

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women -- Annual Retreat

October 6, 2015 – 10am – 2pm

Camden National Bank Corporate Center, Fox Ridge Office Center, Rockport, ME

Present: Marjorie Crowley, Amy Gallant, Samantha Lott Hale, Jane Haskell, Nicole Ladner, Marianne Moore, Lori Parham, Sarah Reuf-Lindquist, Vera Roberts, Regina Rooney, Rebekah Smith

Welcome: Objectives, Agenda, Introductions

Working Agreements Suggested and Used

- Listen, respect and share air time; contribute for the good of the entire group
- Differences of opinion are useful and natural
- Listen carefully for areas of common interest, rather than individual positions
- Enjoy the day's work and look for surprising new ideas

Openings: Myth, Mystery, & Value

- *Commission Myths & Mystery: What myths and mysteries exist at the Commission?*
 - Is there a list of commission members and terms? How long is the term of service? [**SR-L**: 2 yrs]
 - Did not know it (PCSW) existed before being asked
 - Mystified by purpose
 - Is there a list of all of the Maine Permanent Commissions?
 - Is there a benefit?
 - Who reads the report?
 - Are there other models for funding (of the PCSW) within state of Maine or other states?
 - (How) Is the (biennial) report a benefit for those who read it?
 - What role does the Commission have with other statewide entities, specifically those that work with women's issues?
 - How can we work as an advocacy organization and (how can we) not be perceived as having a political agenda?
 - How can the six areas of work (i.e., research, activities, advocacy, information, meetings, reports) be done in an unfunded Status?
 - With no funding, is it (PCSW) doomed? Especially if we do not know who/if anyone sees/reads report?
 - Are there opportunities for funding? For advocacy? *"to move the needle"*
 - We spend lots of time on the (biennial) report; while the report is equally weighted with the other five areas of work
- *Commission Value (Private and Public): Of what value is the Commission to an individual (personally)? Of what value is the Commission to the public (those who do not participate in its work)?*
 - Private Value
 - Networking
 - Better informed
 - Relationships

- Hopefulness about being able to work across range of politics and ideology
- Public Value
 - Provide information to government & Legislature on Status of Women
 - For those who write grants
 - Data resource for other boards' work
 - Non partisan entity that comes to consensus about policy
 - Result of meeting with legislature-submitted a bill about 'economic advantage' (potential for model legislation)
 - Foundational information for legislative decision making
 - Keep 'her' informed
 - Education that can be provided to women (resources)
 - People who do not know about the information in the report 'ate it up' at a presentation (may view things differently about Status of Women in the future)
 - Leverage information in the survey in our (members') networks
 - Who in our networks needs to know the information in the report?

The Commission: Its Work, Its Implications

Commission's Goals – what is our shared understanding of what the goals are?

- Create a (biennial) report
- Educate Legislature (via the report)
- Want to have more influence on policy (advocacy voice) (find place where to have consensus and move the needle on those issues)
- General awareness rising (via the report) about Status of Women and Girls
 - Non-profits, other sectors that matter outside legislature (businesses, etc.)
- Have opportunity to provide non-biased, non-partisan information to students
- Maintain the Commission & support each other as we do the work
- Advocate for the Commission
- Generate original data on the Status of Women and Girls
- Compare 'our' data to others' data
- Above was followed by **SR-L's** reading of the PCSW charge
 - Raise awareness on Status of Women and Girls
 - Push for policy that impacts Status on Women and Girls
 - Our (six) areas of work are the tools to reach goals and have impact
- (Further comments)
 - Also an analysis in the Status of Women and Girls
 - What can the report "be"?
 - How can we think the report differently

Commission's Work: research, activities, advocacy, information, meetings, reports –

Possible discussion areas: how do we feel about this work? What does each accomplish? What is our (the Commission's) common agreement about what each could to accomplish? How do we know this (or how is it measured?) Who has 'does' these? Of this work, where or what can be the Commission's best use of time? How does this remain constant with a changing mix of Commission members?

