 – 6:00 p.m.

Attendees:

ACSW Members: Chairperson Sarah Gruhin, Chantel Bethea, Kathleen Linton, Karen Manson and Elizabeth Tomaszewski

ACSW Members Absent: Daisy Reeves.

Others Present: Jayna Turчек, Director of Human Rights & Disabilities

Welcome

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:13 PM.

The Committee welcomed it's newest member, Karen Manson.

Ms. Gruhin also mentioned that Kristen Lemire had moved outside of Worcester and no longer was a member of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by Ms. Bethea, seconded by Ms. Linton, the Committee voted to approve the minutes from August 22, 2012 as written by a vote of 5-0-0.

Discussion on Young /Women of Consequence Award

Ms. Gruhin provided a brief background of the award. Year to year the number of attendees vary depending on the family and friends of the award winners. The organizing and preparation process for the award event is lengthy and involves notifying area high schools of the nomination process. Last year members called guidance counselors to remind them to nominate students. Last year the Committee also worked to increase the donations for scholarship money given to the awardees. Last year there were thirty-six (36) applications for the YWOC award and six (6) applications for the WOC award.

Concern was expressed by members that the organizing for this award takes up a good amount of their work during the year and does not leave them for much time to do other work.

Ms. Turчек suggested the option of taking a year off from the award and re-evaluate next year whether to continue.

Ms. Tomaszewski suggested that if the Committee agrees to discontinue for this year then the Committee should communicate with the schools to notify them of the decision.

The Committee agreed that they would like to take a year off from the award and Ms. Gruhin offered to draft a letter for review at the next meeting.

Discussion on ACSW membership

Ms. Turчек reported that the City Manager's office was hopeful that more applicants would apply for membership to the Committee and quorum concerns would cease to exist.

Members discussed whether or not a different meeting date would be helpful and the Committee agreed to change the monthly meetings to the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm. The next meeting will be November 13th. Ms. Turчек will update the City's website to reflect the change. Ms. Bethea will make the changes to the facebook page.

If any member has any suggestions for outreach (either mailings, emails, or presentations) to individuals or groups in the City, please forward these suggestions to Ms. Turчек and she will forward them along to the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Members discussed the need for diversity in it's membership. The Committee presently needs applicants from Districts 1, 2, and 3. If Ms. Reeves ceased to be a member, a seat from District 4 will then be made available.

Ms. Linton will communicate with Ms. LeBoeuf to inform her of the meeting date change.

Ms. Tomaszewski will outreach to Thuha Le for possible new members. Ms. Manson will also outreach to colleagues.

2012-2013 Project Themes

In August the Committee voted and ranked the topic areas as follows:

1 – Women's Health Education

2 – Domestic Violence

3 – STEM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

4 – Services to Women

5 – Pay Equity

The Committee decided to do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the top three priority items for the next meeting. The top three topics are women's health education, domestic violence and STEM education. Members are encouraged to email Ms. Turchek with their analysis by November 6th, 2012 so that she can distribute the materials for review in advance of the November 13th meeting.

Presentation by Jayna Turchek on possible collaborative projects

Ms. Turchek shared that her office is organizing a housing discrimination presentation focusing on protections available to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-sexual and/or queer (LGBTQ) individuals. A fair housing attorney from Community Legal Aid will be making the presentation. The event will be a part of National Transgender Awareness Week, November 12-19. The date and location have not yet been confirmed. Ms. Turchek provided members with a list of events currently being planned across the state as well as a report of findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey on discrimination of transgendered individuals in the state of Massachusetts. The areas where discrimination were found included: workplace, harassment and discrimination at school, economic insecurity, housing, accommodations and services, health care and bias- motivated violence. Ms. Turchek would like to develop events/forums throughout the year to bring awareness and educate the public on these issues. She invites the Committee to consider getting involved in this work as it is important gender and sexuality work related to their mission.

Members discussed the opportunity for participating in the November event and given the shortness of time offered to promote the event through their networks once Mr. Turchek has the event details finalized.

Other Business

Ms. Linton announced that Pathways for Change will be holding a panel discussion and screening of a film for Sexual Assault Awareness month (April). The event will be on April 24th and will examine sexual violence in the military.

Members wanted to know what happened with Ms. Gruhin's nomination of an individual in the community for the Outstanding Women in Business Award. No one has heard anything yet.

Ms. Tomaszewski noted that the Lighting the Way to the Cure event happened on October 10th as well as the Making Strides to End Breast Cancer event this month and she believes it is important for the Committee to participate in these and other local events.

There was a brief discussion of the role and function of the Committee and it was suggested that the Committee return to review the survey.

Ms. Turcek suggested that if members wished to encourage community/public involvement in meetings that members could email her with emails and names of people who may be interested in receiving emails with meeting notices/agendas.

Ms. Bethea announced that Women in Action will be holding a financial workshop on the 3rd Saturday of November at 41 Piedmont Street from 11-2pm. Also, Women in Action held a forum with the Mayor to discuss issues important to women and another forum will be scheduled shortly.

Ms. Gruhin made a short review of the assignments to be completed for the next meeting.

On a motion that was duly made the Committee adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayna Turcek