



Wisconsin Women's Council Meeting
Thursday, June 24, 2004
9:00 AM –4:00 PM
DOA Conference Room 4B

MINUTES

Present: Kristine F. Martinsek, Jane Clark, Arlene Siss, Renee Boldt, Representative Samantha Kerkman, Ann Peggs, Amy Polasky, Dr. Joan Prince, Mary Jo Baas and Senator Judy Robson

Guests: Mary Ann Fahl, Chair. Wisconsin Women's Network, Kelly Flury, Office of State Senator Judy Robson, Brittany Schoch, Cullen Intern, Beloit, WI, Stella T. Luong, Cullen Intern, Office of Representative Gary Sherman and Hillary Shager.

Approval of the Minutes – Approved.

Old Business

- Budget - the Chair presented the FY04 (final) and FY05 (proposed) budget. All was in order.
- Web site is completely developed. It was requested that any items that were of interest to the Council be sent to Catherine to add to the web site. It was asked that if there were any changes, suggestions were to be made to Catherine within seven days. It was agreed that after that time, the web site is live.
- E-mail usage – Catherine questioned if any of the Council members are having trouble accessing their state Email accounts. If so, they are to contact the Department of Administration Help Desk at 608-267-6930. This is the chosen mode of communication for Council business.
- Biennial Report – Mary Jo Baas has agreed to submit a Wisconsin Women's Council Biennial Report for FY04. She has requested extended time to complete the draft. It was agreed that it would be ready for the next Council meeting.
- Staffing for the Executive Director position – The Chair announced that the process has been started. It was explained that this is a State of Wisconsin position and will go through the process as outlined by the Department of Administration's Human Resources department. Terry Kraus is taking the lead. There will be an interview committee headed by the Chair for the interviews.
- Announcements
 - Status of Wisconsin Report should be updated by this fall. Kris Martinsek will be listed as the advisor to the committee.
 - Girl Scouts of America, Wisconsin Leaders will have a workshop in the morning of September 10. All are welcome. When more information is received, it will be added to the website.



- Mary Ann Fahl from the Wisconsin Women's Network came and spoke to remind us of Woman's Equality Day at the Capitol to celebrate the ratification of the 19th amendment. She gave us a complementary copy of the Self Sufficiency Study for Wisconsin that their Network sponsored.

New Business – Testimony on Barriers to Women's Full Participation

- Department of Transportation (DOT) – Reggie Newson, Sukie Hahn and Jim Zegers from the Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services gave an informative presentation on the TrANS program at DOT. They brought a packet of information for each member consisting of: the TrANS 2003 Year-End Report, the Transportation Alliance for New Solutions Program, the Marquette Interchange Project: Labor Contract fact sheet and the Fact Book for the Federal Fiscal Year 2003 from the Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development Office of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) programs. The Council Chair or designee has been invited to the Advisory Board meetings. They explained that women own 51% of DBEs. The TrANS program is for candidates into prep, placement and retention for skilled trades. It is a collaborative effort between business and labor; community based organizations and government. It is funded through state and federal grants. Ninety percent of the graduates are placed. The community based organizations help provide the strongest applicants. There is a fact book that is released annually defining a Career Awareness Summer Project for students. It is for one week and free. They recruit one week before school is out. The certification process was questioned and Reggie answered that they are looking into a uniform certification process.
- Department of Commerce (Commerce) – Carol Dunn from the Bureau of Entrepreneurship (Women's Resource Coordinator) gave a presentation on Women in Business. She explained the best source for women in business is the Small Business Administration. She announced that although women are not considered a minority, the state is looking at streamlining the certification and to include women into the 5% advantage and first notice of job opportunities. With sales less than \$5M and 25 employees or less, you have three months to get into compliance. There is an "Angel Network" of investors for women (WI Venture network). The "Grow Wisconsin" plan is a partnership with organizations that gives assistance for federal grants. It also notifies small businesses for rules that impact their business. There is toll free access to information about starting a small business on the Commerce website. There is a new Item 255 that allows tax credits for businesses that want to be investors that will take effect January 1, 2005.
- Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) – Secretary Lorrie Keating Heinemann – gave a presentation on the inequality of women in Finance. Her background is banking, securities and investment. She stated several situations where women may have difficulties from gaining employment and access to Boards and upper management positions to obtaining loans. She stated the low expectations of self and others are primary barriers. Others included home and parental obligations, lack of mentors, lack of respect for taking on the role of primary caregiver, an unfriendly tax system, not challenging the status quo and lack of support to women's business from other women (ex: women doctors, dentists, bankers). She suggested we reach out and encourage institutions to have women on their boards, in their management positions and in traditionally male dominated positions.



