

**Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2009, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Room 104, State Capitol Building**

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women met in Room 104 of the State Capitol Building on January 22, 2009. Secretary Lou Kohlman called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Fern Bowling, Bob Darcy, Vicki French, Catherine Haynes, Lyn Hester, Denise Kinzie, Lou Kohlman, Valeska Littlefield, Joyce Martin, Pat Martin, Bernice Mitchell, Chris Morriss, Patricia Presley, Claudean Reynolds, Nancy Rothman

Commissioners Excused: Patty Bryant, Lee Denney, Sally Frasier, Kathryn Jones, Rebecca Kennedy, Lou Kerr, Debbe Leftwich, Jilda Motley, Anita Norman, Jennifer Paustenbaugh, Pam Peterson, Mary Walker

Commissioners Absent: Toni Calvey, Valerie Thompson

Advisory Council Members Present: Kay Martin, Adeline Yerkes, Glenda Carlile, Jan Peery. Tya Smith (Staff)

Visitors Present: Lindsey Martin-Bilbry, Katie Fitzgerald; Nursing Class Lora Hargrave, Lacey M. Wildrix, Janet Gallegly, Janet Hawkins, Morgan Carrier, Brandee Keele, Angie Collins, Kristine Wyme, Zac Smith, Jayme Seetin, Charlotte Griffin, Elizabeth Hurley, Whitney Zimmerman, Rebecca Prince, April Harmon.

Women's History Moment: Lou Kohlman briefly reported on President Obama's Policy Agenda for Women as published on the White House Web site.

Roll Call: Secretary Lou Kohlman called the roll and noted that fifteen (15) Commissioners, four (4) Advisory Council members, and eighteen guests were present. The Commissioners present constituted a quorum.

Minutes of the December 11, 2008 Meeting were approved.

Reports

Chair: Chair Chris Morriss reported briefly on the Oklahoma Academy meeting on their Criminal Justice System initiative. She noted that the Commission was introduced at the meeting, and suggested that the Commission can do several things to assist the effort. Particularly the Chair volunteered to submit an op-ed piece on the Commission and the issue of incarcerated women, and welcomes help in drafting that piece.

Vice Chair: There was no report.

Joyce Martin, co-chair of the Hall of Fame committee, reported on progress of the event. They are working on estimates for the event. The honorees have been chosen and plans are proceeding. Chair Morriss noted that the honorees are being notified and Commissioners will receive word after that notification.

Secretary: There was no report.

Advisory Council Chair: Adeline Yerkes reported that the Advisory Council survey has gone out and we anticipate its return by the end of January.

NACW Representative: Bernice Mitchell has an NACW conference call meeting on Saturday. She encourages all Commissioners to renew or join the NACW as individual affiliate members. Currently eight Commissioners are affiliate members. Membership entitles you to information and action alerts. The affiliate dues are \$50, due to NACW by January 31. Commissioner Mitchell will send in dues given to her, and members can also send individual memberships in.

Financial Report: Tya Smith presented the financial report. Marilyn Capps said the \$5000 authorized from her salary is being taken out of carryover funds. Ms. Smith noted there are many purchase orders outstanding, resulting from the December authorization of the purchase of office equipment. Although the Commission has budgeted money for NACW dues it will not appear on the spreadsheet until the NACW asks for it.

Business – Topical Committees:

Leadership Committee: Chair Lou Kohlman reported. She and Chris Morriss attended the Oklahoma Academy announcement of its findings and recommendations from the Criminal Justice System Town Hall. She briefly described the broad outlines of the recommendations, and focused on the primary recommendation for Women and Special Populations. This explicitly states that the Academy should partner with the Commission to reduce the women's incarceration rate in Oklahoma to below the national average within ten years, and within five years to ensure that the state is no longer the national leader in the number of incarcerated women. There are several ways in which the Commission can further this partnership: an op-ed piece by the Chair, assistance with the Incarceration of Women Committee in researching programs which work, and inclusion of Academy spokespersons and information in Leadership and Incarceration Committee listening sessions statewide. In addition to developing talking points individual Commissioners can use in speaking with legislators, we may also develop a statement or petition to deliver to policy-makers regarding the status of women in Oklahoma and incarceration.

