



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council Board
Strategic Planning - November 11, 2014 – 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Country Springs Hotel, Executive Learning Center, Pewaukee, WI**

Christine Lidbury, Meeting Facilitator

Board Members Present: Mary Jo Baas, Cindy Block, Nicky Bowman (by Skype), Patty Cadorin, Michelle Mettner, Katie Mnuk, Kim Nickel, Jessie Nicholson. **Not Present:** Senator Dave Hansen, Representative Jennifer Shilling and Heather Smith. **Excused:** Karen Katz (attempted to include by Skype and phone but experienced technical difficulties), Representative Mary Czaja, and Representative Sandy Pasch. A quorum of Board members was present.

Others present: Christine Lidbury, Executive Director

1, 2. Welcome and Introductions

The Women's Council welcomed new Board Member Cindy Block.

3, 4. Maximizing Board Effectiveness / Financial Literacy

Members brainstormed about the Council's assets and opportunities for building programming:

Board members:

- networks and organizational affiliations
- backgrounds and areas of expertise
- access to State government leadership
- sitting legislators have designated board seats
- bi-partisan appointment structure
- geographic diversity

Other Assets

- Reputation for quality research and fact-based findings/publications.
- Council networks, such as Trailblazers. Christine noted that there are more than 50 Trailblazer "alumni" plus their award nominators, who are an untapped network and resource. Also, three of the five largest women-owned businesses in WI are past Trailblazers.
- Past Women's Council board members are another untapped network.
- Council has potential to serve on the model of a legislative service agency.

Important factors for enhancing board engagement:

- Working actively on issues that enable something to get done
- Impactful
- Proactive
- Relevant

Christine posed the question: How can the Council stay Relevant in the Current Environment?

Board members turned to issues where they felt the board could improve engagement and best bring board assets and resources to the Council's work. The Council created a list of issues and possible directions for the Council. This discussion effectively outlined a work agenda that will be voted on and discussed at a future board meeting. The discussion on the Council's work on financial literacy was included in this broader engagement/board role discussion.

A. Access to the Workplace

Several board members highlighted the issue of re-entry for women who experience a change in life circumstances (e.g., divorce, death of a spouse). The question was raised as to whether there was any particular one-stop resource or program to assist women in this situation. Christine suggested this was the focus of the "Displaced Homemakers" Federal grant program, awarded to the technical colleges and some community providers. However, these Federal grants had been discontinued in recent years. (Christine noted that "Displaced Homemakers" was an old term that lived simply in statute, but generally was for women/programs serving women looking to re-enter the workforce and hone marketable workplace skills.) Christine also noted that Job Centers are designed to provide the one-stop skills development and re-entry programming. Board members asked that more information on resources be collected and reported to the board.

- Maximizing Skills
- Re-Entry to the Workforce / How to women get back in to the workforce after change in life circumstances (mom's chapter 2)
- one stop resources for women – can we partner with WTCS?
- NTO / Mfg

B. Education Opportunities (Education Reform)

Several board members noted that this is an important area for women who seek the best educational opportunities for their children and that they have networks and resources on this issue that may be an asset for the Council in developing its agenda. The issue was also raised of adult education for women – this was a topic of discussion at the Council's conference on women and manufacturing and could build on the networks and resources gained through hosting that event.

- Charter Schools, School Choice (Options)
 - getting a good education for their children
 - access to low-income / single mothers
 - excellence in urban education
- Adult Education (going back to school)

C. Women's Safety

Discussion ensued on the Board's previous desire to engage on the issue of human trafficking and would like to continue to explore this area for WWC work. Mary Jo Baas raised the issue of expungement for criminal records for trafficking victims. Christine noted that good examples of legislation and programming can be found in neighboring states.

- Human Trafficking
- Expungement

D. Financial Literacy

It was noted that Katie Mnuk works in the long-term care field and is knowledgeable on the current and emerging issues financial stress of long-term care and caretakers on women. This may be a productive area for developing financial literacy work.

- Young Women understanding impact of choices on long-term finances / Future Financial Success
- Long-term Care / understand how to conserve resources to avoid having to turn to Medicaid programs for LT care (nursing home, family care, etc)
- Caregiving
- Do not continue to develop checklist projects – no new checklists. For web focus on clearinghouse function
- No new checklists – promote with other organization
- likely legislation in 2015 requiring financial literacy standards in schools

Christine asked that any provisional work agenda include women's business ownership and good government and ongoing and episodic work areas. Also Women's Business Ownership – especially Trailblazer – is a program where the Council has excellent board engagement. Board members concurred.

E. Women's Business Ownership

- research
- Trailblazer

F. Good Government

- - ConnectWI
- - Women in Office Research

Discussion ensued on issue of creating a legislative agenda / endorsing legislation. There were a variety of view and approaches to this topic. No vote or final decision was undertaken at this time . Summary of remarks:

- Create a board-only legislative subcommittee (also creates more board engagement) to collect information and report and/or make recommendations to the full board for discussion and voting.
- Okay to take a position on legislation related to the issues prioritized here, take on legislative advocacy based on vote of super-majority of members or board consensus (3)
- Not comfortable with the direct or proactive legislative advocacy. Recommend focus on improving outcomes by shining a light on the issues – research, dialogue, information gathering
- A little in both camps. The specific issues we have prioritized might or might not have legislation to include in our scope of work on any given issue. Where we identify legislation, focus only on the intersection of the WWC agenda and already introduced legislation. Work from a place of board consensus, not at the request of people outside the Council.
- Focus our advocacy position more as an authority versus advocate. Lend a voice, even where there is alignment with the Council Board findings/views, but not sure about specific endorsement.
- Where there is board consensus to write a paper, our position would be clear.
- Talking about policy is a role of the board. As women it is important for us to weigh in on policy. However, need to decide how much capacity we have to do this.

5. Building a Policy Component

- Continue Research & Benchmarking Reports
- Holding hearings (work with legislators) where there is an intersection of WWC agenda and legislation
- Hold policy dialogues as a component of scope of work on WWC agenda issues (not stand-alone initiative). Also look to brown bag lunches.
- New Partners
- - Serve multiple audiences (policy & public)
- - Expand Trailblazer to include dialogue / expand program day

6. Next Meeting

There will be no meeting on December 3, 2014 (previously schedule) in light of the November meeting. However, it was noted that the Council may want to meet in January to discuss and approve the provisional work agenda set out above. Christine will coordinate with the Executive Committee and email members about possible dates.

7. Public Comments and Announcements

Christine was recognized and commended by the Board for her 10th Anniversary with the Women's Council

No public comments.

Motion to adjourn by Mary Jo Baas, seconded by Katie Mnuk. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Lidbury