- Meeting Structure
 - Full Commission meets once a month
 - Sub-groups meet as needed
 - Questions/comments voiced:
 - ? How many Commissioners are needed for quorum?
 - Commission participation – if a Commissioner misses three consecutive meetings, it can lead to being removed as a member
 - Attendance by telephone or video is approved
 - How can we have a list of ‘known’ members with all the data regarding appointment, resignations, diversity, etc.
 - How can we forward names of new members to be considered?
 - How proactive can we be?

The Report: Its Work, Its Implications [2012 & 2015 editions]

Focal areas [aka dimensions]: education, economic security, health, safety & well-being, and leadership & public life; distributed print copies to legislators, each town library, and ‘important’ organizations who would be impacted. Possible discussion areas: Who has used the report? How do we know? Has any library featured the report? Had anyone request to see it? How has the Report impacted policy since 2012 & 2015 printings?

Beginning thoughts:

- Have been two Reports, 2012 and 2015
- To date they are “*all things to all people*”
- Has holes
- Do we recreate it every two years?
- An immense amount of work
- Limited capacity of volunteers (Commission members)
- Does the data change every two years?
- Does the ‘needle move’ as a result of the data?
- Next report - Early year 2017
- Could be an aspirational document

Who uses/used the Report?

- Commissioners have used it with the Democratic leadership, Senate, several MidCoast district Senators, presented to the Maine Department of Labor, one Commissioner used it for research for Angus King campaign, one Commissioner used with a Rotary & Maine Women’s Network (MidCoast Chapter), OpEd BDN blog, Maine Focus blog, and Requested for *Maine Calling* (MPBN)

Comments and questions surfaced about using the Report:

- How can we know if someone uses the hard copy report?
- Nikki can let us know the numbers and amount of times the Report was accessed digitally
- Could libraries use copies more effectively if it was spiral bound (there is a cost) or if available digitally?
- We could list who we have distributed the Report to and who may have accessed it. (time consuming)

- At various conferences, each of us could have copies of the Report or have a “View Only” copy and a card that gives the digital link.

The Commission: Its Importance

*Discussion prompts: What is most important about the Commission and its purpose? **What are the Commission’s goals for 2015-2016?** How are those goals accomplished?*

Proposed two-year goals:

- A. [Build] [Raise] the public profile and credibility of PCSW
- Each Commission member meets face to face with: Community leaders, Legislators (TBD), Municipal staff, Maine School Management Association, Other sectors (e.g., medical, law enforcement, etc.)
 - Find opportunities for presentations to local groups
 - Recruit diverse women who represent many views to the Commission
 - Build a Communication (Tool) Inventory
 - Is there a logo?
 - Face Book page
 - Public Releases
 - Talking points
 - Quick communication between members as a call to action
- B. Identify issue areas for which the Commission can provide information and advocacy to impact policy (legislative and non-legislative) through 12/2016 [note: work can be done in the Short term (i.e., current legislative session, Mid term (i.e., during the election) and Long term (i.e., the session that begins in 2017)
- Involve all Commission members
 - Have conversations with legislature and other stakeholders
 - Develop goals for information and advocacy

Closing

Review next steps

- **SR-L** will conduct a Doodle poll for the November meeting
- November meeting agenda items
 - Determine regularity of meetings
 - Identify issues for information and advocacy
 - Put membership report on agenda – **EWS**
 - Discuss NEWPC (NE women’s policy conference). Determine how the Commission will participate in the biennial event (11/2016). **SR-L & AG** to notify Holly.
- Develop for the December meeting a **DRAFT** Outreach Plan that the issues can then be inserted into. Determine who the audience to whom the Commission communicates -- **AG, SR-L, & RR**
- Develop for the December meeting a **DRAFT** proposal for a Communication Committee; it will ‘define’ itself -- **MC, RR, AG, SR-L, LP & SLH**

- December meeting
 - Internal “survey” (what are each member’s top 3 issues; use a process)
 - External survey (who are ‘they’ to survey?)
- January meeting
 - Members share information they gathered through external surveys

Closing: What I appreciated about today’s work:

- Increased clarity around mission
- Energy to move forward
- Strategize beyond the report
- Used bylaws as guidance for next steps
- Know more about next steps that we have a report
- Working with people I know and people who are new to me
- The chance to have a longer conversation
- Good food; good meeting site