Women's Health Committee: Co-Chair Adeline Yerkes reported. February 6 is Red Dress Day, women and heart disease day. Each of today's meeting attendees will receive a packet of information on women and heart disease, including a pin, wallet card, information sheet, and 2009 Women's Health Calendar. The Committee proposes developing a similar packet to give to women legislators and agency heads within the

Capitol building, and asks the Commission's help in visiting those offices on Friday, February 6 to give the packet. Lyn Hester will help the Committee develop a one-page information sheet by January 30. This release will be from the Commission. The Committee hopes that the information can be distributed in Heart Association bags. The Committee plans to do a women's bone health event in April, to avoid conflict with the Hall of Fame event.

Women Incarcerated Committee: There was no report.

Business – Events

Kate Barnard Luncheon: Lou Kohlman reported on progress of the February event. This will be held in conjunction with the OSU Oklahoma Oral History Research Program. OSU researchers are in the final stages of completing an oral history project in which she has interviewed nearly all of the living women who currently serve or at one time served in the Oklahoma Legislature. OSU is finishing up a website that will have full interview transcripts, biographies, photographs, personal and political memorabilia of all the women interviewed plus photos of all 77 women who have served thus far. The event will begin at 11:30 with a press conference in the Blue Room for the OSU project. This will be immediately followed by the Commission's presentation of the Kate Barnard Award. Chair Morriss will begin by welcoming attendees again on the Commission's behalf, introducing the Commission and explaining the Kate Barnard award. The Award will then be presented. After the honoree speaks, the group will move to the 2nd Floor Rotunda for lunch. OSU will be inviting past women legislators and will pay for their lunch. OSU is also bearing other costs and responsibilities associated with the event. The Commission will print the program and biographical information packet for current elected and appointed women.

County-by-County Study: Chair Chris Morriss began the discussion. Commissioner Darcy has recruited his Women in Politics class to research and prepare a County-by-County study, based on the Michigan Women's Commission report. Teaching assistant Lindsey Martin-Bilbry gave a brief description, with a written prospectus, to Commissioners. Topics include demographics, political participation, employment and earnings, social and economic autonomy, reproductive rights, and health and well-being. The project may also break out domestic abuse, which is not currently tracked in Oklahoma. There are also some health issues which are not currently broken out separately. Among the issues reviewed will be registration to vote; Dr. Darcy is working with the Election Board but has not yet been able to get voter registration data from Oklahoma. He is working with the Census, which does not break down information by county. The project can extrapolate from this data using scientific random sampling method, but needs to obtain the registration from the Oklahoma County Election Board. Bob Darcy moved that the Commission authorize a purchase of data from the Election Board for \$150. Pat Martin seconded the motion, which passed without opposition. The Commission's purpose of the study is to discover and gather statistical information about women in Oklahoma, and give it to legislators, policy-makers, and other persons interested in the status of women in Oklahoma. The Commission may then encourage

legislators and others to act based on facts. We contemplate disseminating the data in a summary report distributed to legislators and others, accompanied by a Web site which has detailed data per county. Lou Kohlman moved that the Commission authorize Dr. Darcy to have his class conduct a county-by-county survey on the Commission's behalf and for the Commission's use, in accordance with the prospectus provided to the Commission, and subject to further discussion by Commission as the project continues. Bernice Mitchell seconded the motion, which passed without opposition, Bob Darcy abstaining.

Announcements: Jan Peery announced the Oklahoma Women's Coalition Advocacy Day at the Capitol, February 18. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., with programs throughout the morning and legislator visits beginning at 1:45 p.m. The Coalition has formed and is actively welcoming members. The Coalition itself welcomes all individuals and organizations and avoids partisanship.

Katie Fitzgerald, director of N.E.W. Leadership, announced that those applications are now available online and asked Commissioners to encourage applicants. She noted that women's incarceration will be the focus of an undergraduate program in the project this year. The program is searching for ways to document lasting results and influences from participation. The program is also developing a partnership with Girl Scouts, looking at similar leadership development for high-school age women to get involved with community policy-making. The program may be found on the Web at ou.edu/carlabertcenter/leadership.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be on February 26, 2009, from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. The room will be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Motions:

Bob Darcy moved the Commission allocate \$1000 to the Kate Barnard luncheon, seconded by Valeska Littlefield. The motion passed without opposition.

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