



## **Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (MePCSW)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**October 17, 2024**

**9:30-11:00 A.M.**

**MePCSW Commission Members in Attendance:** Anne Gass, Kate Elmes, Eisha Khan, Ellen McKenzie, Samantha Lott Hale, Rebecca Austin, Keita Whitten Foster, Darylen Cote, Sue Mackey Andrews, Dania Bowie, Jill Randall, Jill Barkley Roy

**MePCSW Commission Members Absent:** Fatuma Hussein, Maulian Bryant, Jennifer Wilkey

#### **Staff and Guests:**

- Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
- Elinor Higgins, MePCSW Executive Director

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**Facilitator:** Anne Gass, MePCSW Chair

#### **Welcome and Icebreaker**

1. Welcome
2. Icebreaker/discussion question – continued from last meeting, Keita led discussion with a question about race, cultural roots, and identity

#### **Old Business and Public Comment**

1. Approve August meeting minutes
  - a. Motion to approve: Sue
  - b. Second: Darylen
  - c. No discussion/edits
  - d. Vote: Unanimous vote to approve
2. Feedback about the 9/25 lunch-and-learn session – discussion of the opportunities to hear from Commission members about their work and skills during future lunch-and-learn sessions. Interest in hearing from Rebecca about Safe Voices work.
3. Any members of the public may introduce themselves and speak for 3 minutes
  - a. No members of the public in attendance

#### **Executive Director's Update**

1. Elinor shared the following updates:

- a. Overview of draft FY25 workplan, which focuses on the 2024 report, further promotion of the Commission and its role, supporting MePCSW member success and development, strategic planning, and ongoing partnership with the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL)
- b. Update on new website - launch is delayed until February
- c. Statewide data governance workgroup – participation and workshops
- d. Corporate board gender parity report – [published on MePCSW website](#)
- e. Update on Commission appointments
- f. Collaboration with MDOL on women in construction and the trades
- g. December 12<sup>th</sup> - Hall of Flags event to launch report
- h. Spoke at the 2024 Community Health Worker Awareness Day event at the state house
- i. Upcoming event with AAUW, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm in Waterville
- j. New MePCSW Governance committee and its role

#### **Commission Operations Updates**

1. Selection of MePCSW Vice Chair – Commission unanimously voted to appoint Samantha Lott Hale
2. Scheduling for new MePCSW Governance Committee is underway – will support executive director in time-sensitive decision making and support Commission operations
3. Update on proposed bill that would provide Commission member compensation and travel reimbursement

#### **MePCSW Committee Updates, Guest Speaker, and New Business**

1. 2024 MePCSW Report
  - a. **Guest speaker:** Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
    - i. Shared feedback on the report draft, and highlighted areas where Commission recommendations could be further developed to support legislators and to enhance Commission credibility
  - b. Discussed opportunities to highlight the work of policy leaders and subject-matter experts while acting as a unifying voice and highlighting collaboration
  - c. Discussed role of the Commission and strategy for solidifying what legislators and other partners can expect from the MePCSW
  - d. Talked about potential additions to the content of the report including: national best practices and additional Maine-specific examples, cover letter
  - e. Discussion about land acknowledgement – want to ensure that it is not performative. Elinor will conduct additional outreach on this
  - f. Interest in using stronger language for recommendations, and Commission members will add key partners to the report draft using comment boxes to support additional outreach and alignment on recommendations
  - g. An additional meeting will be scheduled for November – Elinor will circulate a poll
2. Other new business
  - a. Preliminary discussion about civic education programming for youth

#### **MePCSW Member Sharing and Other Business**

1. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month – look for opportunities for action and commemoration