



# Maine Permanent Commission on **THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

## MePCSW Governance Committee

### Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2025

10:00 – 11:00 A.M.

**MePCSW Committee Members in Attendance:** Samantha Lott Hale, Keita Whitten Foster, Fatuma Hussein, Sue Mackey Andrews, Eisha Khan, Dania Bowie

**MePCSW Committee Members Absent:** none

**Staff and Guests:** Elinor Higgins (MePCSW ED)

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**Facilitator:** Samantha Lott Hale, MePCSW Chair

#### Welcome

#### Old Business and Public Comment

1. Discussed the structure of Governance Committee (GC) meetings and balancing the committee sharing with addressing operations work
  - a. Strategy: Elinor will share high-level take aways from committee meetings with the GC group and will help facilitate cross-committee collaboration as needed. Committee Chairs will share updates with the full group during MePCSW meetings.
2. Any members of the public may introduce themselves and speak for 3 minutes
  - a. No members of the public present

#### New Business

1. MePCSW Open Seat and Membership Discussion
  - a. Reviewed current geography and attributes of the MePCSW, including a map of where Commissioners are located across the state, to identify some gaps in representation.
    - i. Discussed opportunities to address gaps in formal and informal ways – letting gaps guide outreach to communities, creating “associate Commissioner” roles to invite additional voices to the table, or inviting individuals to participate on committees.
    - ii. Talked about representation (which may never be perfect) not being the only way to bring a diversity of voices to the work
  - b. Discussed open Commission seat and reviewed potential candidates to recommend to the Speaker of the House. Talked about some specific gaps in Commission membership, including around research expertise, Portland residency (as a population center for the state), and work in sexual assault prevention and survivor advocacy.

- i. Talked about need to balance grassroots experiences, varied lived experience, and research skills
    - ii. During discussion, narrowed recommendations and focused on the importance of availability in order to fully engage in the work
  2. Budget Proposal Review
    - a. Reviewed three proposed budget initiatives for the supplemental budget:
      - i. Baseline budget
      - ii. Research expenses
      - iii. Data dashboard
    - b. Discussed potential challenges in the tight budget environment, and opportunities to support work through other funding streams
    - c. Noted that upcoming internship and graduate student fellow programs came with funding for the students
    - d. Vote:
      - i. Motion to approve: Keita
      - ii. Second: Dania
      - iii. Unanimous approval
  3. Plan to discuss the Member Handbook at the next meeting