- Department of Workforce Development (DWD) – Secretary Roberta Gassman spoke concerning the needs of women in the workforce. She encouraged us to partner within DWD to help gain attention to the cause of child support, aid to dependent children, foster parenting, and equal pay for equal work. Parity pay is still a problem with women getting 77 cents on the dollar (67 cents for African American women) compared to men. Women hold the two thirds of the minimum wage positions. She asked the Council to support the two step plan to raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$5.70 to \$6.50. Too many women are stopping by the food pantries on their way home from work rather than the grocery store. They work and still cannot afford to feed their families. The majority of complaints received in the Equal Rights Division are from those with disabilities. Solutions for the workforce will need a good look at the quality of childcare. There is a task force called “Quality Counts for Kids Taskforce” that should be monitored and supported. It is a tiered system for rating childcare. We need education and training for children. We need a better refugee assistance program. This year 3,500 Hmong are here; 91% are employed and 50% are homeowners. Secretary Gassman suggested we study the Children First Program that Governor Doyle has released. It has many good ideas and plans. An apprenticeship program with federal funding in traditional and non-traditional jobs should be considered so women can move into higher paying jobs. To break the cycle of poverty, consider the pivot points in a girl’s life and provide the support needed. The middle school years are when a young girl still has dreams. The self-confidence needs promoted and dreams developed. They need to see what is available for career choices. They need to be prepared to make strong career choices and when the time is right to become strong parents.
- Department of Health & Family Services (DHFS) – Sinikka Santala- Administrator of Division of Disability and Elder Services spoke concerning abuse of the elderly, child abuse and the problems facing women, especially with children, who have been incarcerated. Some of the barriers she quoted were access to health care and elderly Medicare, Badger Healthcare for working families, insurance affordability for women without children who have no health coverage, lack of wellness programs for women, language barriers and knowledge of available programs. She recommended the Kids First program initiated by Governor Doyle for strong families and healthy kids programs. She noted the baby boomers are aging and there are not enough resources for the elderly women especially those who wish to stay in their homes. There is a need for education on where to find information on long term community health care and aging and disability centers. Lastly, she touched on the substance abuse and mental illness barriers. These are in the top 11 health priorities. Those include the 15% of mothers that have post-partem depression, 30% for low income have a higher risk and are twice as likely to experience depression. Women who drink through their pregnancies (32%) or women who "binge drink" risk health issues for their newborns. Health insurance does not normally cover mental illnesses. She would like to see the Council work with Department of Corrections and Department of Workforce Development to reduce the stigma and develop recognition education that the disease is common and treatable and to encourage insurance coverage for both substance abuse and mental illness.



- Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Farshad Maltes, Research and Policy Analyst, spoke about the economic development loans. He presented handouts outlining the purpose of different loans and their eligibility example: Contractor Loan Guarantee Fact Sheet, Linked Deposit Loan Subsidy, WHEDA Small Business Guarantee Fact Sheet and the Neighborhood Business Revitalization Guarantee. He stated that if WHEDA were a bank, they would be the largest in the state. The emerging markets for WHEDA are low cost financing to small businesses and women's businesses (2-4% below the market rate), economical development in distressed communities and 25% of contracts go to under served entrepreneur groups. They are partnered with Legacy Bank for the development of the New Market Tax Credit. Regarding housing, WHEDA is becoming more aggressive in loan writing for first time homebuyers. The Council was invited to attend the Developer's meeting. They have done training on the basics for financial needs, ex: starting a business, budgeting, investing, home-ownership. WHEDA also has a lease purchase program for those with impaired credit.

Discuss Strategy/Goal Setting – Amy Polasky, Representative Kerkman and Mary Jo Baas had to leave. Therefore, it was agreed that the strategy and goal setting was tabled till next meeting.

Public Comments – Mary Ann Fahl from the Wisconsin Women's Network introduced herself and brought materials describing the purpose of the Network. She also presented the Council with a book, The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Wisconsin 2004 that was compiled on their behalf partnering with the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, The Brice Fund, labor unions and non-profit organizations. The updated study was made possible through major contributions from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, The Brico Fund, The Family Law Section of the Wisconsin State Bar Association, the PPC Foundation and many individuals. The Council very well received the introduction.

Next Meeting will be held in August. Catherine will poll the members and choose the date with the most possible attendees.
